

Diversity Statement of Dr. LaKendra P. Hardware

Submitted to Juniata College May 2022

For Dean of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Position

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How does a community care for the aspects of my identity – on all levels – in such a way that I fully experience it as a place that validates, affirms and challenges me at the same time? This is the question that guides my entrance into any community and the foundation of my philosophy of being and belonging I look forward to exploring with the Juniata College community.

Juniata's EDI goal "to create a place where ALL people are included and treated equitably" could very well have been written from the foundational and formational work I've stewarded in my various positions. I operate in the critical understanding that the word **all** centers everyone in the world, hopes, initiatives, resources, accountability and possibilities in such a way that no one's being or identity is ignored. I truly expect spaces to be curated, cultivated and culled in such a way that I can be made to feel this is a space that's awaiting my arrival. Then, I will know that my being is valued and affirmed, and I can thrive in belonging.

Higher education has always been home to me – whether as student, staff or faculty at a predominately white institution (PWI) or an historically black college/university (HBCU). So, I strive to help others experience it as a home they readily see themselves thriving in as members of the community – no matter if they are in the largest or smallest identity demographic present. In every role I've undertaken, this thread tethers me to a sense of call and service. I genuinely believe, and often espouse, that making "diverse people" feel "welcome" should never be the goal. While some may see this as helpful, I counter that the result more often adds to an us/them narrative that erodes a sense of shared belonging.

How one addresses or names members of the community impacts – directly or indirectly – how those populations are seen and experienced on campus. Our goal in crafting personalized and empowering educational experiences should be to build space that individuals can "be" in such a way that belonging is experienced. The wisdom in this approach to crafting community is that being is authentic – it shows up wherever members of the community exist. Welcoming community members in as oddity or anomaly is antithetical to initiating and instilling a sense of belonging.

As a part of my work and in efforts to sustain and enhance community for BIPOC students and employees, I have made it a priority to create and refine spaces for these community members to simply "be" individually and collectively while being part of the larger community. Understanding the toll taken on spirits, minds, bodies and dreams, I've crafted mentoring, advocacy and support initiatives that have resulted in retention, connection and engagement in the broader campus culture.

Following is a sample of some of my efforts in curating community, stewarding growth and enhancing belonging as institutional priorities. This is my hope for any space that I'm given an opportunity to help grow, and this is my goal for the work I can imagine doing at Juniata College.

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Sample of Contributions Advancing & Supporting Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:

Diversity Programs & Initiatives	Engagement & Support with Students, Faculty & Staff
Created and implemented <i>L-A-K-S-AA Framework</i> as foundation to institution-wide efforts	Conducted listening sessions with students and employees
Chaired MLK Committee & Programming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>King: The Man, The Motive, The Movement</i> (2019) • <i>Unapologetically Just: Rooted in the Way of Jesus</i> (2020) • <i>Senior Administrators Speak: Equity & Justice in Action at Goshen College</i> (2021) • <i>Voices in the Movement</i> (2022) 	Convened and supported Intercultural Student Groups & their Leadership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocates • Asian Student Association • Black Student Union (also advised/mentored leadership) • Intercultural Coalition of Goshen College • International Student Club • Latino Student Union
Moderated the Bias Matters Response Team (BMRT), serving as convener and chief steward of BMRT training, policy implementation and accountability processes/practices	Created the Intercultural Student Space, institutional space dedicated as gathering/meeting space for intercultural students and their organizations
Created and advised the Regarding Justice Network (Re:JN), a group of student leaders serving the Office of DEI as Peer Justice Educators	Provided additional support and resources for Commuter Students and First-Generation Students
Implemented Intergroup Dialogue (IGD) experiences across campus with students, faculty and staff	Held <i>DEI Connect</i> sessions for one-on-one or group meetings to support, resource and advocate belonging and inclusion matters at the institution
Co-Chaired Committee on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented <i>Working Groups</i> expanding the reach of the committee's six DEI Officers in an effort address various populational support and advocacy across campus • Developed three working groups: <i>Sex & Gender</i>, <i>Disabilities</i> and <i>Heritage Month Celebrations</i> • Initiated the development of departmental evaluation and assessment process/tools 	Created Employee Resource Group & Professional Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led the Black Faculty Staff Fellowship • Supported the Latinx Employee Resource Group • Implemented <i>Black Professionals in Student Life & Higher Ed</i> for cohort of five administrative faculty (50% of our total Black faculty/staff population) to provide professional development, retention, mentorship and support
Facilitated DEI Book Reads for Faculty & Staff on <i>Overcoming Bias: Building Authentic Relationships Across Differences</i> by Tiffany Jana & Matthew Freeman	Engaged in equity work across institution with divisions, departments and individuals to increase cultural literacy, institutional accountability and agency for change
Launched the #DoBetterGC initiative to increase awareness of and responsiveness to institutional inequity	Stewarded advocacy work with individuals and cohorts of students and faculty to address matters of inequity and discrimination within department programs and practices
Co-authored institutional Freedom of Speech & Expression Statement	Implemented Black Male Success Program for Black Staff Mentors & Students
Facilitated <i>DEI Presents</i> , a three-part series of intentional campus-wide DEI programming in our convocation and chapel schedule	Consulted with Theatre Department majors and faculty on equity matters within department
Facilitated <i>Bias Matters: A Campus Conversation</i> , a multi-week webinar series	Consulted with Performing Arts departments on applying a DEI lens to season selections
Completed inaugural DEI Program Review, an institutional co-curriculum review that will occur every five years	Consulted on Goshen College History Reference Group with other faculty and staff
Facilitated anti-bias training with students, faculty and staff	Taught <i>Identity, Culture and Community</i> and <i>Learning Community</i> courses