


2020 IMPACT REPORT

Division of Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion



Northern Illinois University
Your Future. Our Focus.

Huskie Priorities

A photograph of three young adults, two women and one man, smiling and posing outdoors in front of a background of green foliage. The man in the center is wearing glasses and a grey hoodie. The woman on the left is partially visible, and the woman on the right is wearing a light-colored top.

The mission of Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ADEI) is to create synergy and inclusion for all members of our Northern Illinois University community. Social Justice Education; Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity and Education; and Undocumented Student Support, along with our Diversity and Cultural Resource Centers collaborated with colleges and other departments to bring an understanding of equity-mindedness and to foster inclusive communities.

As the spring 2020 semester approached midpoint, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted university operations. ADEI switched modalities to host virtual events to keep our Huskie community engaged in dialogues that matter.

This report is a summary of the activities and events that our ADEI team organized both in person and virtually during the 2019-2020 academic year.



The Asian American Resource Center (AARC)

The Asian American Resource Center (AARC) creates an inclusive environment where Asian American students, faculty, staff, alumni and allies cultivate a strong sense of community at NIU to raise awareness of the rich Asian American cultural heritage. The AARC serves as a central location to provide culturally relevant programs and services that support students' academic success, cultural education, leadership development and community building.

Prior to the governor's shelter-in-place mandate, 156 events took place in the AARC demonstrating high utilization by students, Asian-interest student organizations, faculty and staff. Nineteen weekly OHANA events such as Asian American Welcome Night, Asian Americans and Mental Health, Culturally Inclusive Language, and Richard Aoki's role in the Black Panther Movement engaged participants in meaningful and collaborative ways. Eight training workshops equipped students with effective peer mentor skills.

Engagement
with students,
faculty and
staff fall 2019
to COVID-19:
863

Virtual
Engagement:
313

After the shelter-in-place mandate, the AARC moved all activities to virtual platforms and continued to provide cultural education and leadership programs such as [Asian American Women in Music](#), [Issues of First-Year Students](#), [Mindful Listening](#), [Impact of COVID-19 and Xenophobia](#) and a [Holi Festival of Lights](#) presentation. Culminating year-end events recognized students' achievements virtually through the annual Leadership Awards and [Asian American Graduation Recognition](#).

During the summer, virtual opportunities for students to connect with AARC staff were also offered.



The Center for Black Studies (CBS)

The Center for Black Studies (CBS) offers NIU and the surrounding communities an interdisciplinary understanding of African Americans, African diaspora and their intersecting identities. CBS plays a significant, essential and unique role in advocating for Black students at NIU. CBS is a hub for student mentorship and education whether through events and programs or through the Black Studies minor.

In fall 2019, CBS engaged hundreds of students, faculty and staff in cultural understanding and celebration. CBS hosted an open house to welcome new and returning students, faculty and staff. The students engaged in the Umoja Series conversation about gun violence. And So-Full Fridays offered an array of movies and post-viewing dialogue to the campus community. Many young Black alumni returned to their alma mater for the Homecoming 2019 celebrations. Other in-person events included the Pre-Kwanzaa celebration, BMI's Men of Color event, Black Heritage Month programs, a graduate colloquium series film screening of "Push Out," a Def Poetry Jam for the Culture and the LaVerne Gyant Lecture Series discussion with Yolanda King.



Professor Joseph Flynn and a group of students sojourned to the South for the Alternative Spring Break – Civil Rights. They explored some of Selma’s most historic landmarks like the Edmund Pettus Bridge and Brown Chapel, and learned about the lesser-known history of the civil rights movement through visits at the Rosa Parks Museum, Southern Poverty Law Center and Interpretive Center. The experience was eye-opening, and forced students to consider personal biases and contradictions. Students were reminded that issues like discrimination, poverty and segregation still exist in our nation today and not just in Selma.

After the shelter-in-place mandate, CBS staff continued to host events and dialogues as well as celebrations. The National Black Students Town Hall was a co-sponsored initiative with multicultural and Black cultural centers where students from across the country discussed issues they encounter as Black college students. The Black Male Initiative and the John Henrik Clarke Honor Society continued their regular meetings. In addition, the honor society induction ceremony was held virtually. The crowning event of the year, **Black Graduation**, transitioned to a virtual event.

Blacks, whether in America or the diaspora, have always galvanized to fight for justice. In response to the distress and activism in response to the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd, Anne Edwards, interim director, wrote a **letter** to support students in their quest for change. In addition, the faculty and staff of CBS developed a virtual dialogue where students learned about the impact of trauma on their development and how to express their concerns and feelings.

Engagement
with students,
faculty and
staff fall 2019
to COVID-19:

2,240

Virtual
Engagement:

581

and **791**
views of Black
Graduation
Celebration.

The Gender and Sexuality Resource Center

The Gender and Sexuality Resource Center (GSRC) is a home away from home for and inclusive of all gender and sexual identities. We're committed to helping students find the resources and support to complete their degrees at NIU. We celebrate all identities and intersections. The GSRC serves as the central location for resources and support where acceptance of intersectional identities is encouraged and celebrated.

Some of the highlights from the GSRC events and programs include the annual Meet and Eat held at the beginning of the fall 2019 semester; Womanist Wednesdays, with interactive tabling sessions that highlighted topics related to gender identity, intersectionality and current events; the Period Project which placed tampons and sanitary pads in the cultural center and classroom building restrooms across campus (including gender-inclusive restrooms); and the LGBTQ+ Speaker's Bureau which has its largest group of volunteers.

The GSRC held LGBTQ+-tailored training for specific departments and organizations virtually, and to psychology doctoral students and orientation leaders. Sister Circles — which are spaces for women and nonbinary students from diverse racial and ethnic background to meet, talk, listen and simply exist amongst each other — continued to meet virtually every Thursday.

Engagement
with students,
faculty and
staff fall 2019
to COVID-19:
773

Virtual
Engagement:
283



The Latino Resource Center

The Latino Resource Center (LRC) promotes social justice and an inclusive environment that focuses on the recruitment, retention, empowerment and advancement of Latinx students at NIU. The LRC offers leadership and mentoring programs, peer support groups, an honors program and academic achievement programs. The academic year kicked off with the popular Latin Chill. The event welcomes new and returning students to engage with the LRC and the Center for Latin and Latin American Studies, and to learn about other campus resources. Noche de Gala (a formal event) recognizes Latinx leaders in the community and student organizations. Prior to COVID-19, LRC Director Luis Rivas-Santos was an active member of the national HACU conference steering committee in Chicago.

Once the shelter-in-place mandate was issued, SOL, Mujer a Mujer, METAS, Honor Society and LSA programs and meetings transitioned from face to face to virtual.

The NIU Student Government Association recognized the LRC with the Student Choice Award as Outstanding Resource Center. In addition, we had two virtual honor society induction ceremonies. The culminating event of the academic year was still celebrated, but virtually.

The **Latino Graduation ceremony** was distinguished to celebrate the accomplishments of Latinx students who successfully complete the requirements for a bachelor's or graduate degree, and was moved to a virtual environment.

Engagement
with students,
faculty and
staff fall 2019
to COVID-19:

773

Virtual
Engagement:

283



The Office for Undocumented Student Support

The Office for Undocumented Student Support (USS) aims to engage and support undocumented students, students from mixed-status families and their allies at NIU. Under the leadership of Sandy López, USS conducted outreach, programs and training on how to support undocumented and mixed-status students.

Before the COVID-19 outbreak, López's team conducted Undocumented Ally Training for faculty, staff and students, as well as for other colleges and universities. In addition to her work with institutions of higher education, López also conducted high school outreach.

As part of the Democracy Challenge, the USS team worked with Huskie Service Scholars and other members of the Democracy Challenge team to set up voter registration tables and events at locations across campus, including the residence halls.

Once the shelter-in-place order was issued, López worked with students on renewing their DACA paperwork with immigration lawyer Jeremy Lime, helped to shift Coming Out of the Shadows from face to face to virtual, held a virtual DREAM Action retreat and a graduate student retreat. During the 2020 spring semester, USS raised over \$16,000 to help Huskies renew their DACA permits, which afforded them protection from deportation and the ability to legally work in the U.S.



Engagement
with students,
faculty and
staff fall 2019
to COVID-19:

708

Virtual
Engagement:

343

Virtual
Engagement:
Coming Out of
the Shadows

**2.1K
views**

and 5,000
people reached.





Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Education

Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity and Education (AAEOE) is dedicated to furthering diversity and inclusion at NIU. We focus on recruiting faculty, staff and students who represent diverse communities and identities in our society; including, but not limited to: gender, age, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, race, culture, ethnicity, spirituality and ability.

We work to align NIU processes with federal and state laws, as well as internal policies regarding affirmative action and equal opportunity. In addition, we work with our community partners to provide an accessible campus environment for faculty, staff and visitors. The 2019-2020 academic year required that, even amid a pandemic, we deliver the same dedication to inclusivity as demonstrated in education and training for students, faculty and staff.

We worked with university colleges and departments on standard recruitment and hiring processes where departments submit positions for hiring, and AAEOE posts the vacancies onto the job board and onto various advertising sites/locations. The Achieving Excellence in Recruiting: Reducing Implicit Bias in Search Committee focused on providing search committees with solutions to decrease bias that might take place during the search process. Additionally, Coordinated Education, Training and Outreach conducted the mandated, Nondiscrimination and Sexual Assault Training for students and employees, violence prevention programming through Active Bystander Education, ADA Training, Domestic Violence Awareness Month Activities and Sexual Assault Awareness Month Activities.

Engagement
with students,
faculty and
staff fall 2019
to COVID-19:
1,890

Virtual
Engagement:
4,006

Social Justice Education

CONVERSATIONS THAT MATTER



Social Justice Education (SJE) provides the university community with experiences to build and sustain an inclusive campus where everyone respects the value and dignity of all members. Social Justice Education's mission, in alignment with Northern Illinois University and Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion's mission and goals, is to educate, create and sustain an equity-minded community that promotes positive social change.

It is SJE's vision to build action-focused communities by providing individuals the tools to dismantle oppressive systems, and groups the knowledge to become self-aware and culturally competent.

All SJE programs facilitate "Conversations That Matter." In response to the shelter-in-place mandate, SJE developed and modified educational programs to provide opportunities to educate and engage participants in discussions focused on cultural competency and anti-racism. New virtual programs such as Social Justice Town Halls, Huskie Conversation Café podcasts and Building POWER workshops were launched. Conversations on Diversity and Equity (CODE) workshops were continued in a virtual platform to enhance knowledge for faculty, staff and students. Five people received the inaugural Richard A. Flournoy Engagement Award for their engagement in developing and sustaining an inclusive campus and community.

Engagement
with students,
faculty and
staff fall 2019:

1,156

Virtual
Engagement:

1,156





Thank you to our donors and campus and community partners.
May we continue to have “conversations that matter.”

The Office of Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
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NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

**Office of Academic Diversity,
Equity and Inclusion**