



# Stronger Together Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2023

Edwin Maxwell, Editor-in-Chief

## Note from The Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer

Greetings Pioneer Family,

I write to extend a very warm welcome to the 2023-2024 academic year at Sacred Heart University (SHU). [The Office for Inclusive Excellence](#) (OIE) team is excited to continue our journey toward inclusive excellence, supporting diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging across the entire SHU community.

I recently celebrated my one-year SHU anniversary as chief diversity and inclusion officer, and the year has been filled with support, collaboration, and forward movement. I fully intend to continue and amplify that trajectory through the work of the OIE team and collaboration across the SHU enterprise. Although much progress has been made, there is much work to be done. As such, I encourage faculty, staff, and students to visit the [Office for Inclusive Excellence website](#) to learn more about ways to engage with inclusive excellence and the resources and support that we offer, including:

- [Anti-Discrimination and Discriminatory Harassment](#)
- [Bias Education Support Team \(BEST\)](#)
- [Chosen Name Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Inclusive Excellence Advisory Council](#)
- [Inclusive Excellence Education and Development](#)
- [Inclusive Excellence Faculty and Staff Fellows](#)
- [Multicultural Center](#)
- [Sexuality and Gender Equity \(SAGE\) Center](#)
- And more!

Thank you for the positive energy that has accompanied me since my arrival a year ago. I look forward to engaging with as many of my fellow Pioneers as possible!

Sincerely with love,  
Maurice D. Nelson  
Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer



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# What's Happening in OIE

News and updates from the Office for Inclusive Excellence.

## New SHU Chosen Name Policy

We are excited to share the newly adopted and implemented [Sacred Heart Chosen Name Policy!](#)

A Chosen Name may be different from a person's Legal Name. There are many reasons why someone may use a Chosen Name, such as a reflection of gender identity, as a nickname, or as a westernized name. Using Chosen Names and correct pronouns are important ways of establishing norms of respect in our SHU community. For everyone, using appropriate names and pronouns honors their identity.

"There are few things that touch one's identity and demonstrate respect more directly, more often and more publicly than how we address one another," said Anne Burmeister, OIE Director of Institutional Equity Compliance and Support. Read the full [Sacred Heart Chosen Name Policy](#), [FAQ](#), [Procedures supporting the SHU Chosen Name Policy](#) and [Guidelines](#) use these links provided or visit the Office for Inclusive Excellence Website. This commitment includes using a person's pronouns correctly. The [Guidelines](#) provide some resources and tips to create habits of inclusion and what to do when we misstep. We also recommend [pronouns.org Resources on Personal Pronouns](#) as a great resource. As you can imagine, this Policy implicates significant technical changes to information systems across SHU and the technical implementation of this Policy is ongoing. Here are some of the biggest changes you will likely see to SHU Systems:

- Students, faculty, and staff can select their pronouns in SPA and that information will be automatically updated in Blackboard.
- Students, faculty, and staff who, in the past, designated a "Preferred" name in a SHU System will automatically see that name as their Chosen Name in updated SHU Systems including SPA and Blackboard.
- Students, faculty, and staff who would like to inform SHU of their Chosen first, middle and/or last name can do so by simply completing the [Chosen Name Change Request Form](#). Once that form is processed, their Chosen Name will appear wherever possible in accord with the Policy.
- SHU IDs can be printed with Chosen Name. Currently ID cards can print first and last name fields only. Printing the middle name field on SHU ID Cards will be available later this fall.
- The first and middle name fields currently accommodate 15 characters, while the last name field accommodates 25 characters. Middle name or middle initials appear in some but not all systems. Where possible, SHU Systems will display Chosen middle name fields.

Here are changes that will come later during the Fall '23 Semester:

- Outlook (email) Display Name will reflect Chosen Name.
- Outlook network user names/email address can be changed upon request. This process requires a coordinated effort between IT and the individual. Instructions to come.
- SHU ID Cards will print Chosen middle name field

You can continue to look for updates and instructions in the [Procedures supporting the SHU Chosen Name Policy](#).

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## Multicultural Affairs Kickbacks and Cookouts

The Multicultural Center (MC) had multiple events so far this year. We began this semester with our first Multicultural Kickback featuring airbrush t-shirt artists and a 360 photobooth! We followed up with the Culture Cookout, which was a big hit with our henna artist. The MC also hosted the annual Salsa Night with La Hispanidad and Student Affairs, kicking off Hispanic and Latin American Heritage Month. We recently hosted a second kickback in partnership with La Hispanidad.

In addition to our kickbacks, the MC hosts Wisdom Wednesday where students engage in discussions about different personal development topics. In the coming weeks, look forward to watch parties, more kickbacks, and more programming in the MC.



## The New MACC Pioneers Program

MACC, Mentors Advocating for Cultural Connections, Pioneers was launched at the beginning of this academic year! The inaugural cohort, having twenty-one mentors known as “Connectors” and twenty-five first year mentees and counting. MACC Pioneers has had their first meet and greet for the Momentum Program where students have been officially introduced to their Connector who will guide them through their first academic year.

Not only do we have the Momentum Program through MACC Pioneers, but we’ve created two other departmental initiatives: Umoja and Sagrado. Both Umoja and Sagrado Corazon had their first interest meetings with great attendance and will begin biweekly meetings starting September 25th.

## Queerorientation

On August 29, 2023, the Gender Sexuality Alliance(GSA) held its Second Annual Queerorientation. This event, planned and facilitated by GSA's president, Nicole Sperling, had a panel of seven faculty and staff from departments across Sacred Heart University. The faculty and staff answered questions to help first-year students familiarize themselves with important resources, understand how to get involved with LGBTQ+ affairs on campus, and ask the panel about how to navigate their identity here at SHU.



## The New Bias Education Support Team (BEST)

OIE is very pleased to announce the new Bias Education and Support Team! BEST is comprised of twelve SHU faculty and staff from across the University, commissioned by President Petillo and organized and led by the Office for Inclusive Excellence. The Team is trained to support the SHU community with educational development and identity bias response tools. BEST members receive training in cultural intelligence, restorative and transformative justice practices and responding to identity bias and microaggressions. Appointed members of BEST will serve two-year appointments and are the following SHU faculty and staff:

- Sasha Aaronson, Clinical Assistant Professor, School of Social Work
- Alexander Barkley, Director, Student Engagement & Involvement
- Renée Delahaye, Director of Clinical Education Physician Assistant Studies, Clinical Assistant Professor
- Christina Gunther, Chair, Department of Health Sciences; Assistant Professor
- Gregory Madrid, Director of Residential Life
- Khawaja Mamun, Associate Professor, Economics
- Ashley Nechaev, Executive Director, Horizons at Sacred Heart University
- Cynthia O'Sullivan, Associate Dean, Academic Affairs and Global Nursing
- Arlete Paez Perez, Assistant Director of Community Engagement
- Deirdra Preis, Assistant Professor, Educational Leadership
- Laurie Scinicariello, Assistant Director of the Office of Student Accessibility
- MaryAnne Turner, Professional Academic Advisor, Davis & Henley College of Nursing

Ensuring inclusive excellence is a University-wide responsibility. SHU cannot advance without collaboration and investment from the entire SHU community. We appreciate those who volunteer their time and efforts to the Bias Education Support Team and all efforts to build equity and belonging at Sacred Heart University. To engage the support of BEST, visit [Office for Inclusive Excellence - Managing Bias](#)

# Inclusive Excellence

## What's Happening Everywhere

### Juneteenth

Juneteenth, a combination of “June” and “nineteenth,” holds a deep-rooted place in American history, commemorating the day when news of the Emancipation Proclamation reached the last of the enslaved individuals in Galveston, Texas, on June 19, 1865. Even though President Lincoln had issued the proclamation more than two years prior, this day marked the long-awaited liberation for those who were enslaved.

Juneteenth symbolizes resilience, hope, pride, and the pursuit of a more equal future. It reminds us that the road to equality involves struggle and progress, and that when faced with tough times, determination is what pushes us through. Today, Juneteenth celebrations include parades, picnics, prayer and educational events. These festivities not only honor African American history but also shine a light on American freedom and civil rights.

As of 2021, President Biden signed into law that Juneteenth will be considered America’s second Independence Day. Juneteenth stands as a testament to unity and progress. It helps the American public reflect on past struggles and celebrate the determination that led to freedom. As the importance of Juneteenth continues to grow, it helps us have those essential conversations about historical issues and understanding. This day should serve as a call to remember, learn, and continue to work towards a society that values justice, diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.



## Pride Month

Pride Month, held in June of each year, is a lively celebration of the LGBTQ+ community, rooted in past struggles and future hopes. It all started with the Stonewall Uprising in June 1969, a turning point that led to the global festivities that we see today that promote diversity, inclusion, and the ongoing fight for equal rights. Pride Month isn't just about colorful parades and parties, it holds a deeper meaning. It's a chance to look back on the progress made in LGBTQ+ rights, honoring those who challenged norms. For people who identify with LGBTQ+, it's an empowering moment for them to be themselves without fear, finding acceptance and belonging.

Pride Month is also a learning opportunity for everyone else that enables conversations about the challenges LGBTQ+ people continue to face. Pride Month is making its way into all sorts of areas, such as businesses and politics. More companies and governments are flying the rainbow flag, signaling a commitment to equality and diversity - but there's more work to be done. The road ahead involves addressing issues like conversion therapy, transgender rights, and continuing to create safe spaces.



## The CDIO's Opinion on the Supreme Court Ruling on Race-Based Admissions.

In an op-ed titled, [Attacking diversity, equity, and inclusion hurts all Americans](#), SHU Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer Maurice Nelson discussed his opinions on the impacts of the recent United States Supreme Court decision that struck down race-based affirmative action policies and requirements weighted as factors in college and university admission. Nelson discussed the decision in the broader context of what he described as attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

[Visit the CT Mirror website here to read the full article.](#)

# Inclusive Excellence

## Spotlights-Individuals

**SHU community members prioritizing inclusive excellence in their lives.**

### Faculty Grants

*As reported by SHU's Marketing and Communications Department*

Two Sacred Heart University professors, Jennifer Phaiah and Thomas Lee Morgan, have been awarded a combined \$77,000 in subaward grant funding from the University of Connecticut for research projects focused on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education.

Jennifer Phaiah's study, "Teachers' and Leaders' Perceptions, Turnover and Supply," will look at the viewpoints of public school teachers and administrators regarding the challenges they've encountered during the pandemic and the support available to them. The research aims to provide these educators with a platform to share their experiences and shed light on post-pandemic education.

Thomas Lee Morgan's project, "Identifying Effective and Equitable Socio-Emotional Supports for Students and Educators," seeks to understand how school districts used the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds to hire staff or support structures during and after the pandemic. Morgan's research focuses on addressing differences in outcomes for marginalized communities and aims to amplify the voices of those affected to inform more effective support strategies.

Both projects contribute to our understanding of the challenges and opportunities in education brought about because of the pandemic, providing insights for educators, administrators, and policymakers.



## Dr. Sue Goncalves recieves Certification

In June, Dr. Sue Gocalves, associate professor in the Davis and Henley College of Nursing, graduated from the AACN-sponsored Diversity Leadership Institute, which centers on DEI in academic nursing. The program equips diversity officers in nursing education with strategies to enhance self-awareness and leadership abilities. Participants create diversity plans and present them for certification upon course completion. The June conference spanned two days and featured innovative projects promoting inclusive excellence in nursing. Dr. Goncalves successfully finished the six-month intensive program, involving monthly mentor meetings and capstone presentations by over 40 participants.



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## Anne Burmeister Presents at 2nd DEI Convening sponsored by the SHU Farrington College of Education & Human Development

Following an impactful inaugural convening of DEI leadership in February of 2023, Kristin Rainville, associate professor of educational literacy and leadership at SHU and co-leader Yvonne Temple, supervisor of diversity, equity, inclusion and engagement for the Stratford Board of Education again led a second convening in May of 2023. The Office for Inclusive Excellence, Anne Burmeister led a working session for the convening called, "How to Make a Policy. Tips for P-12 Policies Supporting Transgender Non-binary Students." The session focused on how to identify the appropriate governance mechanism, tips for writing policy and provided policy samples. OIE provided participants additional resources to take back to their districts. Maurice Nelson, OIE Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer and Professor Lee Morgan, Director of Inclusive Excellence Education, and Assistant Professor of Educational Literacy and Leadership also participated in the convening and provided their insights to other working sessions.





# Contact Us

[Visit our webpage](#)

[Meet the OIE Team](#)

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**Follow us on Instagram:** @shu\_inclusion @shu\_multiculturalcenter\_

Have any stories or upcoming events you'd like us to include in our next issue? [Submit your stories here!](#)



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