Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Mission Statement

WMU envisions an academic community that affirms the dignity, value, and uniqueness of each person. As such, we intend to pursue the recruitment, retention, and promotion of a more diverse administration, staff, faculty, and student body. We will accomplish this by addressing the causes and sources of structural inequalities and changing the decision-making processes that prevent “genuine participation” of all university constituents.

Everyone Counts Diversity Learning Communities

These communities were established to engage faculty, part-time instructors, staff members and graduate assistants in project development and discussions that focus on diversity. These learning communities serve to equip participants with the skills needed to implement course objectives and campus programming centered on diversity, in addition to seeking ways to address any institutional systemic barriers. Each year, participants focus on a topic area in diversity. In this year-long experience, participants will engage in regular meetings within a diverse group of 8-12 people who discuss literature related to their diversity topic area, share best practices, listen to guest speakers, attend workshops and conferences, and engage in dialogue around challenges and opportunities. The learning communities are designed for both personal and institutional transformation.

Real Talk Diversity Series

At Western Michigan University’s Real Talk Diversity Series, participants interact and learn about the experiences and perspectives of individuals and groups from many cultural backgrounds. Each Real Talk event includes discussion of the intersection of multiple identities. The series provides a forum to engage in and discuss critically many pertinent issues, serving as a bridge to the entire campus community. The Real Talk Diversity Series serves as a catalyst to promote, celebrate, and increase awareness about diversity at WMU, to recognize cultural differences as well as similarities, and to encourage cross-cultural interaction. These goals are accomplished through a number of different program formats including awareness raising programs, stimulating dialogue, and eliminating false ideologies.

Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration

Western Michigan University partners with the Kalamazoo community, including Bronson Healthcare, Borgess Healthcare, the City of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo Public Schools, Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Northside Ministerial Alliance, and Volunteer Kalamazoo to honor the legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Some of these events include a convocation, a commemorative march, a day of service, a social justice book bowl, a poetry competition, an art competition, and educational programs and presentations. WMU's Martin Luther King Jr. Committee is dedicated to furthering social justice by engaging in meaningful education, research and service initiatives, and coordinating events throughout the campus and Kalamazoo communities. Through its various outreach programs, workshops and events, the MLK Committee acknowledges that the University community must be provided with the tools that will enable us to participate actively in the urgent struggle for social justice that is ongoing in our region, our nation, and our world.

Kalamazoo Promise Scholars Program

The Kalamazoo Promise Scholars Program serves scholarship recipients attending Western Michigan University. Students served by this program are offered guidance to navigate the academic and personal challenges of campus life and provided access to professional development opportunities to increase retention and graduation rates. Students are connected with campus and community resources that build a solid network for students to guide them in their pursuit of their bachelors’ degrees and to maximize their success after college.