



PROVIDENCE COLLEGE

IDEI in Our Community

MAY 2022 - ISSUE NO. 9

A Message from Jackie Peterson

MS. JACQUELINE PETERSON, SPECIAL ADVISOR TO THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

We, in the office of Institutional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (IDEI) are delighted to share the final **IDEI In our Community Newsletter** for the academic year. We thank you for taking time throughout the year to read and engage with each issue of the newsletters.

In this issue, Dr. Alyssa Lopez, assistant professor of History, offers a brief history of Juneteenth, which is a holiday celebrated annually on June 19 to commemorate the emancipation of enslaved people. Juneteenth is now observed by many institutions nationally and will be observed by Providence College beginning June 19, 2023.

Also, included in this issue is a link to the **Continuing Our Journey Report, May 2022** from Rev. Kenneth Sicard, O.P., president of Providence College. It is an update from his May 2021 report and highlights the various initiatives occurring campus-wide to advance the diversity, equity, and inclusion goal in the **PC200 Strategic Plan**. We have established a DEI framework of five focus pillars that have guided important structural shifts and changes in policies and practices, informed new internal initiatives, and created spaces for challenging conversations. This is progress! However, there is much more needed to build the institutional infrastructure necessary for our efforts to have longevity and sustainability.

Throughout the year, many faculty, staff, and students have moved from DEI commitment to DEI action, sharing in PC's journey toward becoming an equitable and anti-racist institution with the hospitality that welcomes and embraces all. In the coming years, as a community, we must continue to work together and to hold each other accountable for advancing the mission-driven aspirations of Providence College. As Fr. Sicard stated in his 2021 Inaugural Address, "As members of a Catholic and Dominican college, we should not rest until every member of our community feels the love, respect, and dignity to which we are all entitled as people created in the image and likeness of God."

I wish you a safe, healthy, and relaxing summer.

Kind regards,
Jackie

A Brief History of JUNETEENTH

A HISTORICAL RECOUNT BY DR. ALYSSA LOPEZ

Legend has it that General Gordon Granger of the United States Army marched into Galveston, Texas in June 1865 and loudly proclaimed that all enslaved people in the state were formally free, by order of the federal government. Some claim that he gave the **June 19th** order from the balcony of his villa, while others argue that he traveled to a number of key political and social locations in the city citing the law. Regardless of his method, the enslaved people of Texas were the last in the former confederacy to learn of their emancipation from bondage.

The Civil War had been officially over since April, but Confederate soldiers in Texas continued to fight until May. When the final surrender occurred in early June, United States forces moved in to restore order – many white Confederate soldiers were wreaking havoc on the state after their loss by rioting, looting, and targeting Black people – and share General Order No. 3, reiterating the freedom of the state's few hundred thousand enslaved men, women, and children. The Emancipation Proclamation, issued two years earlier in 1863, had already legally mandated this freedom, but the news spread slow and was ignored by the Confederacy. Even those enslaved who had heard the news may have only shared it with gleeful but hushed whispers, fearful of violent reprisals.

The first Juneteenth celebration took place in Austin, Texas the year following Granger's announcement. Most gatherings took place in parks, sometimes on land bought outright by a local Black community because of segregation laws, and involved hundreds of people commemorating the event. Community members came together to meticulously plan, advertise, and then joyfully celebrate freedom. Even then, in this post-Emancipation, Reconstruction-driven society, open celebration of the holiday could be a dangerous decision. White people in Texas and throughout other areas in the South where Juneteenth was first celebrated, were resistant to any form of Black equality and to any changes to what they considered their way of life, namely slavery and an inherently unequal racial hierarchy, for which they had gone to war and ceded from the nation to protect. **In this atmosphere, the significance of the celebration becomes all the more clear.**



Alyssa Lopez, Ph.D
Assistant Professor,
Department of History and Classics



Black Americans who commemorate(d) Juneteenth were not necessarily celebrating the supposedly natural arc of justice in the United States. **Rather, the holiday marks an important moment in African American history, in which formerly enslaved people were able to experience the fullness of their humanity.** In the aftermath of the Order, freed people sought to legalize their marriages, find family members who had been sold far away during slavery, engage in wage work, and attend schools. These and other choices, which were made possible because of freedom, are at the core of Juneteenth and are joined by remembrances of the resiliency of Black people in the nation's history.

Indeed, Juneteenth celebrations also serve as moments to honor Black history and historical actors. The Emancipation Proclamation was often read aloud, events were held at historically significant sites like churches, and the singing of the Black national anthem, James Weldon Johnson's "Lift Every Voice and Sing," was on the day's list of programs. This connection between the past and the present, linking the moment of belated emancipation to contemporary Black life, persists. **Juneteenth is both an honoring of the past and a celebration of Black life.**

For generations, Juneteenth celebrations have included parties in public parks, parades through city streets, and barbecues and fireworks in family members' backyards. This intimate holiday, shared mostly among Black communities in various states throughout the country, has only recently come to national attention. In the summer of 2021, just about a year after protestors took to many city streets demanding accountability in the police murders of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd, President Biden made Juneteenth a federal holiday, marking this history as one of national importance.

But what does Juneteenth mean for the nation? For those new to the holiday, especially white Americans, Juneteenth can serve as an important moment of reflection on American history. As a commemoration of a belated announcement of freedom in tandem with a celebration of the richness of Black history in this country, Juneteenth encourages a confrontation of the contradictions inherent in America. As a second Independence Day of sorts, **Juneteenth is a reminder of the important contributions Black people have made to this nation, but also the enduring struggles of those same people.** There is certainly more work left for the nation to achieve the full equality promised at its founding.



JUNETEENTH



IDEI Progress Report

AN UPDATE FROM FATHER SICARD AND CABINET



CONTINUING OUR JOURNEY
TOWARD BECOMING THE BELOVED COMMUNITY

Rev. Kenneth R. Sicard, O.P. '78, '82G
President, Providence College

April 2022

In the effort to become the Beloved Community that Providence College aspires to be, Father Sicard has shared an updated progress report on various IDEI initiatives.

The April 2022 Continuing Our Journey Toward Becoming The Beloved Community report addresses the IDEI five focus areas. The report provides updates on what the college has accomplished and the work that still needs to be done.

Focus Areas for Institutional Diversity

1. Structural Diversity, Access and Equity

• Goal: Maintain continuous improvement in the recruitment, retention and matriculation of historically underrepresented students, faculty, administration and staff.

2. Institutional Infrastructure

• Goal: Establish a process for ongoing monitoring, assessment, evaluation and revision of College practices, policies, procedures and physical spaces to ensure equitable and inclusive outcomes

3. Climate and Intergroup Relations

• Goal: Create and sustain an institutional environment of respect and civility that "promotes the common good (and) the human flourishing of each member of the campus community" through opportunities for diverse interactions, community dialogue and ongoing intercultural learning

4. Formal and Informal Curricula

• Goal: Assure diverse perspectives and inclusive pedagogies in the context of courses, programs, teaching, learning approaches and experiences across all academic and non-academic programs.

5. Student Learning and Development

• Goal: Create opportunities and experiences that prepare students to actively engage in an increasingly diverse, inter-connected, global society.



LGBTQ+ Awareness Week Celebration

DR. CHRISTOPHER ARROYO, PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY

During the week of April 4th SHEPARD (Stopping Homophobia Ending Prejudice and Restoring Dignity), PC's student LGBTQ+ group, and BOP (Board of Programmers) hosted "LGBTQ+ Awareness Week" at Providence College. This is the fourth time that the two student groups have hosted such a week of programming. The first was held in the spring of 2018 under the name "PC's Proud," but as of spring of 2019, the Office of Mission & Ministry prohibited the student groups from using that name.

The events centered around communicating a message of respect, acceptance, and love for all members of the PC community and especially for members of the Friar Family who identify as LGBTQ+. The Kick Off event on Monday, April 4th, was held in McPhail's and featured food, drink, music, and arts and crafts affirming of LGBTQ+ identities. Tuesday was the "How to Be a Better Ally" Workshop, which draws on the Catholic ideals of love of all human beings and universal human dignity in order to explain how members of the PC community can act and speak in ways supportive and affirming of LGBTQ+ individuals. Wednesday's "Tell Your Story" event gave members of the PC LGBTQ+ community the opportunity to share with others what has made them who they are today. The event gave those who spoke the opportunity to talk about the hardships they faced as queer folks, and it gave all in attendance the opportunity to bond over the hardships members of the LGBTQ+ community face on our campus and to celebrate their resilience. Thursday evening was a screening of *Rent*, the film version of the musical by the same name, which tells the stories of eight individuals while within the context of the AIDS Crisis and the remarkable discrimination and oppression members of the LGBTQ+ community faced during that crisis. Friday was the "Day of Silence Walk" where participants marched across campus in silence in order to protest the oppression and discrimination of queer people. The walk is in honor of Matthew Shepard, the young man who was brutally murdered in Wyoming in 1998 for being gay. The week concluded with a wonderful "Lavender Prom" in McPhail's where members of the LGBTQ+ community and their allies had the opportunity to socialize and dance in a safe space while celebrating the week's accomplishments.

"LGBTQ+ Awareness Week" is an important week of programming on our campus because it serves as a powerful reminder of the ways in which queer members of the Friar Family are often marginalized and made invisible on our campus. **But the events—and the students who organize and participate in the—serve as a powerful reminder of the importance of members of the LGBTQ+ community to the Friar Family and of our obligation to make our campus a place where all are welcomed, affirmed, and loved regardless of sexual orientation, sex, gender, or gender identity.**



#weloveyoumoore

As a multi-purpose, culturally represented and student-centered space focused on the arts, culture, social justice, and belonging, Moore Hall is a welcoming & inviting space to all of the PC community as well as the surrounding community!



BY
STUDENTS



FOR
STUDENTS

THE CENTER @ MOORE HALL



Highlights from the New
MOORE REWIND
A Yearly Recap



Celebrating YOU!

A MESSAGE FROM THE IDEI TEAM

The past four years have been nothing but ordinary. After years of hard work and many challenges, your undergraduate journey has come to an end. As you head off into the world, we hope you can use these odd years as an inspiration to continue to adapt, challenge, and advocate for what you need.

**From the IDEI Team,
Congratulations to
our 2022 Providence
College graduates!**



Created by:

Perla Castillo Calderon '20, '22G