A word from the Associate Vice Provost

Fred Rodriguez, Interim Associate Vice Provost

I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the Interim Associate Vice Provost for Diversity and Equity. I envision this appointment as an opportunity to work with the faculty and staff across campus with the overarching goal of continuing to enhance and strengthen our continued commitment to diversity and equity within the academic, research and service entities which encompass KU. In many respects, this is a challenging time for KU but also a time filled with potential and opportunity.

Within that spirit, I remain convinced that there are many positives across campus regarding our good work in the area of diversity — which have been and continue to be very responsive and supportive — that too often are well kept secrets. With your assistance I would like to begin sharing those “good things” with the university community and with our constituencies. Equally important, collectively, we must seek avenues and answers that will continue to move us forward in this increasingly important component of our university.

This office will continue to seek coordination, communication and clarification of KU’s continued commitment to diversity in its faculty, staff, students and academic program offerings. A hallmark of a premier university is one in which all students, faculty and staff learn to live and interact in harmony within an increasingly complex and diverse society. An educational experience that is respectful, appreciative and one that accepts multiple perspectives and viewpoints is essential. In essence, diversity matters.

As we reflect upon our own role and responsibility at KU, it remains paramount that diversity and equity have a prominent position in our conversations, planning and initiatives.

It is my goal to provide leadership in promoting such an environment but I will solicit and seek your assistance as we work together to make KU a better place for everyone.

You have my very best wishes for a great academic year and I look forward to working with you.

Dr. Fred Rodriguez, Interim Associate Vice Provost for Diversity and Equity & Executive Director of the KU Multicultural Scholars Program
DIVERSITY COUNCILS

There are three diversity councils at KU that meet on a regular basis and have several planned activities for the academic year. If you would like to be added to their distribution list for upcoming events and meetings, the three presidents are listed with their contact information. (A special note of congratulations to the Native Faculty and Staff Council for their recent approval as a recognized Council at KU.)

BLACK FACULTY AND STAFF COUNCIL
President: Karen Hester, Law School
Contact: khester@ku.edu

LATINO FACULTY AND STAFF COUNCIL
President: Alex Castro-Hernandez
Contact: iamalex@ku.edu

NATIVE FACULTY AND STAFF COUNCIL
President: Patti Wakolee
Contact: pwakolee@ku.edu

THE SCHOLARSHIP OF DIVERSITY: A SYNOPSIS

Hurtado and colleagues note that three themes emerge from research studies that explore the issue of diversity on a university campus:

1. Individuals who are educated in diverse settings are far more likely to work and live in racially and ethnically diverse environments after they graduate.
2. Individuals who study and discuss issues related to race and ethnicity in their academic courses and interact with a diverse set of peers in college are better prepared for life in an increasingly complex and diverse society.
3. Increasing the compositional diversity of the students, faculty and staff is essential to create a truly diverse learning environment.


LANGSTON HUGHES VISITING PROFESSORSHIP

The Langston Hughes Visiting Professorship was established at the University of Kansas in 1977 in honor of the African American poet, playwright and fiction writer who lived in Lawrence from 1903 to 1916. Over the years, the visiting professorship has attracted prominent or emerging ethnic minority scholars to the university campus, involving a broad range of disciplines and academic departments/schools.

This year’s recipient is Professor Adam Banks from Syracuse University. He will begin his visiting professorship in the spring of 2010. His campus-wide lecture has been scheduled for February 25, 2010. We will feature Professor Banks in an upcoming issue of Diversity Outlook.