Happy New Year!

As we start the spring semester, I am excited to share some of the initiatives we are pursuing—and I invite you to join us as we collectively make KU a better place for all. First, if there is an opportunity for professional development in your school, department or unit, please consider hosting the Interactive Theatre Troupe. The Troupe actors are currently performing “A Case of the Mondays,” which highlights the complexities of change in the workplace. A session with your staff and the Troupe is a great opportunity to engage the participants in questions that often arise in the work environment.

Plans are underway for the inaugural Spring Symposium on the Scholarship of Diversity and we invite research/scholarship to be shared in a poster session. We have formed a steering committee for the review of Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and plan to enlist several sub-groups to identify and address areas of the campus community to ensure full compliance. The Langston Hughes Visiting Professorship Lecture is scheduled for February 24th. The Diversity Planning Task Force will complete its work this spring and present a set of recommendations for the Office of Diversity and Equity to pursue. Finally, we are coordinating with various campus entities to fill the recruitment coordinator/ambassador position in Southwest Kansas.

I wish you an enjoyable and gratifying spring semester.

Contact: 864-4904 or fredrod@ku.edu

SHARE YOUR RESEARCH: POSTER SESSION

There is still time to submit your research for selection to the first Spring Symposium on the Scholarship of Diversity, March 14-15, 2011. To supplement the keynote presentations by national scholars and sessions on the themes: 1) structure/access; 2) climate; 3) curriculum; and 4) institutional transformation/reform, presenters are solicited for the March 14th evening poster session. Submission deadline is Feb. 10. Participants will display research in exhibition format. For more information: www.diversity.ku.edu.

SIGN UP FOR CLASS ON DIFFICULT DISCUSSIONS

Thursday afternoons, 1:30-3:30, Feb. 24-April 6 (no class Spring Break week), join in this exploration of the polarization of our society and how to deal more effectively with breakdowns in civil discourse, specifically within higher education. Participants will learn effective communication strategies and participate in interactive theatre, with the goal of creating safer places for the free exchange of ideas that are more inclusive of voices previously absent or excluded.

Enroll at difficult discussions.

NOMINATE THE 2012 LANGSTON HUGHES PROFESSOR

Faculty may submit nominations for the Langston Hughes Visiting Professorship for Spring 2012, but coordination at the chair/dean level is strongly recommended. A unit may nominate more than one candidate. Send nominations (letter from the candidate, resume, support letter from chair/dean of KU unit) to Fred Rodriguez, 250 Strong Hall, by Monday, January 24, 2011.

The Langston Hughes Professor teaches two courses and gives a public lecture in their discipline; they receive a stipend, travel allowance, and furnished apartment. The professorship, in a range of disciplines, honors Langston Hughes, the African American writer who lived in Lawrence ages 1 to 12 (1903-1916).
KU COORDINATION OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The ADA Review Task Force **Steering Committee** will coordinate and facilitate efforts across campus in an ongoing, systematic process, enlisting various sub-groups:

Steve Ramirez, ADA Coordinator (HR/EO) Co-chair; Fred Rodriguez, Interim Associate Vice Provost (D&E), Co-Chair; Ola Faucher, Director HR/EO; Diane Goddard, Vice Provost for Administration & Finance; Lisa Hoebelheinrich, Associate General Counsel; Donna Hultine, Director, Parking & Transit; Julie Loats, Director, Enterprise Applications & Services, Information Technology; Mary Ann Rasnak, Director, Academic Achievement and Access Center; Barbara Romzek, Senior Vice Provost, Academic Affairs; and Barry Swanson, Interim Associate Vice Provost for Operations.

Several **sub-group**s have been established with a designated group leader: academic accommodations, employment, facilities, IT, parking & transportation, and student services/programs. Administrators, faculty, staff and students will serve on the sub-groups.

THE SCHOLARSHIP OF DIVERSITY: A SYNOPSIS

The benefits of Universal Design and the remaining challenges

Universal design was originally aimed at innovations in architecture, community spaces, and products, but today it is about creating services and products from their origination in ways that will benefit the widest array of users, including those with disabilities, and without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

Universal design has made a difference for all of us: services and tools that enhance accessibility invariably improve all of our lives. Curb cuts, automatic doors, speakerphones, text-to-speech capabilities, ergonomic keyboards, video captioning, zooming and other movements on smart-phones and tablets, and motion-sensor lighting—although many of these improvements were originally driven by the needs of those with disabilities to participate or be included, the broader community has benefited enormously from the increased flexibility and convenience universal design has brought.

For those with disabilities, however, universal design is far more than a matter of flexibility or convenience; they face significant barriers in accessing the innovative and valuable services and tools essential for daily life.

With more scholarly materials and even textbooks online, the need for universal design becomes even greater to ensure that these electronic materials are organized and presented in an accessible way. In addition, internet-based courses and applications have created a digital divide for many students, faculty and staff who have disabilities due to vision, hearing, motor skills, cognition, or photoepilepsy.