

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Stephens College

Updated March 2021

Introduction

Stephens College is committed to becoming a more diverse, equitable and inclusive community.

At Stephens, we believe that diversity engages the full range of human difference, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, social class, geographic origin, veteran status, physical/cognitive/ linguistic ability/disability or attributes, religious or ethical values system, national origin, and political beliefs.

We believe that equity requires the assumption of institutional responsibility for the elimination of inequality in our procedures, processes and distribution of resources. We recognize that we cannot adequately assure equity in our community until we acknowledge and understand the impacts of historical discrimination and exclusion, the root causes of outcome disparities within our society.

We believe that inclusion means that we intentionally invite and recruit traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into our processes, activities, and decision/policy making in ways that share power and ensure equal access to opportunities and resources.

In 2019, Stephens established a new Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, charged with leading our collective efforts to support and sustain a community dedicated to social justice and welcoming to all. In September 2019, the College hired alumna Shaashawn Dial as its inaugural DEI Director, a member of the Senior Leadership team reporting directly to the President. During her first year on campus, Dial dedicated herself to listening and learning, engaging with all College constituencies, providing extensive training, and becoming a well-recognized and respected presence in our community.

In the summer of 2020, in the throes of the COVID epidemic, Dial joined Title IX Coordinator Shannon Walls and ADA Coordinator Sady Mayer Strand to form the Offices of Equity + Compliance, dedicated to ensuring an environment that is free from harassment, discrimination, abuse, intimidation and/or violence. (See <https://www.stephens.edu/about-stephens/equity-offices/>). The Equity + Compliance Offices distribute announcements about social justice training and events through email and posts to campus calendars and social media.

The Equity Offices were appointed by President Dianne Lynch to lead the efforts to distribute CARES Act Student Emergency funds to the student body. After equal initial grants were made to all eligible students, the committee was given \$176,583.00 to award to students with

financial challenges resulting from COVID-19. As of mid-March, the Committee has awarded \$170,200 to 169 students to be used for expenses related to food, housing, course materials, technology, healthcare and childcare that stem from the pandemic crisis.

All new student orientations include presentations from the three Equity + Compliance offices on rights, responsibilities, and reporting (3 Rs of Equity). Online training programs are required for all members of campus community with modules focused on Harassment and Discrimination, Title IX Rights and Reporting, and Accommodating Students with Disabilities in the Classroom.

The Title IX Office is hosting a series of Awareness Campaigns/Events throughout 2020-21. The first was an Empowerment Bracelet Making event for students in October 2020 to raise awareness for Domestic Violence/ Interpersonal Violence Awareness Month. Additional events were scheduled in January 2021 for Stalking Awareness Month and April 2021 for Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month.

Shaashawn and Shannon also relocated their offices on a temporary basis to the Student Development Office, where they have become valued and valuable members of the team. Shannon is focused on managing the policies, procedures, and protocols on health screenings, pet forms, and residence life housing violations. Shaashawn is contributing her varied skill sets to coordination of student organizations and student programming.

In August 2020, the College adopted a new policy on Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination for All Students, Faculty, Staff and Third-Parties.

<https://www.stephens.edu/about-stephens/equity-offices/>

Strategic Planning

In January 2021, the DEI Office launched a six-month strategic planning process that will engage the entire Stephens community in an exploration of its understandings of and commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion. The DEI Strategic Plan, to be completed this summer, will serve as a framework within which the College will establish and confirm its priorities, commit its resources, measure its outcomes, and annually report its progress to all of its stakeholders.

The DEI Strategic Plan will map to the College's mission, vision, and institutional Strategic Plan:

Mission:

Learn. Grow. Lead.

Vision:

Inspired by its tradition as an undergraduate women's college, Stephens College engages lifelong learners in an educational experience characterized by intellectual rigor, creative

expression, and professional practice, supported by accomplished faculty, talented staff, and engaged alumnae/alumni. Graduates of Stephens College are educated in the liberal arts, informed by diverse perspectives, and committed to lives of leadership, integrity and service.

Priorities:

The College’s Strategic Plan is organized around six “Areas of Excellence” that help to guide and focus its annual priorities and investments. The College has adopted a similar structure for its DEI Strategic Plan:

- Delivering on Our Promise: Academic Excellence and Innovation
- Growing Smart and Strong: Enrollment, Persistence and Completion
- Supporting Each Student’s Success
- Preparing Graduates for the Lives That Await Them
- Campus Matters: Sustaining a Vibrant Living-and-Learning Environment
- Investing in Our Own: Cultivating and Supporting Great Faculty and Staff

Strategic Commitment: Academic Excellence and Innovation

At Stephens College, we believe that academic excellence and innovation require a teaching-and-learning environment informed and inspired by a multitude of voices and perspectives. It is not only our goal but our obligation to recruit and retain students and faculty who can contribute to and benefit from that rich mix of intellect and lived experience. At minimum, the College is determined that its student body and faculty will reflect the diversity of the local, state and regional communities of which it is a part; it aspires to becoming a community in which diversity is not just a target to be reached but a culture that inspires, defines and sustains us.

Progress is measured by improvement, defined as positive change from current state. Clearly, there is much work to be done:

Students, Fall 2019 – Fall 2020

In Fall 2019, about 70 percent of undergraduates and 78 percent of graduate students self-identified as White/non-Hispanic. Of those who identified as non-White:

- 13 percent of undergraduates and 8 percent of graduates identified as Black or African-American;
- 5 percent of undergrads and 6 percent of graduate students identified as Hispanic of any race;
- less than 1 percent of students in either group identified as American Indian/Alaskan or Hawaiian/Pacific Islander;
- about 1 percent of undergrads and 2 percent of graduate students identified as Asian;
- less than 1 percent of both groups identified as non-resident citizen or undocumented individual;

- about 9 percent of undergrads and 4 percent of graduate students identified as two or more races; and
- 1 percent of both groups identified as unknown.

In Fall 2020, 68 percent of undergraduates and 78 percent of graduate students self-identified as White/non-Hispanic. Of those who identified as non-White:

- 11 percent of undergraduates and 8 percent of graduates identified as Black or African-American;
- 4 percent of undergrads and 6 percent of graduate students identified as Hispanic of any race;
- less than 1 percent of students in either group identified as American Indian/Alaskan or Hawaiian/Pacific Islander;
- about 9 percent of undergrads and 2 percent of graduate students identified as two or more races;
- about 1 percent of undergrads and 3 percent of graduate students identified as Asian;
- less than 1 percent of both groups identified as non-resident citizen or undocumented individual; and
- 7 percent of undergrads and 3 percent of graduate students identified as unknown

Faculty/Staff Diversity 2020

- **Faculty.** About 22 percent of the total adjunct faculty and 11 percent of the total full-time faculty self-identify as non-White.
- **Staff.** The College employs 140 staff and 16 “other” workers in specialized positions (contract, consulting, etc). Of the staff, 81 percent identify as White/Non-Hispanic; 11 percent identify as Black/African-American; 4 percent identify as Hispanic/Latino ; 2 percent identify as two or more races, and less than 1 percent identifies as Asian.

Administration Diversity 2020

- **In 2019, of the College’s leadership team,** 81 percent identified as White/non-Hispanic and 19 percent identified as Black or African-American. In 2020, 75 percent identified as White/non-Hispanic and 25 percent identified as Black or African American.

Teaching and Learning

The College continues to reexamine and reenvision a curriculum across disciplines that embodies the richness and diversity of the world around us. Faculty offered five new courses in

the Fall of 2020 and six in the Spring of 2021 focused on diversity, equity and inclusion issues and experiences (including Multicultural Counseling, LGBTQ Cinema, Afrofuturism, Hip Hop/Trap Feminism, DIY:DEI, and Social Justice, Activism, Sustaining Community, among others).

Additional courses across disciplines continue to energetically integrate DEI topics and speakers into broader coursework, including Contemporary Film, Women's Studies, Education, English/Creative Writing, Cultural Psychology, Healthcare and Performing Arts (See Appendix A).

Strategic Commitment: Supporting Each Student's Success

The Office of DEI hosted twice a month "Stephens Womxn of Color Connect" Zoom-Ins from March 2020 until December 2020. Starting spring term 2021, the Zoom-in is held once a month on the last Wednesday of the month. Marlena Thompson, Admissions Office Coordinator, helps set up the meetings. At least four staff members and two faculty members have engaged with students. Four of the five women of color on the Board of Trustees have engaged with students through the twice a month connection opportunity.

Strategic Commitment: Enrollment, Persistence and Completion

The College continues to work with donors and alumnae to establish scholarships dedicated to providing opportunity to students from historically underrepresented groups (HUG). In 2020, an existing scholarship was redefined to provide support to HUG students, and another donor informed the College of her intention to dedicate her estate gift to the College to HUG scholarships.

The College also provides a full scholarship annually through the Columbia Public Schools' "Growing Our Own Teachers" program designed to draw teachers from diverse backgrounds in the public schools. The student earns an undergraduate degree in Education from Stephens debt-free and pledges to return to the public schools to teach for a minimum of five years. In addition, the College provides a full-tuition scholarship to a student selected in partnership with the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

The Director of DEI works closely with other offices and organizations to identify available scholarships for HUG students and to distribute that information to students and faculty. In the Fall of 2020, for example, she distributed SHPEP information (Summer Health Professions education Program) and information about the Flourish Scholarship (offered by the Flourish program at Veterans United (<https://www.allyouthflourish.org/about-flourish/>)).

Strategic Commitment: Sustaining a Vibrant Living-and-Learning Environment

The College's ADA Coordinator, Sady Mayer Strand, works closely with Stephens students and employees who need support and accommodations to address disabilities. The number of students seeking ADA assistance in the Fall of 2020 was the highest on college record.

One of the College's most pressing challenges is the degree to which its facilities are not easily accessible to individuals with disabilities. While it is possible to navigate a pathway to most campus spaces, it is the College's goal over time to provide all individuals with easy, clear, convenient and safe access to all areas of campus.

Strategic Commitment: Investing in People

Training. The College continues to fund and provide programming, training and special events designed to engage the Stephens community in discussion of DEI issues and experiences. They have included:

Summer 2020:

The Think. Speak. Do. Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Summer Series that DEI Director Shaashawn Dial presented on Wednesdays for nine weeks, June 17 through August 19. Topics included humility vs cultural competency; defining isms; implicit/unconscious bias; intersectionality; allyism; anti-blackness; white supremacy; and sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation and attraction. The webinars drew significant audiences from across the College's stakeholder groups, including students, employees, alumnae, community members, administrators, and Trustees. They are available for viewing on the DEI Webpage: <https://www.stephens.edu/about-stephens/equity-offices/diversity-equity-inclusion/>

Stephens College MLK Celebration, January 28, 2021

In addition to local and regional MLK celebrations, Stephens College presented its own public MLK event on January 28. Planned and moderated by DEI Director Shaashawn Dial, the program included a welcome by Alicia Sparer, Assistant Director of Student Success Center, student artwork, a concert by harpist Charles Overton, a keynote address by poet and writer Julia Mallory and closing remarks by a student leader.

The Human Library, January-February 2021

Members of the Stephens community will be invited to serve as 'books' and/ or 'readers' as part of the Human Library events by Services for Independent Living (SIL), Journey Towards Inclusive Excellence, and Daniel Boone Library. The organizers are focused on securing 'books' – people with the specific identities / lived experience willing to answer questions. Once all the 'books' have been secured, the organizers will send out information on how the general public can RSVP to attend as 'readers' aka participants.

DEI Training Series, February – May 2021

Person First Language, Etiquette, and the Medical and Social Model of Disability, February 10, 2021, 12:30 – 1:30 p.m. Facilitation by Jill McClintock, Education and Training Coordinator with Services for Independent Living (SIL)

Ungendering Allyship and Other LGBTQ Issues in the Workplace, February 24, 2021, 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.. Facilitation by Tracy Dais and Michaela Thompson of The Center Project.

Myths and Misconceptions, Invisible Disabilities including Mental Health Conditions, March 3, 2021, 12:30 – 1:30 p.m. Facilitation by Jill McClintock, Education and Training Coordinator with Services for Independent Living (SIL).

Dynamic Changes in the Multigenerational Workforce, March 31, 2021, 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.. Facilitation by Catherine Clements-Jenkins, MHRM, PHR, SHRM-CP. This session will provide a different lens on how we view and celebrate each generation.

Impact of COVID-19 and Independent Living Philosophy April 14, 2021, 12:30 – 1:30 p.m. Facilitation by Jill McClintock, Education and Training Coordinator with Services for Independent Living (SIL)

GROWTH is the new S.E.X.Y.! April 21, 2021, 12:30 – 1:30 p.m. Facilitation by Angie Harvey, Growthologist, on interactive and engaging virtual experience will leave you clear about four essential components of personal GROWTH & development.

Strategic Leadership

On July 2, 2020, the Stephens College Board of Trustees issued a statement on diversity, equity and inclusion, commenting on the events that had reenergized the Black Lives Matter movement across the nation and committing to specific action steps the College will take to increase racial and ethnic diversity on its campus.

A Note from Board Chair Mark Taylor:

MOVING FORWARD

As we begin to focus on the Board of Trustees Pledge and how we intend to assess our progress in the area of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, it is important to remember that the current Pledge should be a living document. That means it should be assessed annually and adjusted according to the College's successes and shortcomings when it comes to DEI.

If there is one thing history has taught us, it is that Stephens is a bit like a chameleon: It has made various adjustments when they were demanded by the changing times. Stephens has evolved from a two-year all-female institution that at one time had no minority students into a four-year undergraduate College that also offers graduate degrees and enrolls students of various races and ethnicities. It at one time taught women to fly airplanes, trained female equestrians and, now, is educating women and men in various fields of health science. The point is, times change and Stephens has always been brave enough to adjust to whatever the challenge of the day might be. Recent events have made it clear that some long overdue changes surrounding race need to take place, and that now is the time to do so. All of our best intentions and actions of the past concerning DEI aside, now is the time to see what we can do better, what new lens can we look through. The Board's Pledge is the first baby step toward that end.

As an alum and Board Chair, I am proud of the Board's pledge because I had a front row seat as I witnessed our Board members, who come from all over the country with different political and religious backgrounds, reach a consensus and produce this blueprint for change on our campus. Is it perfect? No. Did everyone agree 100 percent with every issue? No. Is it a solid foundation on which we can begin to do the difficult work surrounding DEI? I truly believe so. Why do I think so? Because we are Stephens.

Thank you all.

Stephens College Board of Trustees Statement on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The Stephens College Board of Trustees condemns the senseless killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Rayshard Brooks, Elijah McClain and so many unnamed Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC). Further, the Trustees condemn brutality and oppression of all marginalized groups, and particularly among the black community. We grieve with millions of Americans over these deaths while fully agreeing that sympathy and silence are not adequate responses. The Trustees urgently feel the responsibility to take necessary steps to identify and attack the types of systemic failings that have led to this moment.

The Board of Trustees is formulating immediate action plans with complete recognition our focus can't diminish with a few changes and high hopes. "As Frederick Douglass said, without struggle, there is no progress. Let's struggle together for our collective soul." So wrote Brian S. Lowery in a recent Washington Post column.*

Within the framework of the Board's policy and oversight responsibilities, the Board will do the hard and often uncomfortable work of educating itself and bringing needed changes to our institution. We recognize that going forward we need to act vigorously and intentionally.

To this end, and in full support of the actions that President Lynch and her team have taken and are planning to further address issues of diversity, equity and inclusion at Stephens College –

the immediate and initial action steps already identified by the Board's Executive Committee include:

1. The Board will engage in anti-racist** education for all of its members beginning this summer. This education will be a part of each of our meetings this academic year (2020/2021) as well as a permanent part of orientation for all members. Such training will be included in at least one meeting a year going forward.

About 25 percent of the members of the Board of Trustees participated in one or more of the Think.Speak.Do: Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Summer Series presented by DEI Director Shaashawn Dial every Wednesday for nine weeks. Dial also presented a DEI training session to the full Board during its October 2020 meeting. Board members will attend one or more of the six DEI training sessions to be offered during the Spring semester (see schedule, pp.6-7).

2. The Board will continually strive to be a more diverse and inclusive body by utilizing intentional traditional and non-traditional methods to attract and identify new board members during the recruitment process.

The Trusteeship Committee dedicates itself to identifying, recruiting and retaining Board members who bring a diverse array of experiences, perspectives and identities to the Board. Its formal matrix for assessing the Board's needs against a candidate's skills and experience includes age, race, gender, education, geography, professional experience and expertise, relationship to the College, Board experience, and military service

In 2019, the Board of Trustees included 19 members, 15 (79 percent) who self-identified as White, two (11 percent) who identified as Black or African-American, one who identified as Latino/Hispanic (5 percent) and one who identified as more than one race (5 percent). In 2020, the College's leadership team included 19 members, 14 (74 percent) who self-identified as White, three (16 percent) who self-identified as Black or African American, one who identified as Latino/Hispanic (5 percent) and one who identified as more than one race (5 percent).

3. The Board will require a Diversity Report during each Board meeting, to include necessary information that will help us understand whether we have made progress and which practices are succeeding so we can continue to set bigger goals and find better results.

This document represents the College's February 2021 Diversity Report.

4. The Board will approve funding for the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) as part of the College's annual budget and will receive an annual report of the uses of the funding to make real improvements in diversity, equity, and inclusion for students,

faculty, staff and alumni of Stephens College. Donations to be used for this initiative will be a priority for the Board.

The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion budget has been funded at levels identical to the Title IX office, with significant increases slated to be included in the FY22 budget. Additional funding for special purposes is available through the library, the Office of Academic Affairs, and the Office of the President:

- ***The Director can request the purchase of books and other materials through the library, which allows those materials to be available to all members of campus.***
- ***While there is little expectation of travel during FY21, the Director can request funds through the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs for professional development related to curriculum and instruction, and through the Office of the President for activities at which she represents the College.***
- ***Silissa Uriarte Smith and Anita Parran lead the first peer to peer social media fundraiser on behalf of the Office of DEI.***
- ***The DEI Office, with assistance from Kelly Hulse, Equestrian faculty, secured a donation to the DEI Office, which will be used for SOLS and BWE student organizations.***

5. The Board will increase scholarships for students of color by increasing the number of endowed scholarships that give priority to students of color.

As already noted, Board members have refocused their philanthropy to provide scholarship support to HUG students through an annual scholarship and an estate pledge.

6. The Board will work with the President and Advancement to prioritize fundraising for resources to be used to support an increase in the number of faculty members of color as recruitment opportunities present.

Stephens has established the hiring and retention of a diverse faculty as among its most important priorities. (See data on faculty diversity.) It is in the process of hiring a talent acquisition director in the Office of Human Resources to provide support and expertise.

7. The Board's Student Affairs Committee will organize more opportunities for Board members to meet with students while on campus, creating the time to understand better the experience of Stephens students.

The Student Development and Academic Affairs offices will plan and host a two-day Board visit in late Spring designed to provide Trustees with the opportunity to attend classes, athletics events, performances and special small-group meetings with students across campus. Participation will be possible in-person or online (as events allow).

The Director of DEI provided the Board with a 14-point list of possible student engagement opportunities in the Student Development Committee's monthly meeting in November 2020.

The Student Affairs Committee will hold workshops on Leadership Development for student organizations with a focus on organizational impact, member recruitment, and communications in March 2021.

Trustees welcome comments, suggestions and assistance from all our stakeholders to increase diversity, equity and inclusion. As a women's college, operating from a value of collective leadership, we believe that only by facing adversity together can we take the necessary steps to end the systemic oppression that has existed in our country and institutions forever. The process is worth the effort because, as Lowery wrote, we are, indeed, fighting for our collective soul