

TADOHE

Texas Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education

January 2022 Newsletter

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dr. Skyller Walkes, Ph.D.



Dear TADOHE Members and Friends,

As our current chapter President for the state of Texas, it is with tremendous enthusiasm that I welcome you to the Texas Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (TADOHE). As an organization, we aim to advance strategic collaboration, intentional partnerships, culturally responsive professional development opportunities, structured support, and of equal importance- a learning community with shared goals and affirming energy in support of the very critical work that we do. Simply, we aim to provide a space and platform that inspires activation around radical belonging.

Our efforts to underscore the spirit and implementation of best practices related to diversity, equity, accessibility, inclusion, and anti-racism, are all threaded by an overarching theme of justice and the promotion of radical belonging for all. Though these principles have come under recent scrutiny by some, we remain committed and unshakable in our dedication to promote the intentionally inclusive, equitable experiences of all individuals on our campuses, in our communities, and beyond. Students, faculty, and staff are each deserving of our attention through targeted programming, scaffolded initiatives, and outreach that centers their unique needs.

Furthermore, we recognize that our institutions don't exist independently of our extended communities. In many ways, our communities are and have been a life source for our institutions, whether or not historically recognized as such. Therefore, one of the goals of my leadership is to diminish the historic "town and gown" dynamic that exists between so many institutions and the communities in which they occupy space. Part of our intentional outreach will include honoring those communities, their resources, and community members in tangible ways. Corporate partnerships are another way to advance this goal. By engaging corporate partners through both membership and sponsorship opportunities, we will be able to create pipelines of support in our local communities across Texas.

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As we continue to fortify our mission, TADOHE will augment our relationships with minority-serving institutions, most specifically historically Black colleges or universities (HBCUs), across the state of Texas. The historical and continually felt significant impact of HBCUs among Black/African American-identifying professionals is undeniable. Through our recently launched TADOHE HBCU Consortium, we hope to better support each of our HBCU TADOHE institutional members by providing them with a clearly defined space in the diversity, accessibility, equity, inclusion conversation that addresses the interests and needs of our HBCU students, faculty, and staff. We reject colonial paradigms that fail to see HBCUs and Hispanic serving institutions (HSIs) as assets. Far too often, HBCUs have been left out of the DEAI conversations in post-secondary institutional spaces because of limited ideas of what and who should be the focus of diversity initiatives. TADOHE understands that not only should our minority-serving institutions be included but highlighted, as we can learn from our colleagues and the inimitable communal magic that they create in their learning communities.

Inclusive excellence is a charge assumed by TADOHE under the auspices of our umbrella organization, the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE). It is a charge to which we are both organizationally committed and accountable. With that, I am both honored and excited to continue our past work, while creating new opportunities through a vision that responds to the needs of this moment with a sense of purpose and urgency. Thank you for entrusting me with leading this very important charge.

Humbly Yours in Service,

Skyller Walkes, Ph.D.

President, Texas Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education

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