

## A Letter from the Chair

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Commission on Diversity & Racial Equality's (CODRE) Spring 2016 newsletter.

This semester, I would like to feature the student research projects funded by grants through CODRE. Our students are doing some amazing work! I am proud to present a short biography of our student award recipients with a brief summary of each research project funded this year.

### Student Research Project Funding

Each year, CODRE and the Office of Research Diversity Grants for Minority Undergraduate Students funds student research in the areas of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Student projects are supervised by faculty with institutional approval. Research projects may come from any discipline represented at UofL as long as the research emphasizes the STEM area. Piyani Gandhi received the CODRE Grant for Undergraduate Studies.

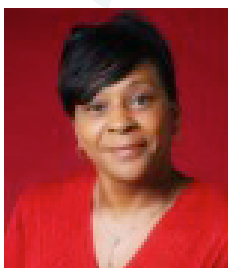
CODRE, in conjunction with the School for Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies (SIGS), underwrites grants for graduate student research that targets populations which are the focus of the commission – diverse, underserved, under-represented and vulnerable populations. Student research projects must be supervised by faculty with appropriate institutional approval. Research projects can come from any discipline represented at UofL. Graduate students receiving this award included Lauren Brown, Sujita Khanal, Yolanda Williams and Tiva VanCleave.

### Celeste Nichols Professional Development Award

CODRE was pleased to serve as a co-sponsor of the Dr. M. Celeste Nichols Professional Development Award. The award was presented to graduate students during the Fall 2015 Women's Empowerment Luncheon. The Commission on the Status of Women (COSW) and the Women's Center co-sponsored the event and the awards. Graduate student award recipients were Lauren L. Evanovich, Ph.D. Curriculum & Instruction; Nadia T. Nelson, Ph.D., Criminal Justice; and Heidi M. Williams, Ph.D., Sociology. We hope you enjoy reading all the research summaries.

I appreciate hearing from members of our campus communities about issues of interest related to racial and diversity equality at the university. I thank members of CODRE for their enthusiastic and supportive efforts, as well as volunteers who serve CODRE to make it the best it can be at UofL! We wish you an enjoyable summer and look forward to sharing the progress of CODRE with you in future newsletters and on our website.

**Vickie Bridgeman, M. Ed, MA** Chair,  
Commission on Diversity & Racial Equality  
(CODRE) Sr. Associate Director, Cultural Center



## Gaëtane Jean-Marie

Gaëtane Jean-Marie, Ph.D., is professor of educational leadership and department chair of Educational Leadership, Evaluation and Organizational Development in the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD). Her research focuses on leadership development and preparation in a global context, educational equity in K–12 schools, and women and leadership in P-20 system. To date, she has over 80 publications which include books, book chapters, and academic articles in numerous peer-reviewed journals. Her recent publication includes a co-edited book, *Comparative international perspectives on education and social change in developing and developed nations* (2015, Information Age). Actively involved nationally, she is the editor of the *Journal of School Leadership*, book series editor of *Advances in Educational Administration* with Emerald Publishing, and serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of Research on Leadership Education* and *Journal of Educational Administration*. She is also past president of the Leadership for Social Justice AERA/SIG and is the co-founder of *Advancing Women of Color in the Academy* (AWOCA), a scholarly inter-ethnic, trans-disciplinary, and cross-institutional network linked by research in the field of education and higher education dedicated to the advancement of women of color in the academy. On June 30, she will begin her new position of Dean of the College of Education and Richard O. Jacobson Endowed Chair of Leadership in Education at the University of Northern Iowa.

Congratulations on your recent promotion! We know you will tackle this new venture with the same passion and dedication you've displayed as part of our cohesive team and will quickly establish yourself as a valued administrator and endowed chair in your new role. Working alongside of you has been an honor and privilege, and we know you will continue to succeed in this new phase of your professional career. **Vickie Bridgeman**

## COMMISSIONER'S SPOTLIGHT



## 19 Years of the Transformation Tea

While women of color and their allies gather at the Transformation Tea on April 11, some fail to understand the necessity of the event, believing campus diversity is enough.



I remember like it was yesterday being called the “n” word as I exited the school bus. The bully's malicious move was deliberate. A colleague recently told me someone yelled the word at her while at another campus. The stings linger, forever shaping our worldview. I seldom tell my story, because not everyone can appreciate its significance or share its pain. The Tea provides such a place.

Not telling such stories denies their existence, allowing history to repeat itself. Sharing stories honors our past, acknowledges the racism we experience, and works toward better tomorrows.

In this spirit, the Transformation Tea continues. May there always be events that allow women to give voice to their experiences.

Respectfully, Selene Phillips, Chair, Transformation Tea

# SPOTLIGHT ON STUDENTS:



**Lauren Brown** is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who lives in Nashville, TN. She currently works as a therapist concentrating on trauma, sexual assault, intimate partner violence and

self-harm. She also teaches social work courses in the Kent School of Social Work. Through her work as a researcher she has primarily studied HIV in South Africa, the intersection of HIV and intimate partner violence, program evaluation in domestic violence shelters, and mental health and substance misuse among older adult minorities.

The CODRE grant specifically assisted Ms. Brown with the ability to collect data for her dissertation study over the intersection of HIV and intimate partner violence among HIV+ South African women. She collected data for this study in South Africa between June-December 2015. She is in the final stages of writing her dissertation and is slated to graduate with a PhD from the Kent school of Social Work this May. The CODRE grant enabled her to provide a risk assessment and safety planning protocol for more HIV+ women, and preliminary results are showing the intervention was found to be feasible, acceptable and effective.

involved shootings which have occurred in recent years. Receipt of the Dr. M. Celeste Nichols Award not only assisted her in the offset of costs related to attending this conference, it also served as a resource in the ongoing process of developing her skills and moving toward the goal of completing her doctoral degree. Dr. Margaret Celeste Nichols was a pioneer, dedicated to education and the advancement of women where under-represented in modern society. Receiving the award was an honor and exacts meaning to Nadia's continued determination and ambition.

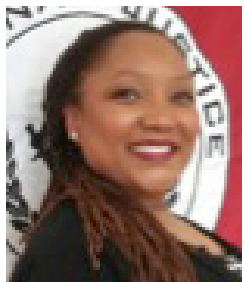


**Lauren L. Evanovich** is a soon to be a doctoral graduate in the College of Education and Human Development, Department of Special Education at the University of Louisville.

Her research interests include multi-tiered systems of support, specifically Tier 2 academic and behavioral interventions for students with and at-risk for emotional and behavioral disorders, academic interventions for students with learning disabilities, and transition services and programs.

## *Midwest Symposium for Leadership in Behavior Disorders (Award Conference)*

This presentation reviewed a pilot study completed on the feasibility of implementing CICO as a Tier 2 behavioral intervention during a truncated summer school schedule in a residential facility for court involved youth. Administrator, teacher, and unit staff interviews as well as student behavioral data were presented. Suggestions for implementation of CICO in truncated schedules were provided.



**Nadia T. Nelson** is currently a Ph.D. student in the Criminal Justice Department at the University of Louisville. Nadia received her M.S. from the University of Central Florida

(Orlando, FL) and her B.A. from Temple University (Philadelphia, PA). Her research includes studies focusing on corrections policy, prison reform, offender rehabilitation, and race and gender issues. Further interests include civil liability (corrections and law enforcement), international crimes, and criminological theory. Her most recent project aims to examine the prevalence of substance abuse amongst incarcerated offenders, specifically women prisoners.

In March Nadia attended the 53rd Annual Meeting of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences where she and another student presented research/findings focused on citizen's attitudes towards the police before and after the officer

parents as they pursue baccalaureate degrees. Findings from 32 in-depth interviews with single mother participants were recently presented at the Sociologists for Women in Society winter meeting. Heidi's dissertation research uses data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study to examine how family structure transitions influence extended family co-residence and child wellbeing over time. Heidi received the Mary Craik Scholarship and the M. Celeste Nichols Award.

Prior to beginning her PhD Program, Heidi served as the Program Coordinator of the Marshall University (MU)-ADVANCE Program. MU-ADVANCE was a National Science Foundation-supported grant program that sought to increase gender equity within Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics disciplines. The program was successful at increasing gender equity within these disciplines at Marshall during its tenure. Further, the program developed and institutionalized two policies - the Modified Duties and the Pre-Tenure Review policies - that will assist pre-tenured faculty in their efforts to earn tenure.

Heidi currently teaches a course on diversity and inequality in the U.S. In addition, she has taught Introduction to Sociology, Social Problems, and Social Theory. In 2014, she won her department's Outstanding Teaching Award.



**Sujita Khanal** is a Ph.D candidate from the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics. I am working under mentorship of Dr. Alfred Bennet Jenson, Senior Scientist, Professor of

Vaccinology, James Graham Brown Cancer Center. The Commission on Diversity and Racial Equality's support helped fund her research project entitled "Human Papillomavirus Detection in Histological Samples of Pre-malignant Oral Lesions". The funding helped Sujita develop a major part of her Ph.D. Dissertation- "Molecular Characterization of human papillomavirus in different tumor lesions of the head and neck".

In this CODRE funded project, she found a novel association of human papillomavirus (HPV) with a distinct histological subset of oral pre-cancerous lesions. In clinical terms, her work suggests that when a pathologist evaluates a

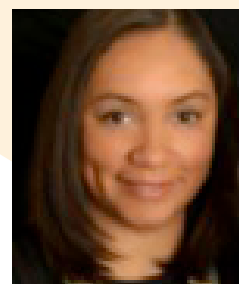


**Heidi Williams** is a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology. Her research focuses on family instability, child wellbeing, and extended family relationships among

disadvantaged families. To date, her research has included a program evaluation of a nonprofit organization that offers unilateral support to single

pre-cancerous case and sees distinct histological features (mitosoid/apoptotic cells), there is a high likelihood that HPV is present and warrants direct testing for HPV.

This work has been widely presented at the international and national conferences (namely International Papillomavirus Conference & Clinical Workshop in Portugal, and Multidisciplinary Head and Neck Cancer Symposium in Scottsdale, AZ, USA). She also has presented this research within the University of Louisville at many events such as Research! Louisville, Biochemistry Retreat, and a CODRE meeting. This study has led us to develop more promising research projects which are currently being prepared for publication.



### Tiva VanCleave

is a PHD candidate in the Laboratory of Dr. Matthew B. Lawrenz, at the Center for Predictive Medicine in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology.

Tiva's research project focuses on the adhesins of *Yersinia pestis*. *Yersinia pestis* is the causative agent of bubonic plague and is primarily transmitted by infected fleas. Upon transmission, bacteria rapidly travel to the regional lymph nodes causing inflammation and cellulitis (referred to as buboes). Left untreated, bacteria escape from the lymph node and disseminate systemically through the blood to cause septicemic plague. Via this route, bacteria can colonize the lungs to cause secondary pneumonic plague. Pneumonic plague patients in turn transmit *Y. pestis* directly to naive individuals via aerosolized bacteria through respiratory droplets. The mortality rate of plague reaches 70-100% without treatment, depending on route of infection. Plague remains a significant public health concern because of its ability to be transmitted from person to person and its possible use in bioterrorism.

The project focuses on the adhesins of *Yersinia pestis*, that the bacteria expresses when introduced into the mammal. Adhesins, a type of virulence factor, are components of the cell-surface of bacteria that facilitate adhesion or adherence to other cells or surfaces. These adhesins play an important role in bacterial pathogenesis in colonizing a new host. We hypothesize that the expression of the/these adhesin/s may aid in the role of how bacteria are able to subvert the endosomal pathway inside of macrophages, typically used for degradation.

Bacteria regulate expression of adhesins in response to the environment in order to survive in specific niches. Defining the role these adhesins play in avoiding degradation and proliferation inside host cells will help us to better understand the pathogenesis of *Y. pestis*. Identification of and understanding mechanisms used by pathogens to sense the host and induce virulence mechanisms will allow us to better combat infection.



### Piyani Gandhi

is a third-year undergraduate student pursuing her Bachelors of Science in Chemical Engineering. She is a member of the American Institution of Chemical Engineers

(AIChE) and the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) organizations on campus. Her participation in these organizations has opened her eyes to the alarming lack of diversity in engineering as well as other academic fields. She has participated in events to understand the causes of this problem and to understand what she can do to aid in the diversification of the engineering field. Receiving the Commission on Diversity and Racial Equity (CODRE) Undergraduate Research Grant has been a great honor because it has allowed her to actively participate in the diversification of academia as well as progress in her research. She sincerely appreciates CODRE's support and, most importantly, for its commitment to the fostering of diverse talents in academia.

The growing awareness of the global energy crisis has led to many discoveries in renewable energy research. This research hopes to provide the growing need for sustainable energy sources for the future. A promising field within renewable energy research is solar energy research. Solar cells must be able to capture and utilize solar energy efficiently and effectively. However, past solar technology has been too costly to manufacture and too inefficient to justify this cost. The CODRE Undergraduate Research grant aids in the research focusing upon the production of perovskite solar cells. Perovskite solar cells show a lot of promise due to their increased efficiency and relatively low manufacturing cost over traditional silicon cells due to the simplicity of their production. Specifically, the research focuses upon the use of TiO<sub>2</sub> nanoparticles to produce cost-effective, flexible and light-weight solar cell films through the use of inkjet printing technology. It is hoped that this research will aid in the commercialization of solar technology.



### Yolanda Williams

is a student in the Counselor Education and Supervision doctoral program working under the supervision of Dr. Richard Balkin. Her research study is

titled Life Balance in Adult Siblings of Individuals with Childhood Cancer. Yolanda is very grateful and honored that CODRE selected her research for grant funding. CODRE's support allowed her to recruit participants for her study. The study population was very limited, and CODRE's support made it possible to recruit more study participants.

Cancer is the leading cause of disease-related death for youth in the United States. Even in instances where the child has been cured of cancer, there appears to be a lingering effect on the family. Healthy siblings of individuals with cancer are often overlooked in the literature, yet their sibling's cancer has a profound effect on healthy siblings. Furthermore, healthy siblings are at risk for psychological issues due to the stress and challenges associated with having a sibling with cancer. There is a need for more in-depth information about the long-term effects of having a sibling with cancer.

The purposes of this study are to (a) examine life balance outcomes of adult healthy siblings of individuals with childhood cancer and (b) examine the role that social support plays in life balance outcomes. This research broadens our understanding of the psychological, social, and career outcomes of adult siblings of individuals who were diagnosed with cancer in childhood. The study also provides a starting point for mental health professions in thinking about social support for adult siblings. Because of CODRE's support, Yolanda has no doubt that she will be successful in obtaining the data needed to complete her study.



# YOU BELONG

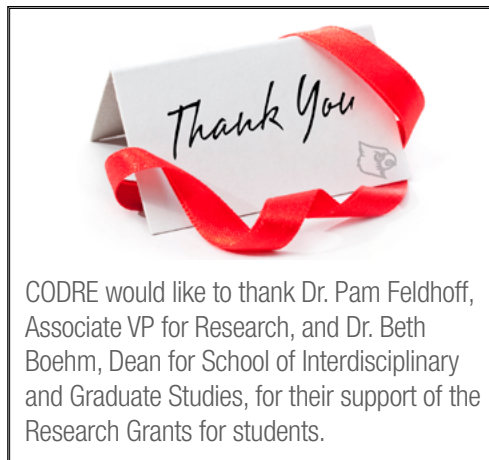


As the first of its kind at the University of Louisville, Diversity Week was a week-long event hosted by the Student Activities Board in collaboration with the Office of the Vice Provost for Diversity & International Affairs and the Commission on Diversity & Racial Equality (CODRE). Hosted November 16-20th, 2015 Diversity Week aimed to promote understanding of the campus community's diverse cultures and educate students on issues of diversity and inclusion through various events including lectures, panel and group discussions, food, music, dance and much more.

The theme for Diversity Week was "You Belong". Inspired by the new "You Belong" mark created by the Office of the Vice Provost for Diversity & International Affairs, "You Belong", seeks to reaffirm that every student, visitor, faculty, staff, and administrator, belongs here. No matter what your affiliation or role is, at the Belknap, Health Sciences, or Shelby campus... You Belong. The week started with the launch of the "You Belong" mark and included other events such as a food festival, open mic, and international fashion show hosted in collaboration with student organizations. There were over 600 students, faculty, staff and community members in attendance.



Photo from 2015 International Fashion Show



CODRE would like to thank Dr. Pam Feldhoff, Associate VP for Research, and Dr. Beth Boehm, Dean for School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies, for their support of the Research Grants for students.

## Fun Facts

**In what year was the Commission on Diversity and Racial Equality (CODRE) established?**

- a) 1979
- b) 1999
- c) 1998
- d) 2001

*The answer: (c) CODRE was established in 1998, when UofL President, John W. Shumaker, commissioned CODRE – see website for information about the charge <http://louisville.edu/codre/about-us>. In 2015, President, James Ramsey revised CODRE's charge to include an active role in the development and implementation of diversity activities that will promote a campus culture of inclusion and engagement.*

**The Transformation Tea is an event scheduled each year in April for the purpose of:**

- a) Donating tea to underprivileged children;
- b) Raffle items for the purpose of creating a scholarship fund;
- c) Providing an opportunity for women of color and their allies to network; or
- d) Provide administrators an opportunity to drink tea rather than coffee.

*The answer: (c) In 1999 Multicultural Center Director, Linda L. Wilson; Women's Center Director, Judi Jennings and COSW Commissioner Mary Ann Stenger felt there was a need to come up with a way to pull together women of color at the university who were often the only people of color in their unit/department. Because the women of color often felt alienated, Linda, Judi and Mary Ann came up with the idea of a tea as a means that would allow these women and individuals who shared their concerns to network with one another. The 2016 Transformation Tea is scheduled on April 11th from 3pm – 5pm in W306 of the Swain Student Activities Center. For more information, contact the Office of Commissions at (502) 852-2029.*

## Sponsored Events

**C.O.N.E.C.T Peer Mentoring Program**  
**African American Recognition Reception**  
Tuesday, March 29th 6:00 p.m.  
in the Student Activity Center

**A&S OFFICE OF DIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH Humanities Ph.D. Program**  
**Department of Comparative Humanities**  
**Global Humanities Lecture Series**  
April 13th, 2016,  
Humanities Building, Room 300

**Finance and Administration**  
**Pathways Women's Leadership Conference**  
Friday, May 20, 2016 on the Shelby Campus

### CODRE News

**CODRE News** is a publication of the Commission on Diversity & Racial Equality at the University of Louisville. It is a free newsletter available online at [louisville.edu/codre/newsletters](http://louisville.edu/codre/newsletters).

To submit article suggestions, contact the Communications and Marketing Committee [codre@louisville.edu](mailto:codre@louisville.edu)

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