Guest Column: Celebrating Our Achievements in Diversity

Assistant Vice President for Community Relations and Chair of the Diversity Coordinating Council
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This week, the UA will celebrate the Visionary Leadership Awards, which honor campus community members who have helped to advance our wide-ranging diversity efforts.

These annual awards are an important recognition of the diversity and inclusion work that our faculty, students, staff and appointed professionals do across campus every day as part of our outreach, community engagement, teaching, mentoring and research mission.

Diversity is woven into every aspect of our work; it is one of the core values that guide all our efforts. Across the University, we all interact with coworkers and constituencies who bring diverse perspectives and experiences. Together, our work is making diversity and inclusiveness a strategic advantage for the UA.

The University's Diversity Coordinating Council, which I have the pleasure of chairing this year, is made up of representatives from various units who contribute to achieving the UA’s diversity goals. Most recently, we have been working on a comprehensive diversity strategy that starts with the Never Settle strategic plan and builds on the strengths of the UA. This plan will create a more inclusive campus by helping to coordinate high-impact diversity initiatives and encouraging innovation in our many campus units.

In designing this strategy, we will leverage the efforts of a group charged by President Hart in the fall to work on our campus climate, beginning with visits to campus cultural centers, which you can read more about here. In the coming months, we also will be seeking additional input from stakeholders in order to develop a robust strategic plan for diversity and inclusion that will guide us toward a more inclusive future for our campus.

The Visionary Leadership Awards are just one example of our varied efforts to acknowledge that diversity is a vital engine for innovation. At such moments, we step back and reflect on the progress that we as a campus have made and the opportunities that we have to continue to do better.

Celebrating achievements in diversity feeds the passion of those who work in this area, and helps to raise the profile of innovative efforts that are making a difference.

We know that a more diverse and inclusive campus will make the UA stronger? with stronger researchers and educators? and a better place to work.

I invite you to contact me and the other members of the Diversity Coordinating Council to offer your input on what we need to do to further our efforts.
Also, please join us to celebrate this important work at the Visionary Leadership Awards ceremony, co-presented by the UA's Programs for Inclusive Excellence and the Commission on the Status of Women, on Thursday, Feb. 25. The awards presentation begins at 5 p.m. in the main BookStore at the Student Union Memorial Center, and will include the presentation of the Peter Likins Inclusive Excellence Award, Richard Ruiz Diversity Leadership Faculty Award, the CSW Vision Award and CSW Mentoring Awards.

You’ll be able to read about the winners in next week's Lo Que Pasa.

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