

The University of Toledo celebrates Diversity Month

This April marks the University of Toledo's second Diversity Month, featuring a myriad of events for students. Upgraded from Diversity Week of last year, the month will shed light on topics ranging from implicit bias to disability service and more.

"When Dr. Gaber came on board, she was really interested in the university having a focus on diversity so that [the week] was expanded in response to her interest in increasing diversity on campus," said Jennifer Pizio, associate director for diversity and inclusion.

The Implicit Bias Series serves as one of the highlights of Diversity Month and includes talks by four speakers. The series kicked off on Thursday, April 6 with an event led by Ari Melber, MSNBC's chief legal correspondent. Melber spoke about "Bias in a Post-Truth Era."

Willie McKether, vice president of diversity and inclusion, said that implicit bias is our conscious and unconscious attitudes toward people that can lead to prejudice and discrimination.

"Diversity at the University of Toledo has been an area of emphasis this year," UT President Sharon Gaber said. "I hope each of us will spend time during Diversity Month asking ourselves what more we can do to ensure basic values such as dignity and inclusion are reflected across UT campuses."

To highlight the prevalence of bias, Adil Haider will speak about "Unconscious Bias and Its Impact on the Patient-Clinician Relationship" at the Health Science campus on April 13.

On April 18, Leanne Son Hing will address bias and inequalities in the workplace, in Student Union room 2584.

The series will conclude with Quinn Capers, who will address “Unconscious Racial Bias in Health Care and in Medical School Admission” at the Health Science Campus on April 26.

“We have two speakers that are going to be on the Health Science Campus who are going to be talking specifically about health disparities in minority communities,” Pizio said.

In addition to the Implicit Bias series, Diversity month boasts events like Holi Toledo, Multicultural Jeopardy, African Night and more, Pizio said.

“We have programs running all month, so there’s lots of opportunities for people to get involved, if they’re interested,” Pizio said.

Diversity enhances the student’s experience by introducing new cultures and showcasing the differences between those cultures, said Farah Alarmanazi, third-year pre-medicine major.

“Diversity is important because it allows us to learn about different people and opens our minds to different cultures,” Alarmanazi said.

Diversity Month is the product of collaborations among the Office of the President, the Division of Student Affairs, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Student Government, the Ad-Hoc Diversity Plan Advisory Board and the Office of Multicultural Student Success.

“At UT, we value all people – regardless of their cultural background, beliefs, ethnicity, gender or sexual identity – because this rich diversity enables us all to excel,” Gaber said.