Creating Connections,
ENHANCING COMMUNITIES

Diversity & Inclusion Report 2019-2020
Dear Miami community,

We have accomplished so much at Miami University, and we have done it together as a community. I’m proud of this work and how we are continually weaving our values of diversity and inclusive excellence into the fabric of Miami. Those efforts include:

• Focusing on increasing our diversity. For example, more than one-quarter of our students are diverse, either students of color or those from another country. One-fifth of Miami’s faculty are ethnically diverse.
• Creating and responding to a comprehensive survey of campus climate. Many of the recommendations are being implemented, including anti-bias and diversity training for new students, faculty, and staff.
• Celebrating diversity efforts across our campuses through our Diversity & Inclusion Awards.

Our goal at Miami is to continually build on the connections that bind us together and to encourage the relationships that make us a family. Our commitment to community is our greatest asset. This Diversity & Inclusion Report includes stories of students, faculty, staff, and alumni. We hope it will inspire you to continue to create positive change in your corner of Miami University.

As we move forward with our diversity and inclusion efforts on our campuses, we must stay true to the values that have anchored Miami for more than two centuries. Continue to support and uplift our fellow Miamians and celebrate our differences. Embrace other backgrounds and perspectives. Always strive for excellence. Recognize that true excellence is not exclusive, but includes others.

Love & Honor,

RON SCOTT
Vice President for Institutional Diversity and Inclusion
A journey from Miami to Microsoft

Prasidh Arora ’19 took a leap of faith when he chose Miami University, nearly 9,000 miles away from home. The only thing he knew about it was from a website and some Google images.

As a high school senior in Mozambique and the son of an Indian diplomat who moved every three years, Arora said something persuaded him to be illogical and pursue a degree in computer engineering at Miami.

He has no regrets. For the past four years, he made unforgettable memories — forging lifelong friendships, dancing at his first Diwali function, and earning a spot in the College of Engineering and Computing’s Lockheed Martin Leadership Institute.

In the spring of his sophomore year, Arora became paralyzed from the chest down after suddenly developing transverse myelitis, a rare neurological disorder. He spent two weeks in intensive care battling for his life and eight months in hospitals and rehabilitation centers fighting to regain his ability to walk.

Arora returned to Miami in January 2018 in a wheelchair. Although it wasn’t easy, he didn’t want to lose sight of his educational and career goals. The support from family, friends, and faculty eased the transition, he said.

Miami's Miller Center for Student Disability Services and the Student Success Center found a scholarship to cover the cost of transportation to his therapy in Cincinnati three days a week.

The computer engineering major with minors in computer science and mathematics accepted a job with technology giant Microsoft. He started in a program management role at its Redmond, Washington, headquarters after graduating from Miami in December.

“Despite the emotional and physical struggle that I have been through,” he said, “I am happy that there are still people who see me for the engineer I’ve always wanted to be.”

“People bounce back from hardship in different ways, and it’s when you hit your personal rock bottom that you bounce back more resilient.”
PRASIDH ARORA ’19
Program Manager,
Microsoft
Miami is scheduled to host the 10th annual National Civil Rights Conference June 22-23.

Miamians have participated in the conference for three years. It will be the first time the conference has been held outside of southern states.

Some events will be at the Western campus site of Freedom Summer, a program in June 1964 at which nearly 800 young adults were trained to register black voters in the segregated South.

Miami permanently honors the legacy of Freedom Summer volunteers with an outdoor classroom, artwork, and historic marker on Western campus. This year, Miami took a suggestion from student leaders to increase awareness for current students. Miami has named three residence hall lounges for the civil rights activists who were slain soon after leaving Oxford in 1964.

NEWLY NAMED SPACES ON WESTERN CAMPUS:
• James Chaney Lobby, Beechwood Hall
• Andrew Goodman Lobby, Hillcrest Hall
• Michael Schwerner Lobby, Stonebridge Hall

A GROWING PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN MIAMI AND CHRIST UNIVERSITY IN INDIA

Vaishali Raval, Miami professor of psychology, initiated a partnership between Miami and Christ University in Bengaluru, India, five years ago that continues to thrive.

The two universities last year received a $99,846 grant through the U.S. Department of State’s Partnership 2020 educational initiative to address global health and economic disparities.

Ten Miami students traveled to India in January 2020. They collaborated with 10 Christ University students on health problems and suggested possible solutions to local officials. Christ University students were scheduled to come to Oxford in May to work with Miami students on local health issues and potential solutions (now postponed to later in the year).

Raval believes these kinds of global partnerships offer a valuable experience for students.

“I feel like these issues require diverse teams, people who have very different life experiences coming together to solve a problem,” she said. “They are going to be a lot more creative and innovative than people who think very similarly.”

The project expands the partnership that started in 2015, when the universities received the U.S.-India 21st Century Knowledge Initiative Award from the United States-India Education Foundation.

While it began as a collaboration between psychology departments at both institutions, the partnership has since expanded to include all colleges and divisions at Miami and their corresponding units at Christ University, Raval said.
Ask Rachel Mancuso '23 about her Miami experience, and her face lights up in a smile.

The first-year student plays rugby and works as a scorekeeper at Goggin Ice Center four nights a week. She has her “10-year life plan” mapped out: earn a history degree at Miami, spend a few years working in distressed communities, attend law school, and build a career as a human rights attorney.

“It’s good to put ourselves in situations we might not be comfortable with,” she said.

Mancuso grew up the oldest of four children in a diverse urban neighborhood on Cleveland’s near west side. She said her family always had enough, but they rarely went out to eat, didn’t have cable TV, and only vacationed to visit relatives. During the summers, she works 70-plus hours a week. She’s brought some of that discipline to Miami, and her experience bred work habits that have given Mancuso a perspective she can use to succeed.

“I don’t think it’s extraordinary,” Mancuso said. “It’s just what I did.”

“MIAMI IS MAKING A TREMENDOUS EFFORT TO GROW THE STUDENT BODY AND DIVERSITY.”

The Miami Access Initiative means Ohio families with an income of less than $35,000 pay no tuition and fees.

Miami’s Tuition Promise freezes tuition, room and board for four years.
Miami’s Center for Student Diversity & Inclusion provides programs and activities designed to enhance the academic success, retention, and personal development of diverse student populations. Recent renovations of this area and the third floor of the Armstrong Student Center brought staff from women’s initiatives, LGBTQ+ services, and the cultural center together. The diversity suite on the third floor of Armstrong was expanded to include a larger student lounge and a meeting room, study area, and work area.
“Being able to see and interact with someone who looks like you and comes from the same background as you is really powerful.”

– NICOLE NEWSOME ’21

Media and Culture and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies double major
The Memory Café concept, which started in the Netherlands in the 1990s, has become a recent community outreach of Opening Minds through Art (OMA), Miami’s award-winning intergenerational art program for people with dementia and their care partners.

In OMA, student volunteers partner with elders in long-term care facilities to create works of abstract art.

In the Memory Cafés, Miami students collaborate on projects with elders living at home who are showing signs of dementia.

Both programs improve the quality of life for elders while providing service-learning opportunities for students. Here, Peter Carels, professor emeritus of German, leads a drumming circle at a Memory Café.

“It’s about connecting with somebody outside their own peer group, learning to communicate and build connections.”

– ELIZABETH “LIKE” LOKON
Director of OMA
Ambresha Hancock ’20 arrived at Miami’s Hamilton campus in 2018 with her husband and toddler-age son after serving four years in the U.S. Army. She is majoring in kinesiology with a co-major in premedical studies and aims to become a physical therapist.

On what she did in the Army: “I was an intelligence analyst. I would communicate with pilots in real time. Sometimes, I would have three seconds to communicate (information) to a pilot.”

On the difference between college life and the military: “It can be hard because you’re dealing with people who have not had that sense of structure — this is the plan for today and it cannot change. It’s a constant balancing act.”

On the special pressures veterans face: “As a veteran, we’ve been in places where failure is not an option. We want to succeed at Miami as well.”

“[Veterans] don’t have the luxury of just worrying about [themselves]. That challenges us in a lot of different ways.”

220 veterans receive services on all Miami campuses.

In November 2018, Miami dedicated the Alumni Veterans Tribute on the Oxford campus.
During her first two years at Miami, Kalena Pendang ’21 has not yet had the opportunity to study overseas. The junior from Cincinnati was among 20 students to sign up for a Career Academy trip to the Miami University Dolibois European Center (MUDEC) in Luxembourg.

The Career Academy trip offers access to employers and alumni who can help students launch successful careers. The access to an international destination only increases the potential value for students, said Tekeia Howard, associate director for career initiatives.

“Travel is a powerful agent of change,” Howard said. Sponsored by Miami’s Center for Career Exploration & Success, the career immersion trip is meant to promote inclusive and accessible career development for students who identify as first generation, low income, or students of color at Miami. Pendang, a psychology major with minors in criminal justice and Italian, wants to go into forensic psychology with an eye on a career in intelligence or law enforcement.

“I feel like I have a lot of resources (through the Career Center) I can use, but it can be daunting,” she said. “I’m looking for what I can do that is psychology related.”

**EXPANDING STUDENT NETWORKS THROUGH TRAVEL**

Miami University’s Bahamas Mapathon drew about 100 students and faculty to help in the recovery efforts on Abaco and Grand Bahama islands. The department of geography and its Geospatial Analysis Center held the September event after Hurricane Dorian devastated the islands.

Robyn Abbitt, associate director of the Geospatial Analysis Center, said mapathons give students a chance to engage with the global community using skills they’re learning. So many people participated in the mapathon, organizers had to open another computer lab.

Ancilleno “Leno” Davis Ph.D. ’18, who works in the Bahamas, connected through Skype and thanked the volunteers for their help. He is the sustainability coordinator on Blue Lagoon Island. In 2017, he participated in Miami’s Mapathon for Puerto Rico following Hurricane Maria. After Dorian, he reached out to Miami about a new mapathon.

“You never expect to do it for your own country,” the Bahamian native said.

Volunteers used open-source mapping from satellite data to pinpoint buildings and roads the hurricane wiped out. The data helped in recovery efforts on the ground.

“In four days, we had the entirety of the two islands mapped and verified,” Davis said. He sent digital map images to the Office of the Prime Minister of the Bahamas and the Coast Guard to help rescue dozens of families by showing where houses were before the storm, likely roadways, and the nearest potential helicopter landing area.

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**#3**

*Open Doors has ranked Miami #3 nationally among public doctoral universities with more than 46% of students studying abroad.*

**Full accessibility to study abroad is a goal of the MiamiRISE strategic plan.**
“In four days, we had the entirety of the two islands mapped and verified.”

- ANCILLENO “LENO” DAVIS PH.D. ’18
  Sustainability Coordinator, Blue Lagoon Island
Moošaki neepwaata, “always learning”

Haley Shea ’13 became involved in the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma’s Summer Youth Educational Experience as a young girl growing up in Indiana. She learned more about her tribe’s culture and language during the camps and began forging her own identity.

That education into her Native American heritage continued at Miami University, where she double majored in psychology and Spanish and took classes offered through the Myaamia Heritage Award Program.

The program, which began in 1991, is a four-year undergraduate college experience for Miami tribe students enrolled as Oxford campus students. It provides a tuition waiver and additional coursework relative to their heritage.

Shea — who earned a doctorate in counseling psychology in 2019 — is back on Miami’s Oxford campus working half time as a research associate at the Myaamia Center, the tribe’s research arm. She also works half time as a visiting professor in the department of educational psychology.

“The tribe has given me so much throughout my life, both in terms of my own identity formation as well as financial and educational support — all of these different types of support,” she said. “I feel a sense of responsibility to give back to my community.”

Shea is a member of the Myaamia Center’s Nipwaayoni Acquisition and Assessment Team, which studies the impact of the tribe’s ongoing language and cultural revitalization initiatives on citizens of the tribe, especially the children.

“Haley came up through our youth programs beginning at the age of 10, so she brings a very unique perspective to the revitalization experience,” Myaamia Center Director Daryl Baldwin said.

Today, about 80 youth, ages 6 to 16, participate annually in the Saakacieeta and Eewansaapita Summer Youth Educational Experiences in Oklahoma and Indiana.

Shea examines factors that have contributed to positive outcomes for tribe students (32 are enrolled at Miami this academic year).

“I think a large part of why our students are succeeding is because of that connection, belongingness, and creating a community,” she said.

85 Myaamia students have graduated from Miami, including 80 with undergraduate degrees and eight with graduate degrees. Three people have earned both.

The average 6-year grad rate for Miami tribe students participating in the Heritage classes was 89.4% in 2017, compared to a national average of 41% for Native Americans.
Leadership in the community

For the six historically black fraternities and sororities on Miami’s campus, progress is measured with outsized community impact and pride.

The chapters that make up the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) at Miami boast a rich history dating back to March 1953, when Alpha Phi Alpha was chartered. Other active chapters include Alpha Kappa Alpha, Kappa Alpha Psi, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, and Zeta Phi Beta.
“The Greek chapters have been the ones who lead the change and push conversations forward.”

– JERMAINE THOMAS
NPHC President
Adrianna Patch ’20 describes college as a world of possibility opening up in front of her. The junior from Zanesville — the first in her family to go to college — tries to grab every opportunity she can. She studied in Guatemala in January 2019 and helps Engineers Without Borders with technical drawings for a sanitation project in Rwanda.

“That’s the thing I love most about college,” said Patch, who is majoring in computer engineering and electrical engineering. “I feel like I’m a goldfish in a small tank who gets thrown into a pond. There’s just so much you can do here. If I want to learn Italian, I can join a club or take a class or something. It’s amazing.”

Patch said that when she needs advice about what classes to take or what activities to join, she can rely on other first-generation students or Miami’s Student Success Center.

“I feel lucky to be a first-generation student,” she said. “You learn to support yourself. When I hit a rough patch, I just tell myself to keep trying.”

ENGINEERED TO HELP STUDENTS SUCCEED

Keisha Norris is a familiar face to many first-year Miami students studying engineering and computing. The academic adviser in the dean’s office of the College of Engineering and Computing (CEC) primarily works with undeclared engineering students and helps increase diversity in the STEM disciplines.

She meets many of them when they are high school seniors attending engineering exploration events on campus. They may see her again at Bridges and Make It Miami programs. Once they enroll, she is available to help them select classes and register for labs. And they may end up in one of her introductory CEC 101 classes.

“I’m always a point they can come back to,” said Norris, pictured at left.

Showing support is what Norris is all about. At Miami since 2015, Norris serves on the advisory board for the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP), a program for underrepresented STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) students.

She is an adviser to the Miami chapter of National Society of Black Engineers, often bringing in homemade meals of spaghetti or tacos to weekly meetings. The chapter’s goal is to help students succeed academically and promote engineering to other students of color. They also prepare for a national conference/job fair in the spring.

BEING FIRST, BUT NOT ALONE

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Patch is one of 3,144 first-generation students at Miami, with many faculty and administrators also the first in their families to go to college. The Student Success Center offers support to the growing cohort, said Craig Bennett MS ’00, senior director of student success.

“Having spaces where students can ask questions is really critical,” Bennett said. “First-generation students add a lot to our campus, and that’s to be celebrated.”

3,144 first-generation students at Miami
National award spotlights Miami’s focus on international education

When Miami University officials launched a strategic plan in 2011 to better integrate international, global, and intercultural perspectives into Miami’s mission, they added a final, ambitious goal: earn the Simon Award.

President Greg Crawford recently accepted the prestigious honor in the nation’s capital.

The 2019 Senator Paul Simon Award for Campus Internationalization is awarded by NAFSA: Association of International Educators. Named for the late U.S. senator from Illinois, the award recognizes outstanding innovation and accomplishment in campus internationalization.

“The award represents the strong commitment of our community of educators, staff, students, and alumni at Miami University who collaborate to embed international, global, and intercultural perspectives and dimensions into our university mission and vision,” said Cheryl Young, assistant provost for Global Initiatives and eLearning.

Miami is one of five institutions to receive the 2019 Simon Award for Comprehensive Internationalization.

While participating on a presidential panel representing award-winning schools, Crawford called internationalization “the defining feature of the 21st century.”

Students experience personal growth by studying abroad, he said. They also gain career growth by acquiring a global competence and confidence “to be able to work in this complex world and have the confidence to be able to go out there and do it and work across boundaries and geographic borders.”

ONE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT’S MIAMI EXPERIENCE


That’s one of the cultural offerings experienced by Swamidoss, a resident of India who came to Miami in 2018 to pursue a master’s degree at the Institute for the Environment and Sustainability. She doesn’t have a car but is seeing more of the Midwest through trips offered by Miami’s International Student and Scholar Services office.

“Miami is even more than I had hoped for,” Swamidoss said.
Dedication to diversity and our democratic ideals was on display on Miami’s Hamilton campus in September 2019 for the annual Naturalization Ceremony held by the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio, where 99 people became U.S. citizens. During the last five years, more than 400 individuals from around the world have become naturalized citizens on the campus in ceremonies that are part of Citizenship and Democracy Week at Miami Regionals.
Providing support for Muslim students on Miami’s campuses and promoting awareness of Islam that will increase understanding are the goals of the Muslim Student Association (MSA).

The student group has sponsored speakers on campus, a food drive, and a session on “Sharing Ramadan.” One day a week, members often gather for prayers in a room set aside for meditation and reflection in the Armstrong Student Center.

Zaim Haq, a junior biology and pre-medical studies co-major from Dayton, is president of the MSA. He said the main point is to “bring Muslims together and give them a community.” Haq takes his daily prayers on different parts of the Oxford campus.

“No most of the time I’m able to go to a more secluded place,” he said. “I don’t want to put people in an awkward situation or anything.”

Nooraldeen Bakri, a sophomore manufacturing engineering major from Syria, said he is content as a Muslim student at Miami. “I’m happy and never bothered by anybody,” Bakri said. “People ask questions, and I answer them politely … I’m not going to sugarcoat it. That’s my religion, and I’m proud of it.”
POETRY IN MOTION

On the basketball court, Myja White ’22 is a self-described “energy guy.”

“I’m a shooter,” the second-year student said. “I’m always talking on the court, keeping the energy going.”

Away from basketball, White writes poetry. The psychology major wants to start a program to help children express themselves through music or art. He has fought through depression and wants to help others do the same. He has his list of favorite basketball players and rap musicians — but also a favorite pianist, the German-born British composer Max Richter.

On an Oxford campus full of high-energy high achievers, White is busting stereotypes all over the place. In his poetry, you’ll read nothing about basketball, but plenty about White’s hopes and dreams, fears and passions. As The Miami Student put it in a recent headline, “Myja White finds solace in creativity.”

“Coach O (basketball coach Jack Owens) always tells us, ‘Be comfortable being uncomfortable,’” White said. “I’ve learned to be uncomfortable in some areas because it brings out the true me.”

White came to Miami from Indianapolis. Before he made his decision, he not only talked to basketball coaches but studied Miami’s graduation rates and the average salary of graduates.

“I was thinking, ‘Would I be able to go here if I didn’t play basketball?'” he said. “It just felt right. The campus was beautiful. The coaches are trying to start something new. I want to be part of that.”

“I’M MORE THAN JUST AN ATHLETE. WE ALL HAVE INTERESTS OUTSIDE OF SPORTS. WE HAVE EMOTIONS. POETRY IS MY WAY TO EXPRESS MYSELF.”

A connection between love and honor

A simple place of gratitude that brings all kinds of people together

White black brown or blue, we all represent the MU.

POEM BY
MYJA WHITE ’22
Empowering women in leadership

The Miami Initiative for Advancing, Mentoring and Investing in Women (called M.I.A.M.I. WOMEN) supports opportunities for women in leadership. It sponsors the Women’s Giving Circle, a collective impact investment program that has granted more than $225,000 in support of causes championed by Miamians. Participants “fast-pitch” their projects each year in a competition called Hawk Tank. In 2019, the Giving Circle supported 13 projects, including a women’s entrepreneurship week, an experiential learning program for Miami University Fashion & Design, and an expanded Textbooks on Reserve program to increase affordability.
The Presidential Series on Inclusivity from Miami’s Performing Arts Series features performances from diverse cultures and artists, encouraging all to “Ask more. Engage intentionally. Think differently.” Performances in 2019-2020 include a star of the Broadway sensation “Hamilton,” a fusion of the words of Martin Luther King Jr. with music across African-American traditions, a documentary play depicting the struggles of seven female writers who brought heroic change to their home countries, and a journey through the music of Harlem in collaboration with the National Jazz History Museum.
### Growth in diversity, fall 2019

**FIRST-YEAR CLASS DATA**

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<th>709</th>
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<td>Students of Color</td>
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**STUDENT BODY DIVERSITY 10-YEAR GROWTH**

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<tr>
<td>International, All Students/Campuses</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Retention** 90% overall and 88.1% for minority students, including 88.5% for African-American students

**Full-Time Faculty** 18.6% ethnically diverse across all campuses and 19% on Oxford alone

**6-Year Graduation Rate** 81.9% overall and 72.4% for African-American students, 81.6% for Hispanic students and 74.6% for international students

**PELL GRANT GRADUATION RATE**

- National 6-Year Graduation Rate, Pell Grant Recipients: 49%
- Miami’s 6-Year Graduation Rate, Pell Grant Recipients: 69.6%
“Diversity and inclusive excellence are more than strategic goals at Miami. They are intertwined in who we are, what we do every day, and how we live our lives. We can advance these noble goals together.”

— GREGORY P. CRAWFORD
President