Miami University has undergone some dramatic demographic changes over the last few years. The incoming class of 2022 was 52 percent female, 16.8 percent domestic multicultural and 8.4 percent international. Those students are taught by an increasingly diverse faculty (19.9 percent) that is consistently recognized nationally for undergraduate teaching.

While deliberately working to increase staff, faculty and student diversity (gender, ethnicity, class, age, ability, national origin, sexual orientation, religion), we have also recognized that inclusion and inclusive excellence are vital elements of our goals and success.

Miami’s commitment is not only reflected in our values, mission and organizational structure, it is part of our formal and informal curriculum. In order to achieve a deeper understanding of cultural differences, we strive to create and sustain a campus environment that supports learning, development and engagement across and among members of the community.

Over the last couple of years, we have focused on intentionally educating and promoting diverse ways of thinking, of collaborating and of celebrating, in classrooms, residence halls, workspaces and the community. Last year we invited faculty, staff and students to tell us their experiences in a campus climate survey called One Miami. While overall response was positive, we found areas for improvement. A task force reviewed responses and is preparing to share recommendations that we can act on quickly.

By establishing an award to honor the ongoing struggle for equity and freedom, to a Presidential Series on Inclusivity with performances and lectures, to the world release of Tigerland by Wil Haygood at convocation, we have sought to educate our community about the value of diversity.

In addition to programs mentioned in this report, the CEO Action for Diversity and Inclusion Initiative, study abroad, international institutes and programs and the Over-the-Rhine (Cincinnati) residential program actively illustrate small examples of how fully inclusive and engaged across differences the Miami community has become.

The following pages provide a glimpse of some of the diversity and inclusion activities on campus. I hope you will also visit our Diversity and Inclusion website, MiamiOh.edu/diversity, for a more comprehensive view and that you will join us in our journey to become One Miami, Many Voices.
Kara Strass always felt connected to her Native American ancestry because of her grandmother, who often shared stories about her experiences growing up. But it wasn’t until Strass came to Miami University that she discovered other aspects of her identity.

As she pursued a master’s degree in student affairs in higher education, Strass began learning the Myaamia language and more about her Miami Tribe’s history and culture. She earned her degree in May 2018.

“The language, culture and games, and extending that kinship network, all of those have been really important to me coming to a deeper understanding of who I am,” she said.

Now, as a full-time Miami Tribe Relations assistant at the Myaamia Center — a research-focused collaboration between the tribe and university — Strass works closely with the 30 undergraduate tribe students taking classes on the Oxford campus.

She is part of the first generation in nearly 100 years learning to speak the language.

The center is leading this language and cultural revitalization effort. Director Daryl Baldwin credits the relationship between the two Miamis — the sovereign tribal nation and the public educational institution — with reaching this significant milestone.

Tribe students have the unique experience of learning together and expanding their knowledge about their own heritage and culture.

The Myaamia Heritage Award Program at Miami provides a tuition waiver and additional coursework relative to their heritage.

Strass is an example of what Baldwin hoped the Myaamia Center could be — “a space to help us as a tribal community develop our young intellectuals into individuals who could contribute back to the tribal nation trying to rebuild itself.”

“Language is one of the drivers of identity.”
Dan Darkow (Miami MS ’17) said people might be surprised to learn that being a wheelchair user has positively affected his life.

“So often when people see or hear disability, a quick reaction is to be sad, think about all the negatives associated with disability and to then treat a person differently. My work is centered around changing this narrative.”

Darkow is a coordinator in the J. Scott and Susan MacDonald Miller Center for Student Disability Services (SDS), Shriver Center.

Because nearly 1 in 5 Americans has a disability, he believes it’s time “we move past reactively accepting disability in our classrooms, institutions and communities” and move toward a mindset of expecting it.

Darkow works with students, faculty and staff providing equal access for students with disabilities, many of which are not apparent to others. Statistics show 2,128 Oxford campus students registered with SDS in the 2017-2018 academic year. That’s an 18 percent growth from 2016-2017 (1,805 students).

“If we remember accessibility and access are an institutional responsibility and not the burden of each individual student served, then it is all of our responsibility collectively to move toward creating a more inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone.”

Miami is among the first 100 employers to join the Ohio Business Leadership Network. Members have taken steps to focus on the abilities of Ohioans with disabilities as they seek to make meaningful contributions to the workforce.

Darkow, who advises the Students with Disabilities Advisory Council, also speaks to classes, faculty meetings and others about creating an inclusive environment.

“I love talking about disability. It is a fascinating, ever-evolving topic, and I get the opportunity to change perceptions every single day.”

John Steele: Becoming a U.S. diplomat

Ask John Steele (Miami ’14) why he chose Miami University, and he’ll tell you it’s the other way around: Miami took the chance on him when others wouldn’t.

Steele struggled in school during a difficult childhood in Cleveland. Several universities recruited him to play football but backed off after discovering his academic issues.

Except Miami.

“When the smoke cleared, and it was actually time for me to make a decision, Miami was the only Division I school that said, ‘Hey, I know you got some baggage. I know you have some issues, but we will work with you. We want to see you succeed on the field and off.’ And that was really important to me.”

Steele earned a full scholarship to play defensive tackle for the Miami RedHawks but suffered a career-ending injury before playing a game.

Again, Miami was there.

Craig Bennett, former assistant athletic director for academic support services, remembers Steele telling him he was done.

Bennett told him his scholarship would remain in place, football or not. That’s something Miami Athletics always commits to, said Bennett, now senior director for Student Success at Miami.

After football disappeared, it took Steele time to see himself as more than an athlete. Without football, who was he?

Othello Harris, associate professor of sociology and gerontology, saw Steele struggling and became his mentor. Steele said Harris was the first person to believe in him academically. By his last semester, he’d earned a 4.0 GPA.

Steele went on to become Miami’s first recipient of the Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Graduate Fellowship. Last spring, he earned a master’s from George Washington University and is training as a foreign service officer.

John Steele has pushed himself — from football to a 4.0 to foreign service.
Miami’s growing diversity enriches educational experience

Miami University’s student population is becoming more diverse. Take a look at campus today, and you’ll find 29 percent — first-year students through seniors — are multicultural students. Statistics show 14.3 percent of the students are members of minority groups, while 14.8 percent are from other countries.

A diverse student population benefits everyone, said Cheryl Young (Miami ‘79, MS ‘07, PhD ’18), assistant provost for Global Initiatives. “Diversity enriches the educational and co-curricular experiences, challenges our perspectives and prepares students for the diverse global world they will enter after college,” said Young, noting 3,177 international students (undergraduate and graduate) were at Miami this fall.

Several programs have contributed to increasing diversity on campus, including the Bridges Program, introduced in 2007 and expanded to out-of-state students in 2010. It is open to culturally diverse, high-achieving high school seniors from historically underrepresented populations or who have a commitment to promoting a deeper understanding of and appreciation for diversity. Students representing different ethnic/racial, sexual orientation and gender identity and socio-economic backgrounds are encouraged to apply.

The high school seniors interact with students, faculty and staff while they spend one night in a residence hall, eat meals at a dining hall, tour the campus and learn about programs and activities. Academic modules give them classroom experiences.

“The purpose of the Bridges Program is to expose high school seniors from diverse backgrounds to the academic and socio-cultural aspects of Miami University,” said Jonika Moore (Miami ’01), senior associate director of diversity initiatives in the office of admission.

Most who visit campus during the program end up applying. This fall, Bridges hosted 603 students from 22 states and five countries. Moore said 95 percent of those participants (575 students) have applied to Miami.
1. Miami students celebrate Holi, a Hindu cultural and religious festival.

2. Kyle Flemings, a graduate student in English/creative writing, performs at a Miami Art Museum conference in conjunction with Telling a People’s Story: African-American Children’s Illustrated Literature.

3. These individuals took part in a naturalization ceremony on the Hamilton campus.
The UniDiversity Festival celebrates the music, arts and food of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Confucius Institute hosts an annual Chinese Festival.

‘An invitation to learn without borders’

Valuable takeaways.

That’s what Jacqueline Rioja Velarde seeks when members of the Miami University and Oxford communities come together annually for the UniDiversity Festival celebrating music, arts and food of Latin America and the Caribbean.

After 16 years, the festival is becoming part of the cultural identity of Miami and the city, said Rioja Velarde, associate director of Miami’s Center for American and World Cultures and chair of the UniDiversity program.

She likes how Miami students are encouraged to learn beyond their classrooms and said the festival is “an invitation to learn without borders.”

The city square in Uptown Oxford becomes the “plaza,” a space of intercultural encounters and multicultural learning opportunities.

“If the variety of activities ... empowers people to leave their comfort zones, allows them to be vulnerable and enjoy learning and experiencing more about the richness of Latin(o) American and Caribbean cultures — that’s a takeaway,” she said.

The native of Peru worked at a private university there before joining Miami in 2003. She was the Center for American and World Culture’s assistant director from 2006-2012.

Rioja Velarde teaches a reflection-based class for students returning from study abroad to help them create meaning about their experiences.

“Study abroad is a transformative learning experience and students for sure benefit from having the opportunity to reflect about these intercultural exchanges,” she said.

Rioja Velarde served as president of Miami’s Association of Latino/a Faculty and Staff for two years and co-founded “Latinas in Ohio” to provide advocacy, mentorship and education.

The Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs recognized her in 2016 for outstanding achievement in professional and community service and for being a role model for the Latino community.
A veteran’s search

A sense of belonging.

That’s what senior Emma Wott was searching for when she became a student at Miami on the Post 9/11 GI Bill following her service in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Many veterans feel lost after the uniform comes off for the last time, she said. They no longer know their worth.

Wott came to Miami wondering what she would be thought of, she told a crowd gathered on Veterans Day for the dedication of a new Alumni Veterans Tribute on the Oxford campus.

At Miami, she found a place where she feels like she belongs. She loves college life.

Wott served in the Marines from 2011-2015. She was a corporal who worked as a barracks manager/embarkation logistics specialist.

Today she is a theatre and religion double major looking forward to graduating in May. She wants to become a lighting designer or stage manager.

Wott chairs the Student Veterans Association and enjoys Miami’s new Student Veterans’ Center in Wells Hall, which provides student veterans and military-affiliated students with a space to be around others with similar backgrounds and experiences. To her, the center shows “veterans exist on campus and that we matter.”

“It takes the courage of a veteran to keep moving forward when the forces are against them,” she told the Veterans Day crowd. “It takes tenacity and encouragement from faculty, professors, students, friends and colleagues to remind them that it was worth it.”

She sees the Alumni Veterans Tribute, located just east of the Campus Avenue Building, as a visible reminder that military service is respected at Miami, frequently ranked as one of the nation’s Best Colleges for Veterans.

A sporting legacy built on acceptance

At a recent home hockey game against St. Cloud State University, LGBTQ+ flags hung from the rafters and the video board shared Brendan Burke’s enduring legacy.

The hockey team’s former student manager found support and acceptance from the coaches and team when he came out as gay in April 2009. Burke died in a car accident on Feb. 5, 2010.

In 2012, his brother, Patrick, co-founded the You Can Play Project, an organization dedicated to ensuring safety and inclusion for all who participate in all sports — including LGBTQ+ players, coaches and fans. More than 700 You Can Play events have been held since then.

“Brendan had a tremendous impact on our lives, and his impact only grew after his death,” said Nick Petragna (Miami ’04), Miami athletics’ director of external relations. He was director of hockey operations when Burke was student manager.

Burke helped Petragna break down video, prepare scouting reports, coordinate community service activities and other administrative tasks.

“It wasn’t a big deal when he told them he was gay,” Petragna said. “I will say the one thing that changed was the language we used. It made us all more aware of the words we chose. To this day, that remains a culture in our locker room.”

Brendan Burke made headlines for speaking out against homophobia in sports.

“I think it’s important that my story is told to people because there are a lot of gay athletes out there and gay people working in pro sports that deserve to know that there are safe environments where people are supportive of you regardless of your sexual orientation,” he told Canadian sports network TSN in November 2009.
Growing up, I didn’t know if going to college was a realistic goal for me. That’s because I have a neurological disorder that affects about 50 people in the world and renders me unable to feel pain, temperature and touch. I’m deaf and wear cochlear implants. I have a lung condition that makes it hard for me to walk long distances and fine-motor difficulties that mean I can’t tie my shoes or button a shirt. All of that, I knew as I prepared to graduate from high school, would impose some limitations. But I was determined to have as normal a college experience as possible, despite my disability.

That all began with Andy Zeisler, the director of what was then Student Disability Services, who met with my mom and me during my college search and assured us both that not only would his office work to accommodate me in any way it could, but that my perspective would be welcome on Miami’s campus.

It continued with the Students with Disabilities Advisory Council (SDAC), an organization I’ve been lucky enough to help lead. SDAC has let me extend the welcome Andy gave me to more disabled students, some of whom have told me the organization is one of the reasons they chose Miami. As a group, we’ve helped establish a disability cultural space in the newly-endowed Miller Center for Student Disability Services and a universally designed classroom in McGuffey Hall.

I also discovered disability studies through the minor Miami offers. The program gave me a totally new framework through which to understand myself — plus incredible faculty mentors, the chance to present at several conferences and even to write a chapter for an upcoming book.

As it turns out, being disabled has enriched my four years in college in ways I never could’ve imagined.

Megan Zahneis: ‘a totally new framework through which to understand myself’
“I learned to enjoy experiences in the moment and to not worry about the specific detail but to look at the overall beauty of a picture. She also taught me to be patient toward others no matter a person’s situation,” she said.

Duffy — a biology and psychology double major with a co-major in neuroscience — will graduate in May and aspires to become a nurse practitioner in women’s health.

She is one of 1,909 students who have participated in OMA. It was founded in 2007 at Miami’s Scripps Gerontology Center by Elizabeth “Like” Lokon, who earned a master’s of art in teaching (’93), a doctorate in educational leadership (’97) and a master’s in gerontological studies (’08) from Miami.

Lokon, OMA’s director, set out to create something to engage elders with different levels of dementia in ways that would help them grow and flourish while encouraging young people to expand their openness to the still-vibrant humanity of elders in general.

OMA is offered at more than 150 facilities around the world.

Lokon is grateful to Miami and Scripps for supporting her idea of combining fine arts, gerontology and service learning.

“Initially, it was just an idea. Now, a decade later, we have the evidence that it benefits both people with dementia and students in the program,” she said. “We are now embarking on making OMA available to medical school students so they can become more empathetic physicians.”

Six medical schools will pilot the project starting in 2019.
Sara Al-Zubi: A path to activism

One photo.

That’s what started Sara Al-Zubi on a path to activism when she arrived at Miami.

She couldn’t shake the haunting image of Alan Kurdi, 3, who drowned in the Mediterranean as his family fled the Syrian civil war.

Al-Zubi spent some of her early childhood in Jordan near the border with Syria before the war and before her family immigrated to the United States.

After seeing the photo, Al-Zubi launched a letter-writing campaign to the children of Syria that became her first nonprofit venture, Peace of Mail. She encouraged people around the world to write letters of support to the children in refugee camps in Jordan. Letters came from Portugal, Singapore, Australia and the United States.

Al-Zubi is a senior human capital management and leadership major and pre-medical studies co-major at Miami. She plans to attend medical school with the hope of working on humanitarian and refugee health initiatives.

She was awarded a 2018 Harry S. Truman Scholarship, honoring future public servants and change agents and was a finalist for a 2019 Rhodes Scholarship.

International Faculty and Staff Association supports, connects

A new International Faculty and Staff Association at Miami (IFSAM) has been created following the success of Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs) built around diversity and inclusion.

“The association identifies international faculty and staff as part-time or full-time employees of Miami who are from foreign countries and with diverse cultural, educational and linguistic backgrounds,” IFSAM President Eun Chong Yang said.

Yang, associate director of Miami’s American Culture and English (ACE) program, said the organization has more than 55 members from at least 25 countries of origin and represents 21 departments, 10 offices, six divisions and various campuses.

She and Zara Torlone, professor of classics who also is on the core faculty of the Havighurst Center for Russian and Post-Soviet Studies, have served as co-facilitators of the Faculty Learning Communities for Enriching Teaching Experiences of International Faculty, Teaching Assistants and Graduate Students since fall 2017.

The learning communities were formed after Yang wrote a proposal to the Center for Teaching Excellence to help international faculty, instructors and teaching assistants become more successfully adjusted to Miami and improve their teaching effectiveness.

Cheryl Young, assistant provost for Global Initiatives, encouraged Yang to create the association.

Young envisioned an organization for professional development and networking that would build awareness, be a collective voice and increase retention.

“We wanted something that was sustainable and would be woven into the fabric of the university,” Young said. “We ... hope that IFSAM continues to grow and becomes an autonomous organization that continues to provide a welcoming presence for all faculty and staff who come to Miami from around the world.”
Gospel music a central part of his life

For as long as he can remember, Jermaine Thomas II has been singing in choirs. Church choir came first, joined by a cappella and show choirs in high school.

When he arrived on the Oxford campus his first year, he joined the Miami University Gospel Singers (MUGS). Now a junior, Thomas loves taking a break from his studies to step into rehearsal for two hours on Monday nights. Together, the men and women raise their voices in spiritual song.

“It’s kind of like a home away from home,” said Thomas, a tenor who has served as MUGS secretary for two years. “We all love each other. It’s like a big family.”

The media and culture and fashion-entrepreneurship co-major from Cleveland said he chose Miami because it offered the best financial package.

“Three years in, I couldn’t imagine going anywhere else,” he said.

MUGS holds two big events each academic year — a Family Weekend concert in the fall and a Gospel Fest in the spring, when other choirs are invited to perform, too.

The musical group holds monthly student-led church services in the Armstrong Student Center and occasionally performs at churches throughout the Cincinnati area.

Thomas said the group has grown in recent years. It had 12 members his first year, 20 last year, and it now boasts 34 members.

He thinks he knows why.

“We’re a faith-based organization, so we always try to follow God’s word and exude Christianity the right way. Being an open group, loving everybody, having fun, being more visible and sounding good,” he said, chuckling. “It all just flows together.”

Inclusive University Program: ‘Change agents’ for a more inclusive society

Courtney Hineman started working in retail after she graduated from Lakota East High School in 2015.

For the past three years, Hineman has participated in Miami’s summer Inclusive University Program, a one-week, one-credit-hour class for students with intellectual disabilities.

The course is led by Ashley Cartell Johnson, assistant clinical lecturer in inclusive special education and the co-coordinator of disability studies.

After attending the program, Hineman became interested in pursuing college. Cartell Johnson enrolled her in her Introduction to Disability Studies course in spring 2018. Last fall, the two collaborated in the same course, with Hineman as a teaching assistant.

Hineman is an example of where Cartell Johnson sees the Inclusive University Program heading as she plans the fifth summer program, which again will involve 15 students with disabilities and 15 Miami students.

Her goal?

“A fully inclusive program where students take typical classes with support from Miami student educational coaches as needed, work on-campus jobs and engage in service learning and student organizations — all typical experiences for Miami students.”

Miami students engage in three ways — as researchers in an independent study to learn more about inclusive college programming to support best practices as they grow the program; as mentors, peers and roommates in the summer program; and as educational coaches supporting the students taking Miami courses.

Cartell Johnson wants the same thing for both groups of students: to have rich experiences so they can learn and grow “and for them to graduate with skills to be independent, to obtain a job that aligns with their goals, and to be change agents for a more just and inclusive society.”
From the get-go, Alison Tuiyott met people like her on campus pursuing science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. She arrived a week early through the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP)’s early arrival program. The next year, she was mentoring new students in the program.

“LSAMP was honestly one of the best experiences I had,” she said.

Tuiyott — a statistics major with an analytics co-major and minor in computer science — will graduate in 2020 with a combined bachelor’s and master’s degree. She wants to become a data scientist or analyst and one day start her own business.

The Cincinnati native took classes at Miami’s Hamilton campus her junior and senior years of high school after a counselor suggested the idea. That allowed her to earn a year-and-a-half of college credit for free.

Tuiyott, an honors student on scholarship, said she enjoyed having nontraditional students in her Regionals classes. She became a math tutor there and later continued tutoring at the Bernard B. Rinella Jr. Learning Center on the Oxford campus.

She found faculty who became strong mentors while she interned in Miami’s Center for Analytics & Data Science (CADS).

The center is an interdisciplinary collaboration among the departments of information systems and analytics in the Farmer School of Business, statistics in the College of Arts and Science and computer science and software engineering in the College of Engineering and Computing. The departments of marketing and accountancy are involved, too.

“Miami is a great place if you want to have really good mentors,” she said.

The CADS experience connected her to summer internships at GE Aviation and Eli Lilly and Co., where she’ll return this summer.

Daniela Reuter: ‘Hillel is a major part of my Jewish journey’

Daniela Reuter, a senior psychology major from Louisville, chose Miami because it fit all of her requirements: “its size, Jewish life, location and overall vibe.”

Reuter is president of Hillel: Association of Jewish Students, which has about 100 active members.

“I chose to be a part of Hillel because having a Jewish identity is a large part of my life,” she said, “and Hillel was the best way for me to be Jewish at Miami.”

Reuter called her four-year experience “a major part of my Jewish journey.”

The association has connected her to social justice, religious Judaism, spiritual Judaism and a community where she genuinely feels welcome and loved.

Hillel does a variety of social justice work. For instance, its “Challah for Hunger” branch focuses on making and selling Challah (a braided bread), with proceeds benefiting charities fighting hunger.

Hillel also focuses on education, Reuter said. “I have learned so much about the world and how I can play a significantly impactful role in it throughout my life.”

For Sukkot, a Jewish holiday celebrated in October, the students made necessity bags for the homeless. They later drove to Cincinnati’s Over-the-Rhine neighborhood on a Sunday to pass them out to those in need.

“This very simple activity benefited my life along with the many people we met and helped,” she said. “Hillel has given me the necessary tool to learn how to benefit the world along with educating myself about the many different people in it.”

Reuter, who wants to become a behavioral therapist for children with autism, studied abroad in Israel one semester. She said that experience also helped shaped who she is today.

Daniela Reuter: ‘Hillel is a major part of my Jewish journey’

Reuter said. “I have learned so much about the world and how I can play a significantly impactful role in it throughout my life.”

For Sukkot, a Jewish holiday celebrated in October, the students made necessity bags for the homeless. They later drove to Cincinnati’s Over-the-Rhine neighborhood on a Sunday to pass them out to those in need.

“This very simple activity benefited my life along with the many people we met and helped,” she said. “Hillel has given me the necessary tool to learn how to benefit the world along with educating myself about the many different people in it.”

Reuter, who wants to become a behavioral therapist for children with autism, studied abroad in Israel one semester. She said that experience also helped shaped who she is today.

Reuter, an honors student on scholarship, said she enjoyed having nontraditional students in her Regionals classes. She became a math tutor there and later continued tutoring at the Bernard B. Rinella Jr. Learning Center on the Oxford campus.

She found faculty who became strong mentors while she interned in Miami’s Center for Analytics & Data Science (CADS).

The center is an interdisciplinary collaboration among the departments of information systems and analytics in the Farmer School of Business, statistics in the College of Arts and Science and computer science and software engineering in the College of Engineering and Computing. The departments of marketing and accountancy are involved, too.

“Miami is a great place if you want to have really good mentors,” she said.

The CADS experience connected her to summer internships at GE Aviation and Eli Lilly and Co., where she’ll return this summer.

‘A great place if you want to have really good mentors’

From the get-go, Alison Tuiyott met people like her on campus pursuing science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields.

She arrived a week early through the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP)’s early arrival program. The next year, she was mentoring new students in the program.

“LSAMP was honestly one of the best experiences I had,” she said.

Tuiyott — a statistics major with an analytics co-major and minor in computer science — will graduate in 2020 with a combined bachelor’s and master’s degree. She wants to become a data scientist or analyst and one day start her own business.

The Cincinnati native took classes at Miami’s Hamilton campus her junior and senior years of high school after a counselor suggested the idea. That allowed her to earn a year-and-a-half of college credit for free.

Tuiyott, an honors student on scholarship, said she enjoyed having nontraditional students in her Regionals classes. She became a math tutor there and later continued tutoring at the Bernard B. Rinella Jr. Learning Center on the Oxford campus.

She found faculty who became strong mentors while she interned in Miami’s Center for Analytics & Data Science (CADS).

The center is an interdisciplinary collaboration among the departments of information systems and analytics in the Farmer School of Business, statistics in the College of Arts and Science and computer science and software engineering in the College of Engineering and Computing. The departments of marketing and accountancy are involved, too.

“Miami is a great place if you want to have really good mentors,” she said.

The CADS experience connected her to summer internships at GE Aviation and Eli Lilly and Co., where she’ll return this summer.
Mentoring students in the LGBTQ+ community

College is often a time of discovery for many students. But it can be an “extremely challenging time” for some members of the LGBTQ+ community, said Hannah Thompson, associate director of LGBTQ+ services. She said it can also be a celebratory and affirming time of finding their community.

LGBTQ+ services, in the Armstrong Student Center, aims to improve the experience of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer people at Miami.

“This is the age when a lot of students are discovering who they are,” Thompson said.

LGBTQ+ services — part of the office of diversity affairs — provides support, advocacy, programming and education to the Miami community and is committed to fostering a safe and inclusive environment.

Thompson said services are geared toward providing a “sense of belonging and feeling that they have a voice on campus.”

One resource is providing a safe space where they can find peer support and professional staff support.

Thompson, who has a master’s in community mental health counseling and is a licensed professional counselor in Ohio, loves her job — especially student engagement. She advises Spectrum and Tint, two organizations for undergraduate students.

Other campus groups representing LGBTQ+ students include Pride at the Hamilton campus, Progressive Christian Students, and Miami University Graduate Student Pride Association.

In her office, Thompson mentors many students and keeps an open-door approach.

“I think that’s really important in this particular role,” she said, adding a lot of students deal with anxiety and depression, which tends to be higher in the LGBTQ+ community.

A strong educational component is facilitating Safe Zone training. Last school year, Thompson reached 226 faculty, staff and students over 18 training sessions. She offers training regularly, including to whole departments.

More than 300 faculty, staff, students educated so far in Safe Zone (for LGBTQ+ understanding) and Green Zone (veterans understanding) educational programs.
This report is a window into the diversity of Miami University, the breadth and depth of how we reflect, engage and learn from each other. You will see what I am privileged to see every day, as the Miami community lives out Love and Honor by practicing inclusive excellence, elevating our focus on diversity in everything we do.

I remember one beautiful day — late August, with the warmth of summer lingering and a crisp morning arriving, signaling that autumn was on its way. August 24, 2018, indeed, was an exciting day at Miami University. We welcomed to Convocation the incoming Class of 2022, the largest and most diverse class ever at Miami. Our newest students came from 41 states and 22 countries. More than 16 percent of them were the first in their families to go to college. As I looked over the crowd at the Freedom Summer Memorial on our Western campus, I saw students celebrating our differences and united by our common purpose, ready to join the Miami family. To me, it represented the best that Miami University has to offer.

At Convocation, Wil Haygood, Miami Class of 1976, launched his book "Tigerland," our first-year read that plants in the heart of our academics the powerful experiences of Ohio high school students at the height of the civil rights movement. Wil delivered his message of hope and inspiration for a more inclusive world to the incoming class, telling the story of the Columbus East High School baseball and basketball teams that won state championships. We honored that story with the naming of Wil Haygood Lane on the Western campus.

Countless performances, exhibits and dialogues through the last year, many of them driven by our students, engaged the entire Miami community and touched each aspect of our life together. I am proud to be a part of this leading-edge institution that models how welcome, respect, sharing, and understanding can empower each of us to flourish — and all of us to thrive together. We are One Miami.
“Let us stand together with all who face anti-Semitism, bigotry and violence, and commit ourselves to peace, mutual respect, celebration of differences and common good in a community where everyone can thrive.”

Gregory P. Crawford  
President