



Core Values *for* Changing Campuses

The 2015 Charles Kennedy Equity Awardee talks about the importance of inclusivity and diversity on campus.

BY DAWN LINDSAY

AS COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE NATION HAVE EXPERIENCED a continued shift in demographics that reflect an increasingly diverse population, at Anne Arundel Community College (AACC) in Maryland we have also seen the number of minority students we serve rise each year. Anne Arundel is committed to meeting the needs of a diverse and global community, and inclusivity is one of the goals under the college's strategic plan. We have also made substantial progress toward achieving greater equity on campus.

When inclusivity and diversity are part of a college's core values, everyone benefits — especially our students. I am proud to report that in 2015, Anne Arundel's equity and inclusion efforts were recognized with three national awards, the most recent being the 2015 Charles Kennedy Equity Award presented at the ACCT Awards gala this past fall.

While these national awards have been gratifying, as they reaffirm our strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, we know this is only the beginning. There is more work to do. Here's a look at some of the progress we have made, as well as some ambitious plans for the future.

To better serve all of our students, in 2014 we hired James A. Felton III as the college's first chief diversity officer to oversee our commitment to equity and inclusivity in AACC's policies, programs, and procedures. We also incorporated a diversity course requirement into the general education program, installed gender-neutral/ADA accessible restrooms on campus, had record attendance at our annual Black Male Symposium, and launched a campus-wide Intergroup Dialogue initiative. Anne Arundel also successfully completed a "Year of Social Justice," which featured

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more than 50 programs, speakers, films, exhibits, and service projects for the college and local community.

One of Anne Arundel's programs that was recognized with the Charles Kennedy Equity Award — and for which we are especially proud — is our Student Achievement and Success Program (SASP). SASP is a highly effective support and retention program designed to increase the academic success and retention of students who traditionally have more barriers and challenges to overcome in realizing their goals. With targeted initiatives like the First Year Experience and the Black Male Initiative, this program helps support first-generation, low-income, underprepared, and minority college students. From fall 2013 to spring 2014, 83 percent of our SASP program students persisted.

Our Engineering Scholars Program (ESP), a scholarship program resulting from a five-year, \$598,000 grant provided by the National Science Foundation, is another Anne Arundel initiative designed to help underrepresented groups succeed. The overall goals of the program include increasing financial and student support services, targeting underrepresented groups (African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, and women) in STEM fields, enhancing student academic and support services, increasing the retention rates of engineering/engineering technology students, and increasing the employment and transfer rates of engineering students.

Since the start of the grant in 2011, the program has awarded full scholarships to more than 60 students majoring in engineering or engineering technology at Anne Arundel who also demonstrated a financial need. To date, over 30 have graduated and/or successfully transferred to four-year engineering programs at such institutions as Virginia Polytechnic Institute, University of Maryland College Park, UMBC, Florida Institute of Technology, and the U.S. Naval Academy.

More recently, in collaboration with the college's diversity committee, we launched the Office of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access, and Leadership (IDEAL), named to reflect Anne Arundel's diversity efforts and core values of access and inclusion. Through IDEAL, we also launched several initiatives this past fall to exemplify this commitment, including the Diversity Welcoming Committee. This committee assists with on-campus faculty interviews where committee members are on hand to answer any questions job candidates of all backgrounds may have about the college and the Anne Arundel County area. We also provide information on resources and programs at the college and answer cultural questions, such as where to find certain cuisines or where the more diverse neighborhoods are. This "welcoming face" helps ensure prospective faculty not only see Anne Arundel as an inclusive campus, but that inclusivity is an important value of our college.

Going forward, Felton has exciting plans to take the Intergroup Dialogue initiative a big step forward. The purpose of Intergroup



(From left) ACCT President and CEO J. Noah Brown with 2015 Charles Kennedy Equity Awardees Anne Arundel Community College Vice Chair Diane R. Dixon-Proctor and President Dawn Lindsay, and (far right) 2014-15 ACCT Chair Robin M. Smith

Dialogue, which is a facilitated learning approach, is to create a space to talk about difficult topics, such as race, class, and inequality through continuous, face-to-face meetings between people from two or more social identity groups that have a history of conflict or potential conflict. It's an innovative strategy to enhance participants' awareness, knowledge, and skills in relating to people who are different from them. This past fall, 22 people from the college and supporting community — from sociology faculty to members of the American Red Cross — were trained as dialogue facilitators.

Plans are also underway for a Day of Dialogue this spring, with sessions for both the community and the campus to attend. The college will also be updating Anne Arundel's diversity plan to be more equity-minded in serving the needs of a diverse student population.

Like most colleges and universities across our nation, at Anne Arundel we pride ourselves on being an open and welcoming college that serves a diverse community. We welcome all — students, faculty and staff — regardless of their religion, race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, or social identity group.

So while we are proud of all of our accomplishments and efforts that help us better serve all students, we are ready and eager to keep going. It is our diversity, after all, that makes Anne Arundel — and this nation — strong and whole.



Dr. Dawn Lindsay is president of Anne Arundel Community College in Arnold, Maryland. Dr. Lindsay also serves on the American Association of Community College's Commission on Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity and is a member of the Anne Arundel County Public Schools' Blue Ribbon Commission on Equity and Achievement.