EMBRACING DIVERSITY & INCLUSION
DECEMBER 2017 | VOL. 6 | ISSUE 4
In this holiday edition of the Embracing Diversity and Inclusion Newsletter, we would like to celebrate the month of December across cultures and religions.

With diverse holidays being celebrated this month, including: Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and Christmas, it is increasingly important to promote inclusion on our campus during this time of year.

It is vital to acknowledge differences in celebrations and customs with a humble heart and an open mind.

We encourage the SIUE community to celebrate togetherness during this month with people from diverse backgrounds.

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Happy Holidays!

- The Office of Institutional Diversity & Inclusion
Psychology Student Jalela Mitchell Leads Pantry Efforts to Help SIUE Students Facing Food Insecurity

While it is commonly known that students can experience many academic and personal challenges, it is not so obvious that many also face food shortages. For this reason, the SIUE Sociology Club, led by senior Jalela Mitchell, hosted a Cougar Thanksgiving Drive to feed students in need. “It’s kind of a joke on campus that if you want students to come, you need to have food at your event, but maybe it’s not funny after all,” said Connie Frey Spurlock, PhD, associate professor in the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice Studies and faculty partner with the Cougar Thanksgiving Food Drive. For six weeks, the food drive collected non-perishable food items and monetary gifts for fresh produce or meat. With the support of many faculty and staff, Mitchell aimed to give out approximately 200 bags of groceries. Read More

SIUE School of Pharmacy Celebrates Diversity of Thanksgiving Traditions

The Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Pharmacy (SOP) celebrated various cultural traditions at its annual SOP Thanksgiving Potluck, taking advantage of the season and using the opportunity to promote diversity. The event was hosted by the Student National Pharmaceutical Association (SNPhA) and the SOP Diversity and Inclusion Committee. Lined on several tables were crockpots and containers of cuisine that included Italian, Polish, Japanese, Lebanese, Bulgarian and American dishes. More than 100 SOP students, staff and faculty gathered for a time of goodwill, cultural appreciation and food. “The Thanksgiving potluck and the presentation of different cultural customs were a wonderful way for the School of Pharmacy to celebrate our diversity and value our differences,” said SOP Dean Gireesh Gupchup, PhD. The culinary festivities also included a time of testimonials from several faculty, staff and students, explaining various cultural approaches to the holidays and food. Jingyang Fan, PharmD, clinical associate professor, talked about some of the traditions, activities and dishes surrounding China’s Mid-Autumn Festival and the Chinese New Year. Misty Gonzalez, PharmD, clinical associate professor, gave a presentation on Guatemalan culture. “Food is a fun way to introduce culture,” said Lakesha Butler, PharmD, clinical associate professor in the Department of Pharmacy Practice, chair of the SOP Diversity and Inclusion Committee and SNPhA faculty advisor. “Events like this plant small seeds to encourage growth from just respecting others who are different, to truly embracing others and facilitating an inclusive environment.” Read More

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An afternoon of friendship and fellowship were the main items at SIUE East St. Louis Charter High School’s (CHS) fifth annual Thanksgiving Day Meal Celebration, Tuesday, Nov. 21 at the East St. Louis Higher Education Campus. The main course was turkey, carved by CHS Assistant Director Willis Young. Also on the menu were ham, green beans, mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, cranberry sauce and rolls. A dessert reception, which included pumpkin pie, brownies, cookies and more. “I’m so excited that all of our students could be here, and enjoy the day and one another” said CHS Director Gina Jeffries. “It is now tradition that we serve a traditional Thanksgiving Day meal and take time for fellowship.” The Charter High School, the school’s administration and each other were repeated responses from students who stood to give thanks. “I’m grateful for this time,” said Taylor Brown, CHS sophomore. “It’s good that we can all come together with our friends and with no problems, eat and have a good time.”
Diversity & Inclusion Observances in December Include:

World AIDS Day
12–01
World AIDS Day is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, to show support for people living with HIV, and to commemorate those who have died from an AIDS-related illness.

Human Rights Day
12–10
Human Rights Day commemorates the day in 1948 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights”. The Declaration sets out universal values and a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations.

THE OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL DIVERSITY & INCLUSION EXTENDS

CONGRATULATIONS
TO THE GRADUATES OF DECEMBER 2017!

WINTER COMMENCEMENT CELEBRATIONS

Black Graduation Celebration
December 4th, 2017 | 4:00pm
MUC Conference Center

Rainbow Graduation Celebration
December 6th, 2017 | 4:00pm
MUC Conference Center

December Commencement
December 16th, 2017 | 9:00am
Vadalabene Center

Click Here for More Information
Hanukkah (or Chanukah) is an eight-day festival beginning on the 25th day of the Jewish month of Kislev each year. During this time, Jews commemorate the victory of the Maccabees over the armies of Syria in 165 B.C.E. and the subsequent liberation and “rededication” of the Temple in Jerusalem. According to religious stories, when the Maccabees entered the temple, they found a single jar of oil, which was sufficient to burn for only one day of light. However, the jar continued burning for eight days until a messenger could return with more oil.

The eight days of Hanukkah are attributed to this miracle of this single jar of oil. The central feature of the observance of Chanukah is the nightly lighting of the Chanukiah or menorah. One candle is lit on the first night, and an additional candle is lit on each successive night, until, on the eighth night, the menorah is fully illuminated. In short, Hanukkah celebrates the triumph of light over darkness and of spirituality over materiality. For Jews this holiday is also a celebration of family and heritage. Click Here To Learn More
Kwanzaa is a holiday honoring the culture and traditions of people of African origin. The word "Kwanza" means “first” in KiSwahili (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania). Dr. Maulana Karenga introduced the festival in 1966 to the United States as a ritual to welcome the first harvests to the home. Dr. Karenga created this festival for African Americans as a response to the commercialism of Christmas.

Celebrated by many African-Americans, Kwanzaa consists of a week of celebrations which ends with a feast and the exchange of gifts. During Kwanzaa, people decorate their homes with a candleholder called a kinara and light a candle in the home each evening.

The seven candles reflect Kwanzaa’s seven principles (nguzo saba): unity (umoja), self-determination (kujichagulia), collective work and responsibility (ujima), cooperative economics (ujamaa), purpose (nia), creativity (kuumba), and faith (imani). Five common sets of values are central to the activities of the week: ingathering, reverence, commemoration, recommitment, and celebration.

In celebration of Kwanzaa, people exchange gifts and have a banquet of food, often featuring recipes from various African countries. Participants greet one another with “Habari gani” which is KiSwahili for “how are you?” Click Here To Learn More
Christmas Day is a holiday celebrated in many countries, commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ.

In the 4th century, church officials decided to make the birth of Jesus as a holiday. Unfortunately, the Bible does not mention a date for his birth, but Pope Julius I chose December 25. Some believe that the church chose this date in an effort to adopt and absorb the traditions of the pagan Saturnalia festival. First called the Feast of the Nativity, the custom spread to Egypt by 432 and to England by the end of the sixth century. By the end of the eighth century, the celebration of Christmas had spread all the way to Scandinavia.

Christmas has evolved over two millennia into a worldwide religious and secular celebration, incorporating many pre-Christian, pagan traditions into the festivities along the way.

Today, Christmas is a time for family and friends to get together and exchange gifts. Additional popular customs include decorating Christmas trees, attending church, sharing meals with family and friends and, of course, waiting for Santa Claus to arrive.
Students, faculty, and staff we wish you the best of luck on your finals and safe travels.
We look forward to seeing you next year!

Happy Holidays!

Warm Wishes,
The Office of Institutional Diversity & Inclusion

Visit our website at
http://www.siue.edu/institutional-diversity-and-inclusion/
where our Institutional Diversity & Inclusion Programming Calendar is always updated with events and MCC hours.

The Multicultural Center is located on the 2nd floor in the Morris University Center (MUC)

NEW Hours:
Monday 10am - 3:00pm
Tuesday 10am - 3:00pm
Wednesday 10am - 3:00pm
Thursday 10am - 3:00pm
CLOSED FRIDAY

Keep in touch with the Office of Institutional Diversity & Inclusion!
Check out news & events on our social media websites:
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/siueidi/
Instagram: @siueidi
Twitter: @siueidi

See something missing from this newsletter, that you feel should be acknowledged by the SIUE community to celebrate diversity & inclusion? We want to hear from you!
Please contact the Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion at siueidi@siue.edu or call (618) 650-5382