Center for Intersectional Gender Studies Emphasizes Statewide Campus Inclusion

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The Utah State University Center for Intersectional Gender Studies & Research (CIGSR) has launched several initiatives designed to foster opportunities to connect USU communities and encourage connection across boundaries. These initiatives were designed to be inclusive and available to the entire state via the university’s Statewide Campus system.

The CIGSR has collaborated with Statewide Campuses to facilitate its goals of supporting intersectional and interdisciplinary research by faculty and students, providing outstanding intersectional and interdisciplinary instruction to students, and fostering a climate that promotes equality and inclusion for faculty, students and staff across all of USU’s campuses.

“The new center offers an exciting opportunity to forge new connections across USU’s Statewide Campuses,” stated Christy Glass, interim director of the Center for Intersectional Studies & Research. “Through interdisciplinary and inclusive programming, we aim to build a statewide community of faculty, students and staff. This is an exciting time to be at USU.”

One of the center’s initiatives is a co-sponsorship program that includes partnering and collaborating on events happening across campuses and supporting existing outreach initiatives led by students, faculty and staff. The center has worked to make all university events as inclusive as possible, making sure activities are accessible for statewide students, faculty and staff.

One event in particular is the Uintah Basin Speaker Series, based out of the Uintah Basin campus, and co-sponsored by CIGSR. The ongoing series tackles different types of inclusion efforts. Speakers already have spoken on the viewpoints and offer insights into Native American culture, the LGBTQIA+ community, finding comfort in uncomfortable situations and purposeful leadership. The speaker series will continue into 2022.

With the support of the center, Statewide Campuses was also able to provide lavender sashes to LGBTQIA+ graduates throughout USU’s system for commencement.

The center has also worked to launch a faculty teaching fellow program. This program works to make courses more accessible and inclusive to all students and supports faculty with needed resources to design new courses or redesign existing courses to be more culturally responsive and inclusive.

Uintah Basin lecturer from the Department of Teacher Education and Leadership, Marilyn Cuch, has provided a wealth of knowledge and guidance to help develop and support culturally responsive courses. The center is available to work with faculty members and have conversations about how to make classrooms more inclusive and to provide ideas to think about.

“I am thrilled to be a member of the advisory board for the Center for Intersectional Gender Studies & Research,” said Vice Provost Rich Etchberger. “Faculty at our Statewide Campuses can now be actively engaged in the research and teaching fellowship opportunities offered by the center. The new academic program offerings will empower our statewide students to achieve the center’s mission of Challenging Inequality Through Intersectional Research and Teaching.”

The research cluster program offered by the center is designed to connect faculty, colleges, and campuses across disciplines to create organic communities of individuals with like interests. The areas include race, ethnicity and indigenous studies, sexuality in the body, global and transnational issues and science, technology and the environment. The organizers host book groups, discussions, film screenings and provides opportunities to share research updates across disciplines.
The center has funded several scholarships, with students from across several campuses able to receive help with paying for schooling. Students who have received scholarships come from the Logan, Kaysville, Uintah Basin, Tooele, Salt Lake and Moab campuses, as well as out of state.

A variety of academic programs are available including the inclusive leadership certificate that prepares USU students to lead in an increasingly diverse and global world. The certificate is appropriate for students planning careers in the public, private and non-profit sectors. The sexuality studies minor offers undergraduate students a unique opportunity to study sexuality and the body – including the history and politics of sexual norms and practices, and how sexuality factors into identity and representation. The intersectional gender studies minor offers a unique program for undergraduate students seeking breadth and depth training in gender studies. The interdisciplinary program trains students to think critically about gender inequality at the intersection of race, ethnicity, social class, gender identity and expression, and sexual identity. Both the certificate and minors are available through USU’s statewide system.

To learn more and access additional resources for students, faculty and staff, visit usu.edu/intersections.