

Diana Rogers-Adkinson Diversity Statement

Equity has been the focus of my work throughout my career. My background in special education and counseling has helped me view the world from the perspective of how someone's life experiences and opportunities are shaped by those who understand them. I lead with these questions: Are my actions, and the actions of our institution socially just? Do we see the unmet needs of our students? How do we create belonging for all members of the campus community?

To live up to the work these questions ask I have strived to ensure the institutions I serve have the resources we need to attempt to create an equitable learning environment. As a part of the merger of Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, and Mansfield, I made application to participate in the *AASCU Student Success Equity Intensive* which supports universities to improve the outcomes for underrepresented and low-income students. This has allowed Commonwealth to review our practices at the foundational level. We developed a collaborative team of students, faculty, and staff for leading strategic change so that equity and inclusive practices would be at the heart of the new university. We have created a dashboard that allows transparent use of data to determine whether our practices are having the intended impact. In addition, I also serve on the PASSHE DEI committee as a CAO representative. We have launched a system wide plan with clear outcomes and expectations for a review of all policies and procedures with an equity lens. We also have developed processes for assessing the diversity of our curriculum including the extent that diverse scholars are represented in our curriculum and syllabi.

I have worked to diversify the faculty and leadership of Commonwealth University. I have successfully recruited two URM deans and also diversified the gender of the academic affairs leadership team. We also participate in the Frederick Douglass Scholars program to intentionally recruit early career diverse scholars. It is critical that students see aspirants in the classroom and leadership of the institution.

I have also strived to create opportunities to grow the number of URM students and students with disabilities in my programs. While at Southeast Missouri State I launched a Holmes Honors program to provide supports and services to URM/neurodivergent education majors. This model provided mentorship, resources for preparation on the state assessments, and opportunities to attend national conferences. The retention of URM in education increased 250% as a result of this program.

Finally, my research and writing has centered on a variety of areas specific to diversity and equity. Most recently, I have explored how female gender bullying prevents women from advancing in higher education. In addition, my past work focused on dual language learners with disabilities and effective practices for assessment to prevent mislabeling a student. I also provided expert witness testimony in a federal court case specific to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act regarding "child find" obligations of an urban district that was underserving URM students.

Collectively, I believe these examples illustrate my consistent commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusivity. As president I would lead by example and design for Eastern Illinois to be an exemplar in service to an equitable learning/working environments for all.