

Faculty Fellows Program

The Office for Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) Faculty Fellows support the advancement of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) at the University of Connecticut. For the 2023-2024 academic year, ODI is planning to sponsor up to 3 Faculty Fellows.

The ODI Faculty Fellows program provides leadership opportunities within and across the University in support of our mission to “advocate for access and equity, to welcome and celebrate the experiences of historically excluded and racially oppressed individuals and groups and to transform institutional climate and build a more welcoming and inclusive community” (ODI Mission Statement).

ODI Faculty Fellows: Purpose and Description

The ODI Faculty Fellows will be positioned to serve as a resource for DEIJ innovation and transformation. Faculty Fellows will serve as DEIJ specialists providing support to strategic efforts to advance DEIJ planning and development within and across academic units. The Faculty Fellow will, through their affiliation with ODI, leverage university-level insights and resources to support institution-wide and unit-level DEIJ efforts and response.

Each ODI Faculty Fellow will be situated in a strategic area of work over the academic year. In addition to area focused efforts to advance DEI, ODI Faculty Fellows will be expected to participate in bi-monthly meetings with ODI representatives; participate in training and development opportunities hosted by ODI; and submit a mid-year and annual report detailing their activities, accomplishments, and overall impact. The hours may range as the semester work unfolds, but on average the Faculty Fellow will commit to 4-8 hours a week to ODI during their time in the role.

Incentives:

ODI Faculty Fellows will receive:

- Funds of \$7,500 to be used to participate in external DEI and leadership training or to attend relevant conferences during the term of the fellowship.
- A course release arranged in consultation with the department head and dean.
- An assigned leadership mentor in the Office for Diversity and Inclusion to advise on professional development, leadership competency, and progress.

This intentional experience will be structured to support potential readiness for future leadership opportunities.

Strategic Areas of Work

For the upcoming year, we are seeking faculty fellows who will work in support of the following three strategic areas:

A. Middle Eastern Cultural Programs

In collaboration with the Director of Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives, this faculty fellow role will provide support for Middle Eastern Cultural Programs. MECP’s mission includes celebrating the intersectionality of identities, which it plans to achieve in partnership with units and departments like Middle Eastern Studies, Hillel, the Islamic Center, and the Abrahamic Program.

General duties for this strategic area include:

1. Provide advocacy and support for students’ concerns; provide information, referral, and appropriate counsel to individuals seeking support.

2. Organize periodic programs designed to provide awareness and understanding of current issues impacting the social, cultural, and educational success of MECP students at UConn.
3. Assist in researching diversity and inclusion topics related to the Middle Eastern issues and prepare reports of findings, as needed.
4. Liaise with relevant stakeholders and communities external to the University.
5. Foster relationships with faculty, academic departments, and programs to further the academic mission of the program and facilitate student support, mentoring services, and academically geared programming.

B. Synchrony JEDI Student Success Initiative

UConn is developing a Synchrony Equity-Focused Student Success Initiative to increase rates of student success for minority, low-income, and other student populations traditionally minoritized in higher education. One area of focus within this initiative is to enhance faculty and student research to support inclusive student experiences at UConn. Toward this goal, UConn will fund and centralize a new Justice, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (JEDI) Research focus for fellows and minoritized undergraduate students: This initiative will allow faculty and students to engage in research that works with minoritized students to understand what programs are working and which ones we would need to implement to meet the needs of these students. These create tailored support at each campus focused on student input. One ODI JEDI Faculty Fellow will be situated at one of the following regional campuses: Stamford, Hartford, and Waterbury.

General duties for this strategic area include:

1. Lead a research team composed of three JEDI undergraduate student research assistants at Waterbury, Stamford, and Hartford Regional campuses to engage in institutional research to understand what programs are working and which ones we would need to be adjusted to meet the needs of historically excluded and underserved students.
2. Establish baseline data for all dimensions of the Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) Survey and identify where equity gaps exist.
3. Examine existing resources already in place to address areas where equity gaps exist and identify 3-4 areas to prioritize for innovative solutions.
4. Provide a report on baseline data and present findings to institutional leaders and relevant stakeholders.

C. UCHC Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation

In Fall 2022, the University of Connecticut was selected as a [Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation \(TRHT\) Campus Center](#). TRHT is an initiative being advanced by the [American Association for Colleges and Universities \(AAC&U\)](#) and the [W.K. Kellogg Foundation \(WKKF\)](#). TRHT focuses on having higher education institutions engaging in narrative change/truth telling about their historical legacy of exclusion and working toward changing narratives informed by limited beliefs in human hierarchy as well as in racial healing where communities can engage in trusting relationship around their common humanity. The initiative aims to center community engagement in areas connected to segregation, law, and economy. Accordingly, this faculty fellow will work with the CDO and Associate Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at UConn Health with a specific focus on addressing racism as a public health threat both at UConn and across the State of Connecticut.

General duties for this strategic area include:

1. Coordinate TRHT projects related to addressing racism as a public health threat.
2. Organize TRHT annual research showcase.
3. Support the dissemination of TRHT strategic planning templates to units.
4. Serve as a trainer for the facilitation of Rx Racial Healing Circles.
5. Participate in the assessment of UCHC related TRHT initiatives.

Application Process

Potential candidates can self-nominate but must include with their application a letter of support from their academic deans. Your letter of interest (no more than 2 pages single-spaced) should respond to the following prompts:

- 1) Briefly explain which area(s) of work you are interested in and your associated relevant expertise.
- 2) Beyond the scope of this program, what are some of the long-term possibilities for the work you would like to engage in related to DEI?
- 3) What are some potential indicators of success for your participation in this program?

In addition, each nomination must be accompanied with a letter of support from the person's respective academic dean addressing the following questions:

- 1) How has this faculty member contributed to the advancement of DEI in your unit and/ or UConn more broadly?
- 2) How might this faculty member benefit from participating in this leadership development opportunity?
- 3) Describe your support of this faculty member for the ODI Faculty Fellow program.
- 4) What are some potential opportunities for supporting efforts to advance DEI that would be of benefit to your unit based on the applicant's proposed strategic area interests?

Please note that ODI will select only one Faculty Fellow for each of the strategic areas. Both the nominee's letter of interest and the dean's letter of support can be emailed together (if possible, as one PDF) to: Diversity@uconn.edu. Please put "Faculty Fellows" in the email subject line. **Deadline for submission of nominations: April 28th, 2023. ODI will make decisions and communicate them by May 8th, 2023.**