Welcome!

The Professional Development Office is pleased to offer its first newsletter! Since July, the new office has worked with employees in the Dean of the College division to create professional development resources, build employee learning communities and, therefore, increase our capacity for supporting the success of students.

Featured in this issue are several professional development initiatives and resources for administrators, office support, and service staff.

Join us
Office Launches Bias Awareness and Education Initiative

In September, President Bradley announced that Vassar would move forward in providing bias awareness and diversity workshops for employees, beginning with the Dean of the College division. With support from Dean of the College, Carlos Alamo Pastrana, and input from administrators in the division, the January 2019 Bias Awareness and Education sessions came together with great anticipation. More than 160 division employees administrators participated over a two-week period. The sessions were facilitated by Dr. Diane Goodman and Dr. Tanya Williams, two highly regarded diversity consultants in higher education circles. Participants discussed social identity, stereotypes and bias, sexism, racism, homophobia, ableism, anti-Semitism, power dynamics, and other inequalities---in large and small groups. Among administrators, office support staff, safety and security, and campus dining staff, the consensus is that more of these and other professional development sessions are needed. Plans are underway to develop an extended curriculum to continue this campus work; before and after the January trainings, many have participated in implicit bias workshops (see Making the Unconscious Conscious....).

The following is a sampling of participant experiences and perspectives from the January program.

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I appreciated that there was space to reflect, speak with others, and develop our understandings.

I would have liked some building tools to be offered to help navigate and skill building.

It is nice to get together as a division and talk about our experiences in a safe environment.
Needed more time. Thank you for giving us this forum to share and engage! My groups taught me a lot about themselves and myself.

The session was very informative. It challenged my comfort level but it was a good thing to do. I wish the next session can be with a mix of staff and higher level personnel.

Stereotypes are wrong. Stress more how they are wrong.

Important discussions; the more we talk the safer it feels to share and take risks.

I think it would have been great to focus on active work we can do more specifically. I also think it would be critical to engage with our positions of power in the institution more directly.

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**Onboarding for New Employees**

Senior Associate Dean of the College, Ed Pittman, met individually with seven division administrators who were hired between August and January. This was the first step in developing a comprehensive onboarding process for new employees in the division. Next up is the implementation of a Supervisor's Checklist for welcoming new team members. In collaboration with Human Resources, this process aims to support all new hires to ensure that their first year and beyond is inviting, inclusive, and supportive of the role they play in student success and within the [Dean of the College area](#).

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**Early Career Administrators Gather for Lunch and Dialogue Event**

The first of three Lunch and Dialogue events for early career administrators in the Dean of the College division took place on March 27 in the College Center Multipurpose Room. Eleven administrators representing the areas of Access and Educational Opportunity, Campus Activities, Career Development, Residential Life, Sexual Assault and Violence Prevention (SAVP), Health Promotion and Education, and Student Growth and Engagement (ALANA Center and Transitions) reflected on their early career experiences and aspirations as administrators. Setting the context for the 90-minute session were Stacy Bingham, Assistant Dean of Studies/Director of Career Development and Luis Inoa, Associate Dean of the College for Residential Life and Wellness. Highlights of the dialogue included observations about work-life balance, graduate education, friendships, gaining
credibility and respect as new administrators, networking and family as anchors, and how does one locate their “compass” in such a fast-paced and high impact profession.

Many thanks to Emily Mattison, Nicole Wong '15, Samantha Hoher '17, Atiya McGhee, Saira Ayala-Santiago, Michael Drucker, Alquan Higgs, Zachary Batchelder, Capria Berry, Will Rush, and Juleen Graham for making the first dialogue rich and informing. The next sessions are scheduled for April 17 (guest administrator, Dean Alamo-Pastrana) and May 15.

Making the Unconscious Conscious: Recognizing and Countering Implicit Bias

Have you ever wondered how unconscious or implicit bias can affect the campus workplace or student learning and support? According to the Kirwan Institute on Race and Ethnicity at Ohio State University, our implicit or unconscious biases comprise the attitudes and stereotypes that affect our daily actions and decisions. Read more about implicit and unconscious bias by clicking here for a series of interactive modules created by the Kirwan Institute (the Institute conducted a workshop for faculty and administrators during Vassar’s 2018 All College Day). At Vassar, Dean Pittman from the Professional Development Office has facilitated two-hour workshops for several Dean of the College offices, including Campus Activities, Career Development, Health Promotion and Education, SAVP, Health Services, Safety and Security, and Student Growth and Engagement. The interactive workshops have provided opportunities for administrators and support staff to explore how bias impacts everyday decisions and work environments. Essentially, implicit (and explicit) bias interferes with our ability to treat others with fairness and equity.

Harvard University’s Project Implicit offers an online Implicit Association Test (IAT) to explore your implicit associations about gender, age, race, sexual orientation, and other topics. It’s a good first step on the journey!

Contact edpittman@vassar.edu if you would like more information.
Gender Inclusive Language and Women's Leadership Sessions Featured

We were fortunate to offer two pivotal workshops early in the academic year.

Capria Berry, Director of Transitions, and Michael Drucker, Associate Director of Residential Life, facilitated a “no-question-too-small” *Introduction to Gender Inclusivity and Pronouns* workshop on October 30 and November 2. The session was designed for administrative support staff members; sixteen employees from the offices of Campus Activities, Campus Dining, Career Development, Dean of Studies, Fellowships and Advising, Professional Development, Residential Life, and Student Growth and Engagement participated. Two staff members from the Registrar's Office also attended. Several participants shared how much they appreciated receiving basic definitions and understanding more about supporting students across the gender spectrum.

On October 16, eleven administrators attended a leadership retreat for women, entitled *The Power of You: Women Taking the Lead*. The day-long retreat in the Faculty Parlor was led by Wendy Maragh Taylor, Associate Dean of the College for Student Engagement and Growth. Participants identified strengths and barriers as leaders, how to empower others, and envisioned paths for achieving specific goals. Equally important were discussions about institutional and systemic barriers that may impact leadership experiences. Look for similar workshops in the future.

Professional Development Online Resource

While online learning may not be for everyone, there are some great resources out there. One is Linkedin Learning, which you can access with your Vassar Username and Password. Formerly Lynda.com, [Linkedin Learning](https://www.linkedinlearning.com) is free to Vassar administrators, staff, faculty and students and has a library of over 1,000 interactive learning modules on topics ranging from communication skills to computer/technical skills, conflict resolution and managing, to implicit bias and diversity-related topics.
Go to one.vassar.edu and click the LinkedIn Learning button and explore.

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