



Kayla Harris



Mya Ford



Taylor Johnson



Kayla White



Joe Chen



Adele Bradley

Six Paths with Purpose

DUQUESNE HONORS SPIRIT OF DIVERSITY AWARD WINNERS

Unmatched passion. A commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. The drive to lead and never stop looking forward.

Six Duquesne students were honored for these reasons and more at the virtual Spirit of Diversity event in April 2021.

Attended by more than 100 guests, the awards ceremony honored outstanding student leaders who exemplify the belief that equity and opportunity begin at home. Hill Harper, humanitarian, best-selling author and award-winning actor currently starring on ABC's TV drama, *The Good Doctor*, served as keynote speaker.

Selecting these award winners? It was no easy task.

"Each brings a level of passion that is unmatched," said Dr. Anthony Kane, director of the Center for Excellence in Diversity and Student Inclusion (formerly the Office of Diversity and Inclusion), which sponsors the awards.

A CULTURE OF CARE

The award winners have lived the University's mission: They've become trusted partners and invested the time and energy that authentic collaboration demands—all in an effort to create a more diverse and inclusive campus community.

"Each of these students has contributed something to the office that has helped us move forward towards becoming a center—whether it's their outreach to peers and colleagues, advocating for social justice and equity in their classrooms, or just having sit-down conversations with administrators and University partners to describe and outline how DU could become a more inclusive campus environment," says Kane.

Sixth-year pharmacy student and award winner Joseph Chen of Westfield, N.J., has been a director for the pre-orientation program and served on the executive boards of Asian Students Association and Duquesne's NAACP chapter.

"I've always wanted to start a bigger outreach program with Duquesne students who may not be aware of internalized racism, misogyny or homophobia," he said. "I wanted to teach people about these subjects in a way that is more from a place of understanding than a place of lecturing."

In addition to creating a safe, comfortable space for students on campus, Chen has stepped up to the front lines during the pandemic, volunteering in local neighborhoods to administer COVID-19 vaccines.

TACKLING HEALTH CARE DISPARITIES

Award winner Maya Ford, of Forest Hill, Md., graduated with a B.S. in nursing in May 2021.

At Duquesne, she served as president of the University's chapter of the NAACP, was crowned Miss Black Duquesne 2019 and was involved with numerous organizations with a strong outreach in the local community such as Strong Women, Strong Girls Pittsburgh.

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"I'm a huge advocate for minority students and making sure they feel OK and comfortable and in creating a safe space for them," said Ford.

Off campus, she received training as a patient care technician at the University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Medical Center's intensive care unit (ICU) and intermediate care unit and worked in the ICU with COVID-19 patients.

Ford has returned to Maryland to work at the University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Medical Center, where she hopes to deliver exceptional care and focus on decreasing health care disparities with minority pregnant women in urban areas.

Like Ford, award winner and fifth-year physician assistant studies major Kayla E. White of Bear, Del., aspires to work in obstetrics and gynecology as an advocate for women of color.

White served as president of the Theta Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and was chair of the Duquesne National Panhellenic Council. She was a resident assistant for three years and was crowned the first Miss Black Duquesne in 2018.

"Diversity, equity and inclusion to me mean being able to enter into any space, being open to the ideas and opinions of others and respecting the backgrounds that everyone comes from," said White.

Award winner Taylor Johnson of Pennsauken, N.J., graduated with a B.S. in nursing in May 2021 and plans to pursue a career as a labor and delivery or cardiothoracic nurse.

On campus, she served as the president of Ebony Women for Social Change and was on the board of the NAACP chapter. As a member of Strong Women, Strong Girls Pittsburgh, she mentored local elementary school girls and was inspired by their optimism and energy.

"They show me there's always a light at the end of the tunnel. I just hope they keep that joyful happiness," said Johnson.

CREATING A FUTURE FOR EVERYONE

Award winner Adele Bradley of Columbia, S.C., graduated in May 2021 with a degree in international relations and is pursuing a master's in public affairs at Cornell University.

She served as the senior vice president of programming for the Black Student Union, secretary for the NAACP chapter and treasurer for the Theta Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Bradley also was a resident assistant and part

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of the Community Engagement Scholars Program, where she volunteered with the Hill District Consensus Group to advocate for racial and economic justice.

"I want to be compassionate and useful in order to make a difference. So, I am pursuing a master's in public affairs because I have a devotion to serving my community," said Bradley.

Award winner Kayla Harris also has spent much of her time and energy at Duquesne advocating for local communities. A Beaver County, Pa., native, she graduated in May 2021 with a double major in psychology and women's and gender studies after arriving at Duquesne as an undeclared transfer student. She's now pursuing a master's in counseling psychology at Duquesne.

Harris was accepted into the Center for Community-Engaged Teaching and Research Scholars' program, where she worked at the Macedonia Family and Community Enrichment Center, an organization that supports families in need of food, housing and educational resources.

"I really wanted to get involved and find different ways to help people," said Harris. "It's a really good connection to reality off campus—graduating and realizing you can make these connections. This type of impact can be even grander."

On campus, Harris served as a resident assistant in St. Martin Hall and received the 2021 Student Life Leadership Award. Additionally, she was executive vice president of the Black Student Union, social media chair for Duquesne Cultural Ambassadors, internal audit chair for Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and cohort coordinator of Strong Women, Strong Girls Pittsburgh.

COMMITTED TO THE WORK

"These award winners are special because they're well-rounded students inside and outside the classroom," Amber Satterwhite, administrative assistant at the Center, said. "Whenever we ask them for anything, they're there. And they excel in their student groups and academics."

For Kane, it's an honor to work closely with student leaders and to see them realize their potential.

"They've stood the test of time and have been consistent in their efforts. They will continue to be involved as they graduate and become excellent alumni," he said. ♦



Visit duq.edu/magazine to hear more from these student award winners.



DR. ANTHONY KANE, E'19

DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN DIVERSITY AND STUDENT INCLUSION

If there is one thing that's abundantly clear about Dr. Anthony Kane, it's his dedication to the mission of—and to the students served by—the newly renamed Center for Excellence in Diversity and Student Inclusion.

"You have to think about what we're called to do in our mission, which is to serve God by serving students, and that's unconditional. There's no asterisk that says 'unless,'" he said.

"We come to work every day to serve them. They bring a fire and passion to our center that makes us really want to keep going," said Kane, who was named the center's director in August 2020.

That fire in the belly is apparently in everything Kane says when talking about the center, the students it serves, and a person's need to feel welcome and understood. The center provides support services and opportunities for learning; promotes camaraderie, unity and understanding; and provides programming and scholarships for diverse students who enrich the University and the community at large.

While Kane acknowledges the center serves Black students more than any other population, he wants to make sure all diverse student populations feel at home at Duquesne.

"When people think about diversity and inclusion, they think about these ideas and initiatives that are centered on one particular population of people or one particular type of person. In reality, inclusion is about the idea of providing everyone the opportunity to achieve at the same level," he said.

"We are building relationships out of kindness. I truly believe those who feel they have a rightful place in a community are the ones most likely to succeed. Any time you walk into a room and you know your people are there, you're more inclined to stay in that space. As we create a more inclusive campus environment, our students will perform better. We contribute to that perfect fit idea by making students feel they belong."

Born and raised in Uptown just a few blocks from campus, Kane earned bachelor's and master's degrees in social work from California University of Pennsylvania in 2011 and 2012, respectively. He started working at Duquesne in 2013 as a minority development associate before he was hired as assistant resident director and then resident director of Towers. He was assistant director of residence life for two years while earning his doctor of education in educational leadership at Duquesne.

Kane was instrumental in renaming the center from its former name as the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. His reasons were simple but profound.

"I realize that when I saw the word 'excellence' used on campus, it typically was used in spaces that represented white students. What we have done was excellent; we provided excellent support to students, and I wanted that excellence to represent us."

That commitment to inclusive excellence encompasses every aspect of personhood—including age, citizenship, disability, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation and veteran status.

"The diversity is who we are. The student inclusion is what we do. And excellence is what we represent," he said. "We didn't change much. What we did is expand it. We wanted to make sure that students know who we are here to serve." ♦