

Community and Collaboration

Dear Vanderbilt community,

When I see or hear the words “community engagement,” my mind almost instantly begins to create a word cloud: people, proximity, collaborating, connecting, problem-solving, partnerships, dialogue, transparency, relationships, parents, students, staff, faculty, government, schools, businesses, faith leaders. The list could go on and on. To me, community engagement means people with similar interests and connections coming together, sharing and acting on an overarching vision for the well-being of the community. It means working together to identify problems and develop effective solutions more accurately.

Community engagement is something I value, both as a member of this community and as a leader, because it is rooted in relationship-building and respect. It builds deeper, stronger and more trusting relationships between an institution and the communities it serves. Simply put, trust is important if the goal is for the community to trust one’s expertise in planning and implementing a project or program that impacts them. The better informed and more actively involved community members can be, the more likely they are to trust those engaging with them.

Community engagement also leads to better decision-making when addressing major issues. Community members know the unknown. There will be ideas, issues, concerns, history and context that one may not be aware of or have a good grasp on, but on which the community will be able to shine light. Through community engagement, we expand our understanding and avoid landmines that could potentially set a project or program back days, weeks, months or even years. When community members are engaged regularly, the satisfaction rating of an institution almost instantly increases. A community that feels well informed and has an opportunity to provide input will be happier with the institution and likely more satisfied with the decision-making process.

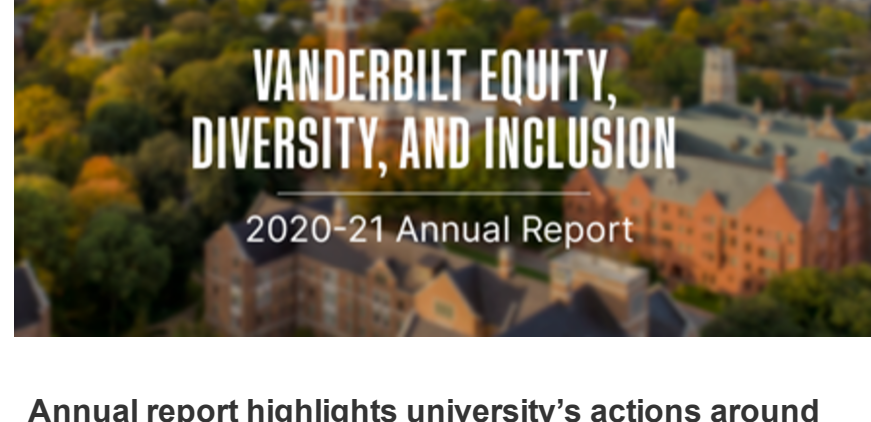
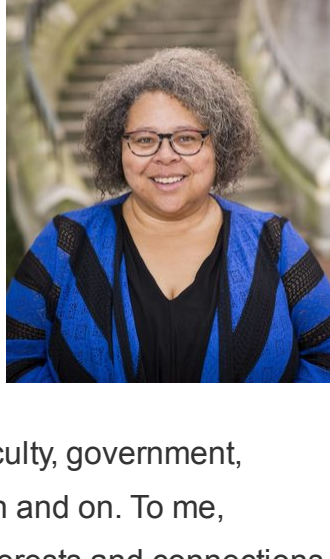
Satisfaction leads to acceptance. When community members are satisfied, even when the outcome is not what they had hoped for, they will be more likely to accept the end result because their point of view, needs and hopes were taken into consideration.

Community engagement is a commitment to finding ways for community members to be informed, consulted, involved and empowered, which leads to long-term and sustainable outcomes, relationships and discourse.

Engagement matters!

Tara Faith Williams, M.Div.

Chief of Staff, Office of the Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion



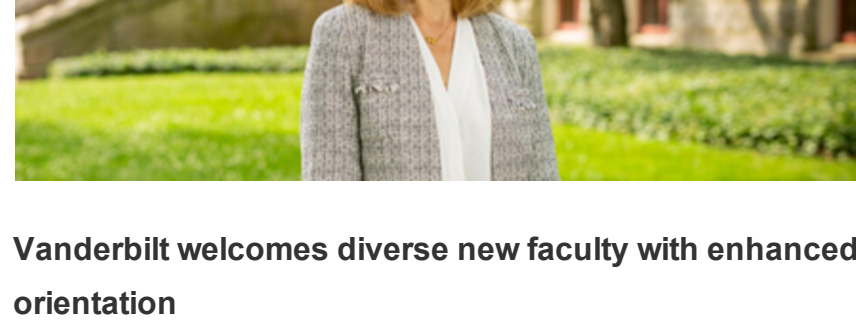
Annual report highlights university’s actions around equity, diversity and inclusion

Vanderbilt has released its 2020–21 Report for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion highlighting the university’s commitment to several actionable objectives that were outlined in the July 2020 commitment to strengthening equity, diversity and inclusion at the university. [Read More +](#)



Panel to share experiences on allyship and what it means to be an ally

Dr. André L. Churchwell, vice chancellor for equity, diversity and inclusion and chief diversity officer, will host a panel of Vanderbilt faculty and students to discuss meaningful allyship and steps one can take to be a good ally on Wednesday, Nov. 10, at 4 p.m. CT. [Read More +](#)



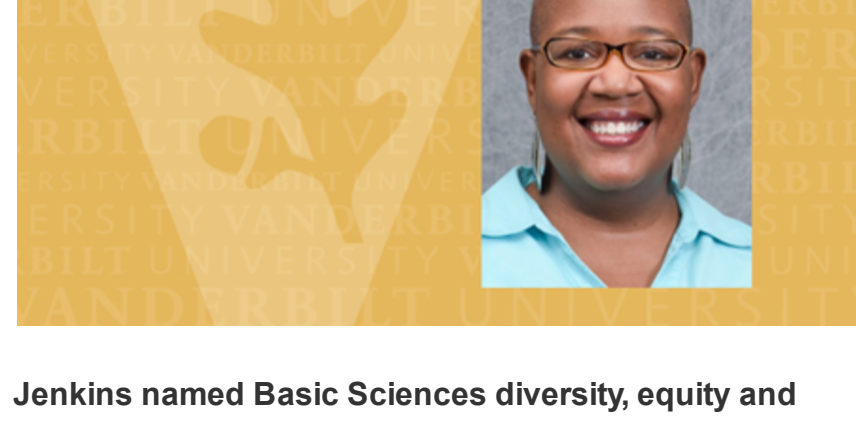
Vanderbilt welcomes diverse new faculty with enhanced orientation

As Vanderbilt’s Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs C. Cybele Raver marks her first 100 days at the university, colleagues reflect on her principles and values as a leader and scholar. [Watch Video +](#)



K.C. Potter Center honors legacy of LGBTQI support at Vanderbilt; learn about available resources

October is LGBTQI History Month, a time when the Vanderbilt community comes together to celebrate the history of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex individuals, and the history of the gay rights and related civil rights movements, through programming and events. Central to these activities is the K.C. Potter Center, a hub for outreach and support for the LGBTQI community and allies on campus. [Read More +](#)



Jenkins named Basic Sciences diversity, equity and inclusion program manager

The Vanderbilt University School of Medicine Basic Sciences has named Felysha Jenkins as its first diversity, equity and inclusion program manager. [Read More +](#)



Vanderbilt celebrates Asian Pacific Islander Desi American Heritage Month

While Asian Pacific Islander Desi American Heritage Month is officially celebrated in May, Vanderbilt’s celebration takes place annually during the fall semester from October to early November. APIDA is a celebration honoring the history, cultural diversity and unique contributions of Asian, Pacific Islander and Desi Americans. [Read More +](#)



Robinson named president of National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers

Renâ A.S. Robinson, associate professor of chemistry and Dorothy J. Wingfield Phillips Chancellor Faculty Fellow, has been named president of the National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers. [Read More +](#)



Kirkland Hall renovation to enhance accessibility, upgrade infrastructure

Kirkland Hall, central to Vanderbilt’s history and widely recognized as the university’s signature building, will undergo a significant renovation that is reflective of the institution’s purpose and commitment to excellence. [Read More +](#)

Get Connected: Upcoming Events

[Vanderbilt Farmers' Market is back on Thursdays through Oct. 28](#)

[Apply for Meharry-Vanderbilt CERC mini-grants through Oct. 29](#)

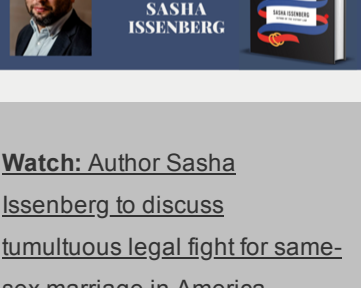
[11/2 - Fall Staff Assembly to be held Nov. 2; staff award nominations now open.](#)

[11/8 - Divinity School Harrod Lecture with Jennifer Harey, Ph.D.](#)

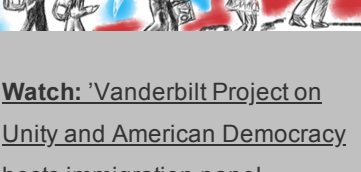
[11/10 - Inclusive Book Group to discuss "Interior Chinatown."](#)

[For employees and staff - Access televideo counseling services](#)

Continuing the Conversation



[Watch: Author Sasha Issenberg to discuss tumultuous legal fight for same-sex marriage in America](#)



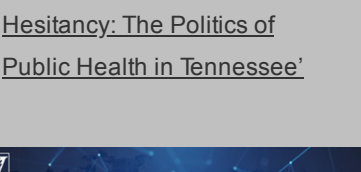
[Watch: "Vanderbilt Project on Unity and American Democracy hosts immigration panel"](#)

'DORES IN DIALOGUE

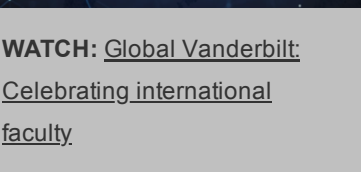
[Watch: 'Dores in Dialogue: 'A Conversation About the History of Hispanic Heritage Month](#)



[WATCH: Vanderbilt Project on Unity and American Democracy and VUMC present 'Vaccine Hesitancy: The Politics of Public Health in Tennessee'.](#)



[WATCH: Global Vanderbilt Celebrating international faculty](#)



[WATCH: Vanderbilt Leaders honor Rep. John Lewis and civil rights history of Nashville](#)

Resources

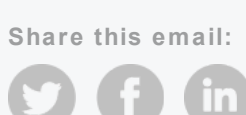
Heritage Month

Workshops

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