UMD

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA DULUTH

Driven to Discover℠

We All Belong 2020 Faculty-Staff Artist Statements

Jennifer Berges (she/her), Office of Development, *Diversity on Campus*

Being Latina has always been a part of my identity and yet rarely did I ever feel the need to defend or promote it. Since moving to Duluth seven years ago, I have struggled to find an authentic sense of belonging that honors all aspects of my identity. Through knitting, sewing and crafting, I continue to find community, comfort and a sense of place. I created this quilt in the traditional Japanese boro style of repurposing scraps of fabric. I salvaged pieces from a dress I made for my daughter's birthday, the little blue stuffed whale I made my son, a pillowcase for a friend, and one of my spouse's old dress shirts. I also included vintage Japanese fabrics and a piece of fabric purchased years ago for a dress I've yet to make. All stitched together as a reminder who I am and who I am becoming.

R.B. Brooks (they/them), Office of Diversity and Inclusion, *Inclusivity: A Welcoming Campus*

Envisioning an educational environment where everyone is welcome & affirmed includes ridding ourselves of systems of policing. These systems manifest in more ways than just uniformed individuals. We're all complicit in policing each other's thoughts, feelings, and behavior, the way we dress, speak, move, love, live. This complicity further enables & legitimizes the existence of police departments, border patrol, ICE, & other agencies charged with the false project of protection.

On a welcoming campus, we would reject compulsions to police each other & eliminate agencies founded in the continued violence & control of systemically disenfranchised people. This depiction of a simple idea, "NO COPS," is made complicated by our conditioned response to call law enforcement when we encounter feelings of insecurity. When we picture a "criminal," what characteristics come to mind & why? How are we perpetuating the exclusion & incarceration of those who match our socialized image of a criminal? And when do we finally say "NO"?

Judges Choice for Staff award:

Rachel Gilbertson (she/her), Employee Health & Wellbeing Center, *Inclusivity: A Welcoming Campus*

“Planting Seeds of Love & Kindness”

When seeds of love and kindness are planted, strong roots begin to form allowing us to be grounded in presence and connected to ourselves and each other. By cultivating compassion and nurturing self-acceptance, we grow into who we are and blossom into who we are becoming. This creates space for others to do the same.

With tender care and some growing pains, our roots deepen and a solid trunk is formed. Both offer stability as winds of change blow through. Our branches reach for each other and our roots become intertwined as we stand in our collective strength. We transform with the seasons, show our true colors, and learn the art of letting go. The cycle of grounding & growing and rooting & rising continues as our seeds of love and kindness grow into connection and belonging.

Linda LeGarde Grover (she/her), American Indian Studies, *Diversity on Campus*

I made this belt to wear with my Ojibwe ribbon dress years ago.

LeeAnn Myers (she/her), Office of Development, *Inclusivity: A Welcoming Campus*

My mosaic represents our cellular bodies, what we are all made up of in terms of biology, and how that connects each of us as humans and on a wider scale, how that connects us to the Earth and the Cosmos. I used found objects from the shores of Lake Superior, all human-made objects that give a different perspective on what was once trash from the Lake. In relation to Inclusivity, this piece represents our connections to one another and to our environment.

Paul Ranelli (he/him), Pharmacy, *Diversity on Campus*

Nature can teach us a lot, if we pay attention. Diversity in nature boosts our ecosystem’s efficiency where each species, no matter how small, all have an important role to play. A larger number of plants means a greater variety of crops. Greater diversity ensures natural sustainability for all life forms. Nature can teach us a lot, if we pay attention.

Cheryl Reitan (she/her), Marketing and Public Relations, *Civility: Anti-bullying*
I wrote this piece: "That is Not Acceptable" about a moment when two students and I were shouted at with a hurtful comment in the Kirby Commons. At the time, I didn't know how to respond and it bothered me so much, and I felt so helpless in the moment, I asked many people what I should have done. The answer that felt the strongest to me is that I should have called out the bullying behavior and told everyone who saw and heard it, "that is not acceptable." I have witnessed terrible bullying since then and added those incidents in the poem.

Judges Choice for Faculty award:
Ladona Tornabene, Ph.D., MCHES (she/her), Applied Human Sciences, *Diversity on Campus*
This print is entitled Diversity due to the variety of colors within it that were intensified by the recent rain. The strong red hues of the leaf's vein reminded me of a vessel within the human body and the water, of the oceans that divide humanity. I was inspired to write: "Although separated by water, we are all bonded by blood. Every heartbeat provides an opportunity to connect!"
Backstory:
This rare image was taken on campus in 2004. Had not the leaf recently fallen from the tree, it would have curled, repelling the water. Had not the rain descended at a certain consistency, the drops would not have formed. Had I not been there seeking and ready to preserve that precious moment, I may have unknowingly crushed it instead.

Rebecca M. Webster (she/her), American Indian Studies, *Diversity on Campus*
People from different backgrounds come together on UMD's campus. This doll is the embodiment of how Native American students, faculty, and staff, often walk in two worlds. We maintain our Native American languages, cultures, and traditions while living in modern society. To honor Oneida culture, she carries a braid of traditional heirloom corn, an historic staple food among Oneida people. She also wears a traditional Oneida overdress, beaded skirt, and leather moccasins. To recognize the modern world we live in, she also carries math and science textbooks, is wearing a backpack, and has sunglasses propped on her head.

Links:
We All Belong story

Mia Martinez: Tongues Untamed
Rikkia Walker: My Skin Glows
Riss Leitzke: We are Trees, Trees are Us
Liza Wood: Untitled
Jenessa Iverson: Untitled
Hina Durrani: We Belong Here
Morgan Wittman: This is me ASL
Bronze Artwork: Bronze Award Artwork
Bronze Artist Statements: Bronze Award Artist Statements
Faculty Artist Statements: Faculty/Staff Artist Statements
Faculty Art: Faculty Artwork
Cheryl Reitan Spoken Word: That is Unacceptable