

# Meet Danielle Pullen, DEI Program Coordinator at the Health Sciences Center

Differences define the obstacles we encounter. So, what can be done to remove those obstacles?

Danielle Pullen has embarked in a journey with the office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to find answers to her question. Although a member of the office for almost two years as a temporary employee, Danielle has been selected as the DEI program coordinator at the Health Sciences Center in December 2020.

Originally from Edmond, Oklahoma, Danielle earned a bachelor of science in human development and family science from Oklahoma State University and has worked in nonprofit organizations before deciding to focus on higher education to continue her work in diversity and inclusion. In her words: “DEI has always been a part of my professional career. In all my positions, I have been the only person of color for people with diverse backgrounds. I have always tried to practice inclusion, learn from others, and be an ally to folks who are from communities different than mine.”

For Danielle, inclusion is a way living. She stated that the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the University of Oklahoma has become the place “to practice what I preached. I wanted to grow in my DEI knowledge and help others grow.”

Developing communities that value diversity is challenging. As Danielle explains: “Diversity is more than just the physical attributes that a person possesses. Diversity is the intersection of identities that makes the individual. All these differences make us encounter life’s obstacles very differently. We must change current policies and practices so that they will be more equitable rather than equal, in order for all to be successful in overcoming their obstacles.”

Danielle’s interest for DEI developed gradually by volunteering with diverse communities. She volunteers as a mentor for the Comeback Kids Society, a nonprofit that provides training about leadership for teens at the Oklahoma County Juvenile Detention Center. She is also on the Young Professional board for the CARE Center, a child advocacy center committed to preventing any form of child abuse through education.

Now Danielle will continue to infuse her energy and experience in her current position as the DEI program coordinator at the Health Sciences Center, where she assists the assistant vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusion in implementing and coordinating all training sessions, programs, and events for students, staff, and faculty.

She is elated to continue to do DEI work and grateful “for the opportunity to persist in doing work for the campus and work along with such an inspiring team.” OU is the place where she can work to remove obstacles to in people’s paths.

