



DR. KIMBERLY A. TRUONG
Chief Equity Officer at MGH Institute of Health Professions

Dr. Kimberly Truong and The Immeasurable Value of Relationship Building

By Evan J. Cutts

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Champion and 2021 Publisher's All-Inclusive Award Winner Dr. Kimberly Truong shares a noble vision for battling inequities in health and patient care.

"I work at MGH Institute of Health Professions (IHP), the only degree-granting institution within the Mass General Brigham system," says Dr. Truong. "They say 'Our graduate students aspire to become physical therapists,

occupational therapists, physician assistants, genetic counselors, nurses, and speech language pathologists. My vision for IHP is to move the institution [and our students] toward fulfilling its mission to advance care for a diverse society."

Dr. Truong works diligently to ensure "each member of the IHP community can thrive and succeed, free from systemic barriers and each member of the IHP community will develop skills and knowledge so they can lead organizations and make them more equitable."

As an educator and DEI leader with two decades of experience, Dr. Truong understands what it takes to have a positive impact. "One must know the landscape that they are in," she explains. "It is imperative that folks in DEI positions understand the experiences of folks in the communities they serve. They should endeavor to have listening sessions and informational meetings with as many people as possible when they enter an organization to better understand the history of DEI, successes, challenges, opportunities, and the individuals who have contributed to this work."

"As DEI leaders who work across an organization, we are also able to see patterns and gaps that may exist to further develop institutional strategies and initiatives to transform our organizations. As an impactful leader, we must also communicate the work that we are doing and report back organization-wide and especially to the individuals and communities most affected by our DEI efforts."

This year students and faculty return to campus and the Institute of Health Professions will reach a critical milestone in their organizational DEI strategy.

"In 2022, we will be finalizing our Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) core competencies for faculty staff and students," Dr. Truong states. "We will be continuing to work on greater alignment of our JEDI principles with organizational practices, such as working with our enrollment management team to develop recommendations for admissions, financial aid, and affordability and curriculum integration, including clinical experiences. We will be continuing to capacity build so that there is collective ownership of JEDI work across the IHP."

Equally important to their JEDI goals, Dr. Truong emphasizes the value of community and relationship building in their work. "We [are] also working on community (re)building as many of us are zoomed out and seek to reconnect as we physically come back to campus. While we are accountable for metrics to demonstrate success, it is the things that we cannot measure that are most important. Relationship building is not transactional and is not measurable, but it is what drives institutional change and the ability for us as DEI leaders to collaborate and build in community with others."

"This work is emotional work that many of us are passionate about," she continues. "It can take a toll on us, so recognize your body when it tells you it is time to take care of yourself. Self-care, community care, and structural care are critical to being able to sustain ourselves in this work."