Saying goodbye has always been difficult for me, and this time is no exception. In my final week at Oregon State University, I reflected on the majesty of Oregon, and I know I will often return to enjoy not only the state’s natural beauty but friendships made. It has been my distinct pleasure to serve as OSU’s inaugural Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer.

Thank you to all who attended my going away celebration at the Black Cultural Center. It was a fitting location, because we must recognize the students who challenged the university during the Students of Color Speak Out in 2015. They moved then-President Ed Ray to act.

We must carefully examine the outcomes of our efforts. I continue to ask four questions: How are we creating opportunities for student success? How are we identifying opportunities for student success? How are we communicating those successes? How are we celebrating those successes?

I am not a chief diversity officer who struggled for support. I know my work was valued. I believe every member of this community understands how important this work is for the future of OSU and the state of Oregon. I am not saying there weren’t times when I had to have difficult conversations, felt frustrated or shared a perspective that was not universally appreciated. That comes with the territory. However, I always felt respected.

I believe we have an incredibly strong foundation on which to grow. I am equally confident that Scott Vignos possesses the leadership skills and vision to continue advancing DEI efforts at Oregon State. The future remains very bright indeed, and I thank you for your support.

Thank you to all who have helped realize those goals, and I look forward to seeing OSU’s Diversity Strategic Plan 2.0.

Those of you who know me, know that I have a bias toward action. We know what the issues are, we know where the challenges are located, and therefore, we must act to advance the institution. It is OK to try and fail, but it is essential to act.

Ask challenging questions of ourselves and the university. What should we be doing to address gatekeeping courses and practices that prevent talent at OSU from succeeding? Start with faculty and staff who have demonstrated care and commitment to underrepresented students and create environments where all truly feel welcomed. We must act!

I also see a future where Oregon State is one of the first larger four-year colleges and an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution. We must act!

The last 18 months have been difficult. Between a pandemic and violence visited upon Black and brown communities, every OSU community member has been impacted. We have been forced to confront difficult truths while cultivating empathy and care, at times across great philosophical divides. And through this time — in some cases because of it — the work continued. This issue of Taking Action highlights some of the amazing efforts of OSU faculty, students, employees and volunteers to advance equity and make change despite uniquely challenging circumstances. We are excited to celebrate them and amplify their work here.

We are also in transition. I am excited to step into the role of interim vice president and chief diversity officer. I have been a member of OID since its opening in 2016 and worked closely with Charlene to steward our work. I am very thankful for Charlene’s guidance and leadership. I am also grateful for the many contributions of Allison Davis-White Eyes and Brandi Douglas, who departed OSU to new opportunities — having dedicated decades of leadership to the university.

We are poised to build on existing relationships and cultivate new ones, to continue advancing inclusive excellence at every level at OSU. We have made great progress and have more to do.

Scott A. Vignos, J.D.
Interim Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer
TAKING ACTION

Here to stay—with professional legal help.

Undocumented students face multiple challenges while pursuing their education, especially the risk of deportation. And while there are avenues for legal immigration status, there are also complex, inconsistent and changing federal immigration policies that make navigating the process an obstacle students cannot reasonably handle on their own. Fortunately, Oregon State students don’t have to.

Thanks to student activism, the Here to Stay advocacy group and the Dreaming Beyond Borders Resource Center, ASOSU Legal Services began offering advice and consultation on immigration issues over the winter term. As with other legal assistance provided through ASOSU, these services are funded by student fees, and there is no additional charge to students. Appointments can be made by phone at 541-737-4165 or by email at assos@accessthelaw.org. A variety of other resources are available at undocumented.oregonstate.edu.

Sienna Kaske, ‘21, was one of the students who advocated for the expansion. She says undocumented students had been asking for years for legal assistance with immigration issues. In many cases, students were having to go to attorneys in Eugene, Salem or Portland, which is time-consuming and expensive, with fees in the hundreds or even thousands of dollars.

The new offerings from ASOSU Legal Services include comprehensive immigration screenings, which can identify what types of relief from deportation a student might be eligible for under the law, as well as pathways to a more permanent legal status, says ASOSU Student Advocate Daniel Dietz. For students who are eligible for the federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, ASOSU Legal Services can assist with a DACA application or renewal.

Dietz says professional guidance is essential because the DACA application process is complicated and has many steps. “It’s easy to make a mistake, and if you get something wrong on a federal form, your entire immigration processing paperwork can be messed up,” she says.

For students whose DACA applications are successful, or who achieve other legal status, the benefits extend beyond reducing anxiety over deportation. They include work authorizations, which allow students to apply for paid internships or research opportunities, as well as part-time jobs. More importantly, once they’ve earned their degrees, they can move into their careers, Dietz says.

Kaske earned her degree in ethnic studies and writing last spring, and she now works for AmeriCorps on a literacy initiative in Washington, D.C. She spent all four years at Oregon State advocating for undocumented students. Along with other students involved in Here to Stay and the Dreaming Beyond Borders Center, Kaske worked on a proposal to the ASOSU Student Advisory Board. Starting in summer 2020, the proposal went through multiple formal public processes with ASOSU, gathering input, gaining support and earning approval through the Student Fee Committee, the Student Advisory board and ASOSU elected leaders.

Both Dietz and Scott Vignos in the Office of Institutional Diversity helped with shaping proposal details, but Dietz gives the students full credit for its passage.

“Everyone has been very supportive, but it was the students who figured it out,” he says. “They showed up at every step. They advocated for themselves. They came with a sophisticated understanding of the issues and the resources available, and they offered concrete, realistic solutions to serve their peers.”

Now that the new services are available, Kaske says the next task is getting the word out. She encourages students to follow social media accounts for Here to Stay, Dreaming Beyond Borders and ASOSU, and also to take advantage of the many resources available on campus.

“What matters most is that students get the help that they need in whatever capacity that looks like,” she says. “Reaching out is the first step. Someone will be there to help you.”

Dreaming Beyond Borders receives $60,000 grant to help support undocumented students.

A $60,000 grant from the Meyer Memorial Trust in Portland will provide scholarships and other support to students accessing services at the Dreaming Beyond Borders Resource Center. Housed under the Educational Opportunities Program, the center offers a safe, welcoming space for undocumented, DACA-status and mixed-status-family students at Oregon State.

Secured via the OSU Foundation, the Meyer grant to the Beavers Care fund will provide COVID-related assistance, including scholarships, for students who may be ineligible for other resources, says Mike Moran, senior director of development. As with all scholarships, recipients are selected according to university policies and procedures, and recipients will not be selected based on their immigration status.

The grant will also help fund academic, legal and health services, educational and social programming, academic counseling, and educational events, training and partnerships offered through Dreaming Beyond Borders.

Donors who wish to support Dreaming Beyond Borders can contribute through the OSU Foundation at fororegonstate.org/giving.
It’s our responsibility to educate others about the past — so we can create a better present and future, together.

That starts by acknowledging Indigenous voices have always mattered — and they still do. The art exhibition “This IS Kalapuyan Land” helps build understanding that the land in which we live and learn was taken from the Kalapuyan people.

Making its first debut at Portland’s Five Oaks Museum in 2019, the outdoor exhibition — made up of ten signs — arrived on campus in the spring of 2021 through collaboration with an Oregon State advisory committee and the museum’s guest curator, Steph Littlebird Fogel. The signs, featured throughout campus and in the OSU research forests, celebrate traditional art like beading, combined with powerful paintings, sculptures, baskets and other pieces that call attention to the many effects of colonization: family separation, missing and murdered Indigenous women, American brands that perpetuate stereotypes and others.

In addition to the original ten featured signs, three new pieces were created by Chanti Manon, an ethnic studies and studio art student in the College of Liberal Arts. One of her creations features Eliza Young, who spent the early years of colonization as a farmwife’s helper. Another details the loss William Hartless experienced as the last speaker of the Champinefu Kalapuya language. Her third sign shows the traditional practice of picking and harvesting camas, also known as t’ip. Each sign is poignant in different ways, showcasing the stark reality of a world before and after the Oregon Territory’s settlement.

To prompt discussions and encourage Oregon State students and faculty to learn more about these critical topics, the exhibition included three virtual talks via Facebook in May. Each included a panel of guest speakers and covered the impact of revamping the original Five Oaks exhibition, a discussion with featured artists and talks about tribal histories and connections.

A larger, virtual sample of “This IS Kalapuyan Land” can also be viewed at fiveoaksmuseum.org.

Art tells a story. It builds awareness, evokes emotion and calls for change. It’s up to us to take the next step.

“This is —and always will be— KALAPUYAN LAND.”

“Exhibitions like this mean the Indigenous community sees themselves represented visually on campus. We often feel invisible on campus (and beyond), and having this representation helps tell us we have a place here.”

Luhui Whitebear
Center Director | Kaku-Ixt Mana Ina Haws
Assistant Professor | School of Language, Culture and Society
More than an educator: AN ADVOCATE.

T he best teachers lead with empathy. They seek to understand what their students are going through, offering a listening ear as well as guidance.

Jonathan Garcia embodies empathy. An assistant professor in the College of Public Health and Human Sciences, he helps students find a sense of community while working to find and create equal opportunities for LGBTQ+ students and students of color. For his ability to relate to student situations and desire to create a better college experience for all who attend, Garcia was awarded the 2021 Outstanding Diversity Advocate Award.

As program director of the OSU Global Health program, Garcia developed a curriculum focused on health equity and social justice. One of the offered courses, Be the Change for Global Health Transformation, shows students how discrimination and stigmas impact the quality of health care that traditionally marginalized people have access to, and how to begin facilitating change.

Through his work with ENLACE — Engaging the Next Latinx Allies for Change and Equity — and in collaboration with the nonprofit Outside the Frame, Garcia empowered LGBTQ+ youth of color to combat isolation and bullying. Through a series of telenovela-style videos, students tell their personal stories, on topics ranging from bullying to self-harm to access to health services. Sharing their experiences through these videos can be therapeutic, but more than anything, they show other LGBTQ+ students that they are not alone.

Nancy Vargas, who worked directly with Garcia during her graduate research assistantship, says Garcia greatly valued her contributions and acknowledged her hard work. She adds that he has always been there to encourage her, especially when faced with the microaggressions that often arise at primarily white institutions.

“Dr. Garcia exists as one of my support systems,” she says. “He always makes sure to build students’ self-esteem and their belief in their own capacity to be great.”

F. Javier Nieto, dean of the College of Public Health and Human Sciences, emphasizes how much it means to students — and the university as a whole — to care about the future of Oregon State students like Garcia does.

“Jonathan pushes us to extend our circle of compassion to our students and ourselves,” Nieto says. “He is unfailingly cheerful and pleasant, and he makes every room he walks into — even if it’s a Zoom room — seem more comfortable and welcoming. The world needs more Jonathan Garcias.”

The ADA at 30: accessibility as social justice.

When the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law in 1990, the goal was to ensure that people with disabilities had opportunities for equal participation in American society. The ADA at 30 Celebratory Symposium, hosted remotely by Oregon State, considered the ADA as a tool for inclusion and social justice.

Gabrielle Miller, M.A. ’21 and Lzz Johnk, Ph.D. ’21, both graduate students in the Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies program at the time, worked for more than a year on the symposium committee. The symposium’s 17 sessions were held over Zoom May 4-27 and included academic presentations, workshops and discussions. More than 500 disabled and nondisabled participants joined from artistic, scholarly, activist and other community groups at Oregon State and nationwide.

Miller says the symposium committee wanted the program to include both research and activism, addressing theories, systems and structures that affect people with disabilities, particularly disabled people of color.

“There’s a huge gap between people’s lived experience and the actual document of the ADA,” Miller says. “We wanted to talk about what we can change to create a more accessible future for everyone.”

Liat Ben-Moshe, an assistant professor of criminology, law and justice at the University of Illinois at Chicago, gave the opening keynote. Based on her book, “Decarcerating Disability,” Ben-Moshe’s presentation looked at how people with intellectual or developmental disabilities are frequently incarcerated or institutionalized. For the closing keynote, Theri Alyce Pickens, a professor of English at Bates College, focused on public discussions of Blackness and disability. Both keynotes, along with some other sessions, were recorded and are available online from the OSU Disability Archives.

Gabe Merrell, deputy ADA coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access, says a key takeaway from the symposium is that while the ADA is a civil rights law, it does not mandate inclusion and social justice.

“We can go further,” he says. “We look at the ADA as an important legal success, but barriers still remain for a lot of individuals to participate fully and equally in our society.” Beyond the physical barriers that are resolved with ramps, doors and elevators, there is a need to “address the social stigma of disability and dismantle systemic ableism.”

Merrell points to information technology as one area where barriers for the disabled often go unnoticed. While the text of the ADA says exactly how to make buildings accessible, there is no technical standard for IT accessibility in the law, which predates widespread use of the internet.

“Everyone that makes any decision or creates manages anything related to IT needs to know what to do to make it accessible to our disabled community,” Merrell says. At Oregon State, that includes an information technology accessibility policy, and Information Services offers Monsido, an all-in-one tool to find and fix accessibility issues and other errors on a website.

Both Miller and Merrell credit OSU Media Services for making the Zoom sessions work seamlessly and just as important, ensuring they were accessible for all attendees. Miller says the remote format and sessions spread out over a month encouraged discussions among attendees.

“One of the conversations were really illuminating and gave insight into people’s lives and what they’re experiencing,” Miller says. “Having that space, even virtually, to talk about disability-related topics with people who identify as disabled was a great opportunity.”
Collaborative relationships lead to action.

OSU’s Pre-Doctoral Scholars program is proof.

The advancement of diversity, equity and inclusion is an integral part of the university’s mission. Building relationships with the next generation of academic leaders is one way to make progress. The Pre-Doctoral Scholars Program opens the door to partnerships and collaboration — by identifying promising scholars with a history of DEI research — and bringing them to Oregon State University.

The program, developed by the Office of Faculty Affairs and the Office of Institutional Diversity, was piloted last August. It pairs ABD (all but dissertation) scholars with a faculty member who has similar research interests.

Four scholars from across the U.S. were chosen:

- Quincy Clark, who recently earned a Ph.D. from Purdue University in agricultural sciences education and communication, and whose research focuses on innovative technologies and practices for improving attraction, retention and diversity in the STEM fields.
- Aundrea Collins, a Doctor of Public Health pre-candidate at Morgan State University, whose research focuses on training mental health professionals to be sexual health education “first responders” in psychiatric residential treatment settings.
- Jesus Martinez-Gomez, a Ph.D. candidate at Cornell University, whose research studies the evolution of highly diverse plant architectures.
- Olivia Vilá, a Ph.D. candidate at North Carolina State University, whose research emphasis is on disaster recovery, hazard mitigation and resilience — particularly in underserved communities.

During the weeklong visit, scholars were introduced to current university research and opportunities, making connections and helping identify community challenges. This year’s cohort toured OSU research and other facilities in Corvallis and Portland, the Hatfield Marine Science Center in Newport and Extension centers in Hermiston, Pendleton and Hood River.

Clark, for example, was paired with Silvia Rondon, a professor in the College of Agricultural Sciences, acting director of the Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center, and director of the Oregon Integrated Pest Management Center. Clark says meeting with local growers, community leaders and other university researchers statewide revealed new opportunities for teamwork.

“The program helped me to better understand how my research in agricultural education can complement the research that plant pathologists, biologists, horticulturists, entomologists and agronomists are conducting at agricultural research centers,” she says.

Clark says the Pre-Doctoral Scholars Program was an enriching experience where she felt welcome and appreciated. She adds that the scientists she met were genuinely interested in helping each visiting scholar discover how their research could fit in at Oregon State.

The Pre-Doctoral Scholars program is also used as a recruiting tool for future faculty members by showcasing all that Oregon State has to offer. And the mentoring and relationship-building it provides propels them toward success no matter where they end up.

That’s one more step toward an equitable, inclusive academic community — at Oregon State and beyond.
EQUITY-CENTERED COMMUNITY DESIGN: An empathetic approach to problem-solving.

We may not notice the systems that shape our daily lives. Or the power structures that favor some groups while oppressing others. Inequality is often built in. But what has been built can be redesigned.

Equity-Centered Community Design is a tool for reimagining and rebuilding systems with inclusive and equitable outcomes for all.

Also known as ECCD, Equity-Centered Community Design was developed by Creative Reaction Lab, a St. Louis-based education and civic engagement nonprofit focused on Black and Latinx youth that was established after the 2014 protests in Ferguson, Missouri. The organization defines ECCD as a “creative problem-solving process based on equity, humility-building, integrating history and healing practices, addressing power dynamics and co-creating with the community.”

Empathy starts with humility

Charlene Martinez, associate director of student experiences and engagement in the Division of Student Affairs, applied ECCD in her work with the University Innovation Alliance, a consortium of 11 large public research universities focused on student success and degree completion. She was on a team developing Oregon State’s Career Champions Program to help bridge the gap between education and careers for low-income, first-generation and underrepresented students of color.

“I noticed that in my work in equity and inclusion, education and civic engagement nonprofit focused on Black and Latinx youth that was established after the 2014 protests in Ferguson, Missouri. The organization defines ECCD as a “creative problem-solving process based on equity, humility-building, integrating history and healing practices, addressing power dynamics and co-creating with the community.”

The idea is that you don’t just empathize with the individual or community and assume that you can have a good relationship. You need to figure out where you have personal learning and growth to do. You have to do some research around the history and the healing that needs to happen before assuming you can be in relationship with often minoritized or historically excluded individuals or communities.”

With the Career Champions Program, for example, Martinez says the design team “cared cognitively about supporting underrepresented groups, but there was a disconnect in thinking about how to meet students where they were. ECCD gave them a process to embrace humility, recognize what they didn’t know, build relationships with the students they wanted to support and design the program with greater intentionality and attention to power dynamics. Ultimately, the program was designed to support faculty in creating interventions in their classrooms and pedagogy.

ECCD brings student advocates together

The Associated Students of Oregon State University has also adopted the ECCD model for its policy advocacy programs. In fall 2020, students within the ASOSU Office of Advocacy gathered with student leaders from other groups within ASOSU, the Pride Center, the Lonnie B. Harris Black Cultural Center, the Dreaming Beyond Borders Center, Here to Stay, #DAMWORTHIT and others to look for opportunities to work together on social justice and campus initiatives.

Gabriel Bendat, a junior majoring in environmental economics and policy, was also involved on the ASOSU student advocacy team. He says student groups completed multiple workshop activities from the ECCD Field Guide to see how to work across different interests and perspectives. Several activities focused on assessing power, “learning how to recognize the power we have and the power we don’t have, and how to leverage our power to get our goals accomplished,” he says.

Miles adds that the activity helped each member of the group think about how they show up for conversations, “having that vulnerable moment to assess ways we are privileged and ways we can use this privilege to advocate for the groups and initiatives we really care about,” she says. “I think those intentional conversations aren’t had as often as they need to be.”

Conversations > relationships > sustainable change

One outcome of these conversations was an event held toward the end of spring term focused on Oregon’s racist history. Bendat says the event opened up dialog for attendees to examine what it means to be part of Oregon’s historical and continued injustices and how to address those issues going forward. Another outcome is the connections between students, relationships that he hopes will last over years and help create sustainable change.

Miles says ECCD is a “high-quality and low-maintenance” framework for student leaders, with structure, priorities and values that align with justice-oriented initiatives and focus on building community. Both Miles and Bendat agree with Martinez on the importance of approaching issues with humility and meeting people where they are.

Those ideas aren’t new, but Martinez says ECCD provides a new tool for activating social change locally.

“My hope is that people check it out, that they take what’s useful to them, she says. “It’s not about one tool that will fix everything, but it’s the more tools we have in our toolbox, the better we’ll be able to tackle hard problems.”
Every student deserves the chance to succeed

OSU-Cascades is adding tools and support so they can.

Students are more likely to achieve if they feel supported — personally and academically. For underrepresented and first-generation students, who make up nearly one-third of the student population at OSU-Cascades, student success services are even more important. And soon, they will find all the support they need in one place.

The Oregon Legislature has approved $13.8 million for a dedicated Student Success Center at the Bend campus. The 22,500 square-foot center will offer student support services like career counseling, internship coordination, academic advising, tutoring, disability access services, veterans support, student health and mental health services. Also to be included are a multicultural center, recreation and gathering spaces, and a home for student organizations and clubs. Construction will begin in 2022, and the center is expected to open in the 2023-24 academic year.

“The Student Success Center is especially critical for underrepresented, first-generation, low-income and rural students who benefit from support services, networking and advising that aid their progress to graduation,” says Andrew Kettsdever, interim vice president at OSU-Cascades.

The center will also help OSU-Cascades keep pace with growing student enrollment, which saw a 27% increase in first-year students and a 16% increase in transfer students in fall 2020. Nearly 60% of OSU-Cascades students come from Central Oregon, and they include:

• 19% students of color.
• 35% Pell Grant-eligible students.
• 28% first-generation students.

The Student Success Center will not only support students, it’s supported by students. Current OSU-Cascades students lobbied state legislators to support funding, and they also voted in 2017 to increase student fees, raising $5 million for the project.

“This investment from students, in a building most of us will never enjoy the opportunity to use, is a testament to the shared commitment by both our campus and the Central Oregon community in supporting success for all students,” says Taha Elweftati, president of the Associated Students of Cascades Campus. “We are dedicated to creating a better tomorrow for future generations of OSU-Cascades students.”

Goals and ambitions should never feel out of reach. OSU-Cascades is making sure they won’t.

HE FOUND A NOVEL TOOL FOR PHYSICAL FITNESS: READABILITY.

Now an assistant professor at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, Thomas earned a Ph.D. in kinesiology, a Master of Public Health in health promotion and health behavior, and a Graduate Certificate in College and University Teaching from Oregon State. His award-winning project, which provided hands-on research and mentoring opportunities for undergraduate students, continues the work he started while a graduate student at OSU. Thomas has published multiple papers on the topic, several coauthored with Bradley Cardinal, a professor in the College of Public Health and Human Sciences.

“I’ve always been interested in equity and opportunity,” Thomas says. “So my research focuses on a variety of factors that can influence equity and opportunity for health and activity across the lifespan.”

Thomas says he wasn’t aware of these readability issues until working on his doctorate. He discovered from readability studies that content on physical activity often exceeded an eighth-grade reading level, the maximum recommended level for health education resources. And while kinesiologists are trained to teach safe, effective options for physical activity, “we’re not informed about the barriers to our teaching that can reinforce inequity,” he says.

Thomas found physical activity materials have their widest impact when they’re written at a fifth-grade level or below.

Small changes can be meaningful in thinking about how readers will use the information, he says, “and when we lower the fence, more people can cross over.”

Although it was not part of his original plan when he came to Oregon State to pursue his Ph.D., Thomas says the Master of Public Health turned out to be complementary. Expanding on the work he was doing in kinesiology, public health applied community-based programming, “giving me a sense of how to create sustainable change beyond individual interventions.”

“I’m interested in the practical, and I’m inspired by those I learned from and work with,” Thomas says. “I want to be part of efforts that make positive, sustained impacts in the communities that I work with, that I serve, and that I live in.”

The Hally Beth Poindexter Young Scholar Award is one indication that Jafra Thomas is achieving his goal.
MLK event celebrates leaders, changemakers.

Six Oregon State community members received Legacy Awards at the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration this year for their tireless efforts to create a more inclusive OSU:

**FRANCES DANCY HOOKS AWARD**

Tenisha Tevis  
Tevis, the only Black faculty member in the College of Education, helps students of color feel at home at Oregon State. Her research focuses on systemic tension for students with disabilities and its impacts on their sense of belonging. Tevis has spoken about being a Black athlete and LGBTQ+ rights, and she co-chairs the President’s Council on the Status of Black Faculty and Staff.

**PHYLLIS S. LEE AWARD**

Allison Davis-White Eyes  
During her 20 years at Oregon State, Davis-White Eyes has continuously enriched the lives of students. In addition to overseeing new buildings and staffing for the university’s seven cultural centers, she revived the memorandum of understanding between OSU and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, advocated for all Indigenous students to pay in-state tuition and partnered with the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities to expand OSU’s Latinx presence.

**ALUMNI LEGACY AWARD**

Román Hernández, ’92  
A College of Science alumnus, Hernández is an attorney at Troutman Pepper in Portland and founder of the Oregon Hispanic Bar Association. Despite a demanding career, he speaks to middle and high school students about pursuing the future they really want, mentors law students and gives back to his alma mater by supporting programs like Vamos OSU, the OSU Alumni Association’s Latinx/Chicano network.

**OSCAR HUMBERTO MONTE MAYOR AWARD**

James Duncan  
Duncan’s leadership has connected students across campus toward a common goal: to fight the injustices people of color encounter every day. A senior in the College of Engineering, Duncan has served as leadership liaison at the Lonnie B. Harris Black Cultural Center, is president of the Alpha Phi Fraternity and the National Society of Black Engineers and has led marches and discussions about racism in America.

**Lara Jacobs**  
Jacobs, a Ph.D. student in forest ecosystems and society, has focused her academic career on caring for the environment and supporting Indigenous communities. A member of the Muscogee Nation, she worked with Gerrad Jones, assistant professor in the College of Agricultural Sciences, to develop the American Indian Science and Engineering Society, which provides academic support to increase acceptance rates and retention of Indigenous students.