



Office of Human Resources

## The Inclusion Council

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Dear Colleague,

Our February Inclusion Council newsletter focuses on Black History Month, highlighting a variety of [2021 Black History Month Events](#). This year we recognize and grieve for the very visible reminders of the legacy of racism and bias against the Black community. These great resources can expand our understanding of open dialogue with one another in our everyday lives:

### [The Man Behind Black History Month](#)



Dr. Carter G. Woodson (1875–1950) was an educator and scholar who devoted his life to Black history. He launched the *Journal of Negro History* in 1926, in which he and other researchers brought attention to the achievements of Black Americans. He chose February to announce the first "Negro History Week" because the month contained the birthdays of both Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, two prominent men whose historic achievements African-Americans already celebrated. Finally, Congress passed National Black History Month into law in 1986, proclaiming that the "foremost purpose of Black History Month is to make all Americans aware of this struggle for freedom and equal opportunity" ([Library of Congress](#)).

### [This Free North](#)



The documentary *This Free North* explores achievements and obstacles in Black history on the University of Minnesota's Twin Cities campus and reflects on the people and events that led to the creation of the U program. Celebrating the University of Minnesota's 50th Anniversary of the African American Studies program, the half-hour film examines the influences Black history has had over the years and still has today, both on campus and in the community. In the act of looking back, this documentary reminds the viewer that history is complicated, divisive, and ongoing.

## [The American Dream While Black: 'Locked in a Vicious Cycle'](#)



Homeownership is the prime driver of America's wealth gap. One of the clearest examples of that ongoing discrimination is the housing market, where the gap in homeownership rates between Black and white Americans is wider than it was before the civil rights movement. While 76% of white households owned their homes at the end of the second quarter of 2020, just 47% of Black households did, according to the Census Bureau. That 29 percentage-point gap,

perpetuated by decades of housing and economic policies favorable toward white buyers and designed to exclude Black buyers, has only been exacerbated by the pandemic and before it the 2008 financial crisis.

## [Four Takeaways From Equal Justice Initiative's Bryan Stevenson on Justice and Healing](#)



The Equal Justice Initiative is committed to ending mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the United States, to challenging racial and economic injustice, and to protecting basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society. Its founder, Bryan Stevenson, gives four takeaways for everyone to put into practice in their personal walk with understanding justice: 1) Get proximate (become familiar with people and communities who have been

marginalized), 2) Change narratives (reevaluate conventional wisdom and the history underlying many policies), 3) Have hope ("hopelessness is the enemy of justice"), and 4) Do uncomfortable things (change can be inconvenient and often means making difficult choices).

## **Links to More Resources**

- [Without Slavery, Would the U.S. Be the Leading Economic Power?](#) Host Jeremy Hobson explores with Edward Baptist, author of *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*, how slavery established the United States as a world economic power. (Podcast; 15 minutes)
- [Hip Hop, Grit, and Academic Success](#). Dr. Bettina Love explains how students steeped in hip-hop culture, often seen as deficient, actually bring the very characteristics deemed necessary for 21st-century success. (Video; 15 minutes)
- [25 Black Americans You Don't Know but Should](#) (Article, *O* magazine)
- [The Reason Black History Month Is in February](#) (Article, *O* magazine)
- [Our Democracy's Founding Ideals Were False When They Were Written. Black Americans Have Fought to Make Them True](#) (Article from *The New York Times*' "The 1619 Project")
- [The Disturbing History of the Suburbs](#) (Video from "Adam Ruins Everything" series, which humorously explains how redlining came to be; six minutes)
- [Black History at MIA](#) (Minneapolis Institute of Art web page)
- [Colleges Must Take a New Approach to Systemic Racism](#) (Article, Inside Higher Ed)
- [The Case for Reparations](#) (Article by Ta-Nehisi Coates, *The Atlantic*)
- [How to Respond When Someone Makes a Racist Comment](#) (Article, *Reader's Digest*)
- [Responding to a Colleague Who Makes a Racist Comment](#) (Article, Education Week)

Questions to Consider and Share on the [OHR Inclusion Council Slack Channel](#)

- What role has Black History Month played in your life?
- How have homeownership and generational opportunities played a role in your family and communities?
- Did you know about the 1969 takeover of Morrill Hall and the impact it has had on the University?
- Which resource stood out that you want to discuss with colleagues, friends, and family?

Sincerely,

Josh Iniguez  
OHR Inclusion Council Chair

**THE LAND**

The University of Minnesota Twin Cities is built within the traditional homelands of the Dakota people. Minnesota comes from the Dakota name for this region, Mni Sota Makoce—the land where the waters reflect the skies. Each day, the students, faculty, staff, and community members who traverse this campus engage with Dakota territory and should reflect on the ongoing relationship that Dakota people have to this area.

—Adapted from a statement by Iyekiyaipiwiŋ Darlene St. Clair, Bdewakaŋtuŋwaŋ Dakota

This email was sent to OHR staff on behalf of Josh Iniguez on February 12, 2021, by the Office of Human Resources, 100 Donhowe Building, 319 15th Ave SE, Minneapolis, MN, 55455, USA. The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity educator and employer. [Read our privacy statement.](#)

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