Vanderbilt celebrates Asian Pacific Islander Desi Heritage Month annually during the fall semester from October to early November. While Asian Pacific Islander Desi American Heritage Month is officially celebrated in May, Vanderbilt’s celebration takes place in collaboration with the Asian Student Association and the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Vanderbilt named Felysha Jenkins as its first diversity, equity and inclusion program manager in 2019, and her leadership has been instrumental in advancing the university’s commitment to strengthening equity, diversity and inclusion.

Jenkins named Basic Sciences diversity, equity and inclusion manager to lead new unit within the office. Under her leadership, the program is focused on equity, diversity and inclusion in areas such as recruitment, retention, and professional development. The goal is to create a welcoming and inclusive environment that values and leverages diversity.

Jenkins has also been appointed as the inaugural interim chief diversity officer for the new office of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Her appointment highlights the university’s commitment to the professional advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers, and the unique contributions of Asian, Pacific Islander and Desi Americans.

Community and Collaboration
Dear Vanderbilt community,

Community engagement is something I value, both as a member of this community and as the Chief of Staff, Office of the Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. I believe that community engagement is a commitment to finding ways for community members to be informed, consulted, involved and empowered, which leads to satisfaction and acceptance of the community.

When community members are satisfied, they are more likely to take the end result because their point of view, needs and hopes were taken into consideration. Satisfaction leads to acceptance. When community members are engaged regularly, the satisfaction of an institution almost instantly increases. A community that feels well involved can take to be a good ally on Wednesday, Nov. 10, at 4 p.m. CT.

Panel to share experiences on allyship and what it means to be an ally. Dr. Robert Smith, Director of Community Engagement, and Dr. Lara Halverson, Director of Strategic Partnerships, will lead the conversation. The discussion will focus on meaningful allyship and steps one can take to be a good ally.

For more information, please visit the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion website.

Sincerely,

Cybele Raver
Chief of Staff, Office of the Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

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