

Diversity and Inclusion - Kimberly Elahab

Kimberly Elahab exemplifies the spirit of the Victor Nelson-Cisneros Award in the many ways that she supports diversity and inclusion at Colorado College. Colleague Brenda Gillen writes, “Where others see differences, Kimberly finds common ground. She is empathic and deeply connects with others in meaningful ways.”

One of the most significant contributions Kimberly has made to diversity and inclusion at Colorado College is the role she has played supporting first generation students.

Kimberly has participated with the Butler Center’s First Generation Collegiate Program, as a keynote speaker, panelist, and program mentor.

Pearl Leonard-Rock writes:

Kimberly has been a consistent and supportive partner to the Butler Center. She has participated in our anti-racism initiatives as well as our signature student program, the 1st Generation Collegiate Program.

Kimberly knows that educational transformation happens when others commit their time, talent, and treasure to help college students succeed. She is always willing to give of her time and talents to support students, especially 1st Gen students.

She has served as a keynote and panelist in the 1st Gen program. She also serves as a program mentor. In Block one, she delivered a presentation to 1st Gen students on how they can ANCHOR themselves for success and build in strategies for resilience. Kimberly has spent her career making a difference in the lives of students and that effort continues to happen here at Colorado College. She is an awesome story teller and has a compelling delivery style.

Kimberly’s Block One presentation included the following mnemonic device for cultivating resilience:

- A= Ability to believe 100 percent in yourself
- N= Never give up
- C= Connect with others for support
- H= Hold on to your dreams
- O= Overcome negative thoughts with positive actions
- R= Root and ground yourself to your goals

Kimberly’s outreach to first generation students and students of color is not limited to her involvement with the First Generation Collegiate Program. Over the past few years, Kimberly has employed students to assist with various administrative and research tasks for the Prospect Management team. Yet Kimberly’s work with the students goes beyond the immediate job at hand. Colleague John Wallace writes, “I have been really impressed by Kimberly’s ability to create meaningful experiences for student workers. She does really seem to care not only about how to train them to be effective contributors – but also to provide them with experiences they can build on if they choose to do so.”

Marj Webster, Prospect Management Analyst, commented, “She takes a personal interest in each one of them, making it a true mentorship not just a job.” As Kimberly’s supervisor, I have seen firsthand the relationships that Kimberly builds with the student workers. She has been a support structure for the students, encouraging them through her personal experience.

In supporting and inspiring students, particularly first generation students and students of color, and by embracing the diversity found within our community, Kimberly is cultivating the inclusive and equitable community that Colorado College strives to be.

Diversity and Inclusion Award - Felix Sanchez

It's an honor to nominate Felix Sanchez, assistant vice president for communications, for the Victor Nelson-Cisneros Diversity and Inclusion Award. As a campus leader, Felix sets a strong example of how to effectively bring diverse voices to the decision-making table.

He is thoughtful and intentional about including diverse perspectives in meetings, publications, conversations, and projects. Not only does he make it part of the conversation, he makes inclusivity a priority.

Felix's leadership was critical in successfully guiding sensitive and challenging conversations on the "Untold Stories Project," and Felix has stepped up to lead this project going forward. This project creates an engaging space to share the experiences of marginalized persons who make up our Colorado College community and our history.

Felix has worked closely with the NASU students to follow a thoughtful process to request the creation of a space on campus, named in Native language. He is a contributor in making sure to include thoughtful recommendations on the Native world view, helping to foster cultural dialogue on campus. Felix was involved in development of the smudging policy and making this a relevant part of campus discussion.

In addition, he serves on the steering committee for the external review of racism at CC and works to improve communication campuswide on this essential initiative.

Felix exemplifies the qualities of former Associate Dean of the College Victor Nelson-Cisneros in supporting diversity and inclusion and is quite deserving of this award.