

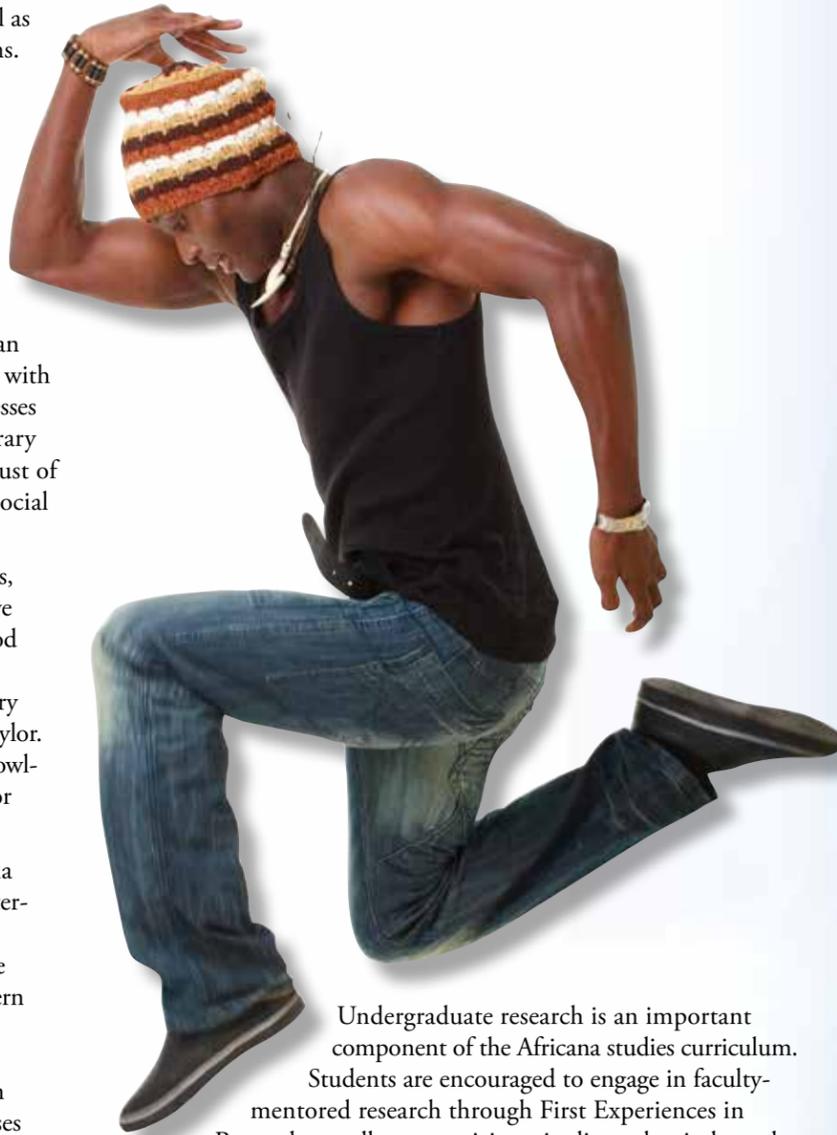
DEPARTMENT OF AFRICANA STUDIES:

A Meeting Place for Ideas

The sounds of hip-hop music blast through the large lecture hall as students conduct a lively debate about the music and its origins. The opinions that are expressed are as diverse as the students who are enrolled in the Introduction to Africana Studies course. This popular gateway class represents a microcosm of students taking courses offered through the Department of Africana Studies at the University of Pittsburgh. The program provides a multicultural and multidisciplinary learning experience that crosses all ethnic, cultural, and racial boundaries.

The Africana studies major is designed for students who have an interest in shaping the world. The discipline provides students with a basic understanding of the complexities, struggles, and successes of people of African descent within historical and contemporary contexts. The term Africana incorporates the three-tiered thrust of the department: African, African American, and Caribbean social sciences and humanities.

“Through classes, research projects, and internship opportunities, the department presents students with a comprehensive narrative that reviews the total Black experience, from the formative period of classical African civilizations through the oppressive phase of European enslavement and colonialism to contemporary recovery or transformation strategies,” says department chair Jerome Taylor. “This unique learning experience provides students with the knowledge, information, and global perspective unlike any other major on the University of Pittsburgh campus.”



Students majoring in Africana studies learn to study, interpret, research, and teach others about the culture and historical and modern experiences of Africans, African Americans, and Caribbean people through a curriculum that encompasses a variety of subjects. Students can choose from two areas

of concentration: the humanities track, with courses in literature, dance, music, theater, and film, or the social sciences track, with an emphasis on courses in history, anthropology, sociology, psychology, political science, and health sciences. There also is a joint major combining Africana studies and English literature.

Many students choose to double major, combining courses in Africana studies with a major in economics, communication, education, English, sociology, or urban studies. A minor in Africana studies also is available for students who are interested in gaining a basic knowledge about the people, cultures, and histories of the African diaspora.



The Department of Africana Studies is uniquely positioned as an undergraduate only department, with all of its resources and energy directed to the undergraduate population. Taylor emphasizes that students are the department’s number one priority. “In terms of our development and trajectory, we always have students at the forefront of everything we do,” says Taylor. “We are continually reviewing the curriculum and developing new courses to strengthen the major.”

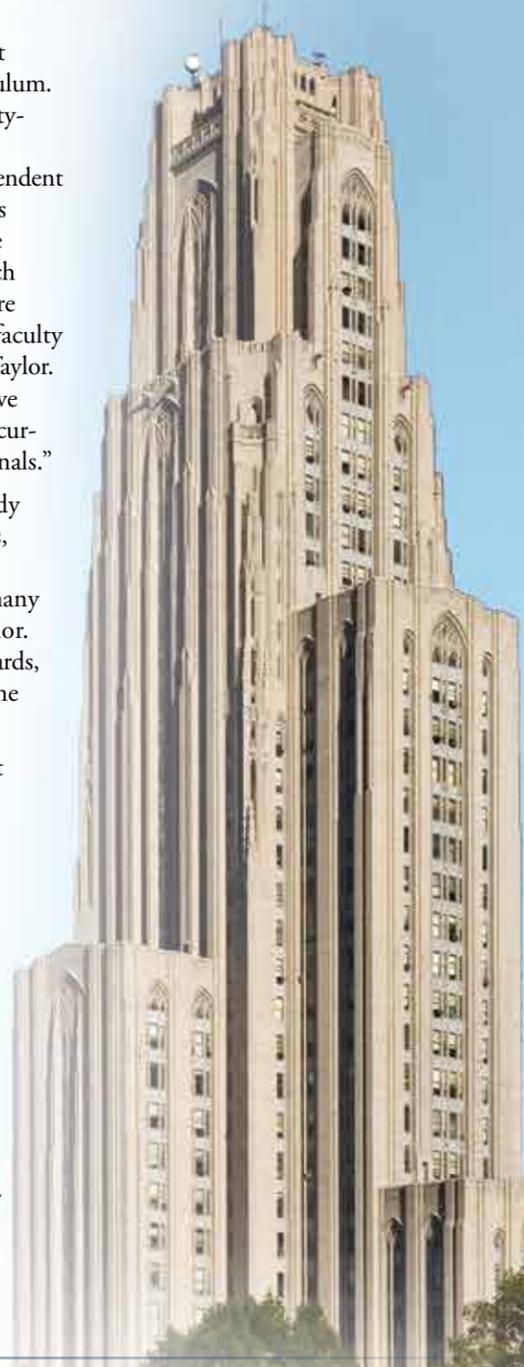
Undergraduate research is an important component of the Africana studies curriculum. Students are encouraged to engage in faculty-mentored research through First Experiences in Research as well as to participate in directed or independent research projects and study abroad opportunities. Taylor is planning to expand the department’s research efforts with the creation of a center focused on the development of new research initiatives. “Our students have a burning curiosity to learn more about the Black experience and work collaboratively with our faculty on directed study and independent research projects,” explains Taylor. “In fact, we are very proud to have numerous students who have presented their research at national conferences and others who currently are poised to submit research papers to professional journals.”

A degree in Africana studies prepares students for graduate study and employment in many fields, including international affairs, education, social work, public administration, medicine, and public health. “We are proud of all of our students and their many accomplishments inside and outside the classroom,” says Taylor. “The impressive number of students who have won national awards, including Fulbright and Rhodes scholarships, is indicative of the caliber of student who comes through the department.”

To learn more about the Department of Africana Studies, visit www.africanastudies.pitt.edu.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Africana studies graduate Cory Rodgers was selected as a 2012 Rhodes scholar. He is the seventh winner of the prestigious Rhodes Scholarship at the University of Pittsburgh.
- The Department of Africana Studies offers student involvement opportunities in University-wide organizations that include the Black Action Society and African Students Organization.
- Performance is a key part of the Africana studies curriculum. Students are encouraged to participate in the Shona Sharif African Drum and Dance Ensemble, Black Dance Ensemble, and Black Dance Workshop, which provide students with workshops, lectures, conferences, and social opportunities.



MESSAGE FROM THE ASSOCIATE DEAN

Pitt Students Make a Difference

The Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences provides undergraduate students with a strong academic foundation that enables them to translate their success as University of Pittsburgh students into becoming well-educated and self-aware global citizens. Through a broad liberal arts education, students expand their understanding of the world and their role in it. They begin to develop capacities for innovation and sound judgment in making decisions. Most importantly, they learn to make a difference.

It is this decision to make a difference that I am most proud of today. During the past several months, the students at Pitt have stood strong in the face of adversity. They had the courage to “keep calm and carry on” despite disruption and dislocations. In doing so, they demonstrated to the University community, and to the country as a whole, extraordinary strength of character and what it truly means to be a University of Pittsburgh student.

The perseverance, resilience, and generosity exhibited by our students have astounded me. They came together in the face of such unusual challenges. With maturity, they showed compassion for their peers and a determination to continue their education. Across campus, many events demonstrated a heightened sense of unity, from singing the alma mater in the Commons Room of the Cathedral of Learning to raising money for the University of Pittsburgh police and K-9 officers. Our students’ determination made a substantial contribution to the development of a caring community in which compassion for others is valued.

Through it all, students at Pitt continued the legacy of academic excellence. I am proud of the extraordinary achievements attained by all of our students, especially the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences student scholars who were awarded the prestigious Rhodes, Barry M. Goldwater, and Morris K. Udall scholarships. These highly competitive awards reflect the talent and hard work of our students and Pitt’s commitment to undergraduate education.

Since its founding in 1787, the University of Pittsburgh has become one of the foremost centers of learning, research, and service. As we continue to celebrate 225 years of Pitt’s building better lives, let us also celebrate our students, who are distinguishing themselves by making a difference both within and outside the classroom through their many contributions to the campus community, the city, and the region.

Congratulations to all of our 2012 graduates, and a warm welcome to the incoming Class of 2016.

May you all have a relaxing and enjoyable summer!

John A. Twyning, PhD

Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies



FACULTY PROFILE

The Transformative Power of Performance

As the last notes of the popular 1950s song “Rockin’ Robin” fade away, Yolanda Covington-Ward and her 4-year-old daughter continue to twirl around, swinging their arms and stomping their feet, oblivious to the fact that the music has stopped playing. For Covington-Ward, an anthropologist and assistant professor in the Department of Africana Studies, dancing has provided much joy throughout her life and has profoundly influenced and directed her career.

“I remember growing up in the South Bronx, N.Y., playing those famous hand-clapping rhyming games like Miss Mary Mack on the school playground. Through those competitive games, I became more confident in myself and slowly began to have the courage to face life’s challenges,” says Covington-Ward. “I also noticed that when I began taking dance classes in middle school, I literally transformed from a shy, serious fifth grader into a more confident, flamboyant girl. Nothing could stop me!”

Covington-Ward’s research interests have been shaped by those formative years growing up in the Bronx. Throughout her career, she has tirelessly researched how the body is used to transform social relationships and identities. Her first published article focused on those playground performances and the relationship between hip-hop music and Black girls’ games. While they are seemingly innocent and innocuous, Covington-Ward says that those hand-clapping games and cheers actually give Black girls the outlet to look at life through a different lens and to freely express how they feel about womanhood, beauty, and body image.

One of Covington-Ward’s most rewarding achievements came in 2005, when she was named the first student in 10 years to travel to the Democratic Republic of the Congo on a Fulbright scholarship. “What a life-changing period in my life! By living with a Congolese family for a year, I experienced their daily routines, rituals, and movements and saw what a tremendous impact body gestures had on their lives and interactions with others. It was then that I completely redirected my research to focus on gestures, dances, and spiritual possessions used to create, confirm, and contest authority in everyday life.” In a national competition, she was recently awarded a Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship to turn this research into a book.

Since 2009, Covington-Ward has brought her passion for music and dance into the classroom at Pitt, providing an enriching, engaging, and challenging experience for students. In *Power and Performance in Africa*, a class she developed, students are encouraged to learn more about the histories and experiences of the African people by interviewing African immigrants and then translating that research into monologues, dances, and speeches. Covington-Ward’s favorite class to teach by far is *Women of Africa and the African Diaspora*. “I am continually blown away by the extraordinary performances presented by my students,” says Covington-Ward. “One performance that I will never forget was when a normally shy student stood up in front of the class and used dance hall reggae song lyrics to perform a monologue about a Jamaican girl who felt pressured by society to go through the process of bleaching her skin. I was transfixed, and the entire class watched, mesmerized. It was the best and most haunting performance by a student I have ever witnessed and my proudest moment as an instructor.”

For more information on Covington-Ward and her research, visit covington-ward.com/index.php.



Registration for Summer Sessions Continues

The University of Pittsburgh is the place to be this summer to catch up on needed credits, stay on track to graduate in four years, or get ahead of schedule for the fall term. With more than 500 course offerings, summer sessions classes are designed to help students reach their educational goals no matter where they are in their academic career.

The flexibility of four-week and six-week sessions allows students to enroll in courses that fit around their busy work and internship schedules. In addition, because classes are offered during day and evening hours, students can choose the times that are most convenient for them. Summer courses provide students with a wonderful opportunity to complete final general education or specialized requirements needed to graduate, finish core and prerequisite courses, enroll in popular courses and labs that fill quickly during the fall and spring terms, or explore subjects in their major without the pressure of a full class load.

For more information on specific course offerings, campus housing, and registration, visit www.summer.pitt.edu.



FUTURE LEADERS LEARN TODAY

Student Investigates Health Disparities

As an operator for TeleFACT, the University of Pittsburgh question-and-answer telephone service, Ta Misha Bascombe is very adept at fielding all kinds of questions. From the mundane to the sublime, she enjoys the ability to research and find answers to help students and members of the Pittsburgh community quench their thirst for knowledge. However, the most significant and vital question this rising senior and Africana studies and biological sciences major wants to answer is why there is such a disparity in health resources available to underrepresented populations and what she can do to help rectify the disparity.

This Maryland native remembers always having an interest in health-related issues but was not exactly sure how she could best use her talents and skills. "I came to Pitt thinking I would be a prepharmacy major because my heart, my passion, my love is in the sciences," says Bascombe. "However, I wasn't too far into my freshman year when I felt that I was being called in a different direction, combining my interest in genetics with my desire to work with the public, specifically underrepresented populations."

Two events significantly influenced Bascombe's decision to work in public health. One was the valuable experience she obtained while interning at Pitt's Graduate School of Public Health, where her insightful research on health equity helped her to educate others on health disparity issues. The other event was closer to home. "I was horrified by what I was witnessing in my own neighborhood. There was a dichotomy when it came to health resources," explains Bascombe. "Some people had wonderful health insurance and resources available to them, while others right next door could not even afford to pay for medication they needed to sustain their lives. It was then that I realized that I wanted to work on closing that health disparity gap by making health resources available to all people."

Bascombe, who also is completing minors in history and chemistry, is thrilled to be learning more about her own heritage through the many varied courses she is taking through the Department of Africana Studies. "I never knew that Black studies existed in college until I came to Pitt," says Bascombe. "By examining many different cultures, I have a much better appreciation of where I came from and how we are all interconnected. This program has by far helped me to have a greater understanding of all types of people and how to interact with them."

In addition to her work as a TeleFACT operator, Bascombe is actively involved in the African Studies Club and the Black Action Society, a student group that uses scholarship, community outreach, political activism, and other tools to reach out to the Pitt community.

While Bascombe's ultimate dream is to work in public health on racial and ethnic health issues at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, she is looking forward to continuing her studies at the graduate level so that she can begin to discover solutions to the many questions she currently has about health disparity.



COMMUNICATION IN FAMILIES

by Mary Koch Ruiz, University Counseling Center

Communication is more than just words. It is not just what is said but how it is said, why and when it is expressed, and what is not stated. It is the expression on your face, the tone of your voice, your body posture, and your gestures.

Good communication in families is not something that just happens. It is created by active listening and thoughtful expression of words. It is how children learn to effectively express themselves and listen to others.

Communicating well involves a conscious effort, being aware of oneself, and practice. If you practice the skills below, eventually healthy communication will become a natural occurrence for you and your student.

Speak encouragingly and with respect. A family environment that fosters communication is one in which everyone feels validated, heard, and understood.

Be aware of your nonverbal messages. They are sometimes more powerful than words.

Actively listen. Avoid distractions when others are speaking to you. Make eye contact and position your body toward the speaker. Nod your head to indicate that you are listening. Active listening means not thinking about your next response or turning the conversation back to yourself.

Hear what is not being expressed. Listen for the emotions and the words that are indirectly communicated. Tone of voice as well as body language convey emotions that are not directly expressed. Sometimes what is stated is an attempt to please the other person; hear what is not stated.

Repeat back what you heard in your own words. This is an important technique that lets the other person know you understand what was said.

Refrain from offering advice, especially when it is not solicited. If decisions need to be made, explore options but allow the other person to make the decision. Some young adults have difficulty making decisions because they did not develop the self-trust that is needed to make them because earlier decisions were made for them.

Parents who are concerned about healthy communication raise children who, as young adults, are able to be assertive, resolve conflicts with others, and manage stressors in their lives.

RESOURCES

University Counseling Center
334 William Pitt Union
412-648-7930

www.counseling.pitt.edu

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Virginia Cooperative Extension
pubs.ext.vt.edu

Dietrich School Debuts New Student Magazine

This spring, the Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences debuted a new student-run interdisciplinary magazine, *Forbes & Fifth*. The magazine is sponsored by the Office of Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity (OUR), and its editorial board consists of nine Dietrich School undergraduates. Truly inclusive, the board is composed of freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. The editors major in anthropology, chemistry, English writing, history, neuroscience, and politics and philosophy, among other disciplines. "The students chose the title *Forbes & Fifth* to accentuate the magazine's diversity," says Patrick Mullen, director of OUR. "I am pleased to see the same diversity among the student editors. It is thrilling to listen to the conversations that occur when future doctors, writers, scientists, and historians gather to create something new."

Cutting through the center of the University of Pittsburgh campus, Forbes and Fifth avenues offer very different experiences. On Fifth Avenue, one finds academic buildings, the Book Center, and the hospitals and research facilities of UPMC, while restaurants, coffee shops, and music stores line Forbes Avenue. Like the exciting range of experiences produced by these avenues, *Forbes & Fifth* features dynamic works of student writing. As the editors began preparing the first issue, they read and analyzed research articles, creative writing, and other scholarly papers. "Working with such talented students has taught me to appreciate a diverse range of student writing," says Katelyn Blough, a rising junior and communication and rhetoric major.

"It also allows me to grow professionally," she says, "immersing myself in the field of study I plan to pursue in my career."

The student editors published the first issue in April, and copies are available in academic departments and the undergraduate studies offices, including the Advising Center, Academic Resource Center, and OUR.

"I am very excited for the future of *Forbes & Fifth*," says rising sophomore and anthropology major Emily Durham. "It will give undergraduate students an incentive to work together with fellow students from many different backgrounds. We encourage cooperation between unlikely allies."

Left to right are *Forbes & Fifth* editorial board members Sara Pecora, Rachel Stachelrodt, and Carly Dunning.





University of Pittsburgh

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- Office of Undergraduate Research,
Scholarship, and Creative Activity412-624-6828
- Office of Freshman Programs412-624-6844
- Office of Student Records412-624-6776
- www.as.pitt.edu/undergraduate

Questions or concerns? E-mail us at pittpride@as.pitt.edu.

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Bellet Awards Presented

The University of Pittsburgh Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences has named Sunil Saxena, an associate professor in the Department of Chemistry, and Cindy Skrzycki, a senior lecturer in the Department of English, winners of the 2012 Tina and David Bellet Teaching Excellence Awards. The Bellet Award recipients were honored at a dinner on April 5 in the ballroom of Pitt's University Club.

The Bellet Awards were established in 1998 and endowed in 2008 with a \$1.5 million gift from Dietrich School alumnus David Bellet (BA '67) and his wife, Tina, to recognize extraordinary achievement and innovation in undergraduate teaching in the Dietrich School.

A committee appointed by the Dietrich School associate dean for undergraduate studies evaluates teaching skills based on student and peer evaluations, student testimonials, and dossiers submitted by the nominees. Full-time faculty members who have taught in the Dietrich School during the past three years are eligible. Each award recipient receives a cash prize of \$5,000.

For more information about the Bellet Awards, visit www.as.pitt.edu/teaching/bellet.



Pictured from left to right are N. John Cooper, Bettye J. and Ralph E. Bailey Dean, Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences; Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg; Tina Bellet; 2012 Bellet Award winners Sunil Saxena and Cindy Skrzycki; David Bellet; Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor Patricia E. Beeson; and Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies John A. Twyning.

SUMMER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June

- 23** Summer 6-week (1) session ends; final examinations scheduled during last class meeting; official date for awarding of degrees
- 25** Summer 6-week (2) session enrollment period ends and classes begin
- 27** Summer 6-week (1) session grades must be approved by instructors by 11:59 p.m. before final posting can begin; Summer 6-week (2) session add/drop period ends; Summer 4-week (2) session deadline for students to submit Monitored Withdrawal forms to the dean's office

July

- 4** Independence Day (University closed)
- 6** Summer term and 12-week session deadline for students to submit Monitored Withdrawal forms to the dean's office
- 7** Summer 4-week (2) session ends; final examinations scheduled during last class meeting
- 9** Summer 4-week (3) session enrollment period ends and classes begin
- 11** Summer 4-week (2) session grades must be approved by instructors by 11:59 p.m. before final posting can begin;

Fall term deadline for continuing students to register without penalty fee; Summer 4-week (3) session add/drop period ends

- 20** Summer 6-week (2) session deadline for students to submit Monitored Withdrawal forms to the dean's office
- 25** Summer 4-week (3) session deadline for students to submit Monitored Withdrawal forms to the dean's office

August

- 4** Summer 12-week, 6-week (2), and 4-week (3) sessions end; final examinations scheduled during last class meeting
- 8** Summer 12-week, 6-week (2), and 4-week (3) session grades must be approved by instructors by 11:59 p.m. before final posting can begin
- 11** Summer term ends; final examinations scheduled during last class meeting; official date for awarding of degrees
- 12** Residence halls close
- 15** Summer term grades must be approved by instructors by 11:59 p.m. before final posting can begin
- 21** Residence halls open for fall term
- 27** Fall term enrollment period ends for all students and fall term classes begin

For the online academic calendar, go to www.provost.pitt.edu/information-on/calendar.html.

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
DIETRICH SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
THE PITT PRIDE

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The University of Pittsburgh, as an educational institution and as an employer, values equality of opportunity, human dignity, and racial/ethnic and cultural diversity. Accordingly, as fully explained in Policy 07-01-03, the University prohibits and will not engage in discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, disability, or status as a veteran. The University also prohibits and will not engage in retaliation against any person who makes a claim of discrimination or harassment or who provides information in such an investigation. Further, the University will continue to take affirmative steps to support and advance these values consistent with the University's mission. This policy applies to admissions, employment, and access to and treatment in University programs and activities*. This is a commitment made by the University and is in accordance with federal, state, and/or local laws and regulations.

For information on University equal opportunity and affirmative action programs, please contact: University of Pittsburgh; Office of Affirmative Action, Diversity, and Inclusion; Carol W. Mohamed, Director (and Title IX, 504 and ADA Coordinator); 412 Bellefield Hall; 315 South Bellefield Avenue; Pittsburgh, PA 15260; 412-648-7860.

For complete details on the University's Nondiscrimination Policy, please refer to Policy 07-01-03. For information on how to file a complaint under this policy, please refer to Procedure 07-01-03.

*Except where exempt by federal or state laws.

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