



## **J.E.D.I. Education Program Article**

### **The Constant Pursuit of Justice**

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The J.E.D.I. Strategist Education Program  
The Office of Diversity and Community Engagement



The J.E.D.I. Strategist Educational Program Leadership Team



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*“Of all forms of discrimination and inequalities, injustice in healthcare is the most shocking and inhuman.”*

*Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*

*April 16, 1966*

On April 16, 1966, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stated that “of all forms of discrimination and inequalities, injustice in healthcare is the most shocking and inhuman.” Through our inaugural Justice Equity Diversity Inclusion (J.E.D.I.) J.E.D.I. Strategist Education Program, The Office of Diversity and Community Engagement seeks to acknowledge and address injustices in healthcare by creating an authentic path that empowers our entire community to flourish together and move forward in our vision *“to be the nation’s leading public academic health system and a best place to work – while transforming patient care, research, education, and engagement with the diverse communities we serve.”*

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The J.E.D.I. Strategist Education Program was created to fulfill our mission of, *“transforming health and inspiring hope for all Virginians and beyond”* and supports *are Equity Aspire Value of “promoting an environment of inclusivity, equity, and respect for our patients, visitors, team members, and students, and striving to improve community health by addressing social determinants of health.”*

The Justice Equity Diversity Inclusion Strategists (JEDIS) Education Program is a collaborative program within the University of Virginia, School of Medicine and under the leadership of the Senior Associate Dean of Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI), Dr. Tracy M. Downs and The Office of Diversity and Community Engagement team members, Melody M. Pannell and Dwan Love - Dinkens. Each department appoints an individual to serve as the department JEDI Strategist and each JEDI is actively invested in creating an inclusive environment.

Across the various clinical and basic science departments, JEDIS work collectively as a cohort to ensure diversity and inclusion are woven into best practices for all of their departments’ initiatives. Collectively, the JEDIS program will create a centralized framework to align DEI efforts within the School of Medicine (SOM) and UVA Health. Expectations for each designated J.E.D.I. include focuses such as, 1. Monitor and keep track of your department’s community outreach and engagement efforts. 2. Communicate opportunities for Diverse Scholarships, Research Funding, and other External Funding. 3. Survey your department to determine which area(s) of Social Determinants of Health they are interested in working on each academic calendar year.

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The J.E.D.I. Strategist Education Program has a three - year curriculum. Year I focused on Orientation to J.E.D.I. Training, Year II focuses on Research and Strategic Planning and Year III will focus on Facilitation training. Curriculum topics include: Inclusive Excellence, Intersectionality, Cultural Competence/Humility, Implicit Bias, Multicultural Organizational Transformation, Social Determinants of Health, Courageous Conversations, Emotional Intelligence, Restorative Justice, Adaptive Leadership.

Now in its second year, the J.E.D.I.s Program has two cohorts - Cohort I: Year II with 26 participants and Cohort II: Year I with 6 participants. Year II J.E.D.I.s are currently working on their Capstone Projects that have been identified from data reflecting particular gaps in our UVA Health Strategic Plan as we center our commitment to *“Cultivating Healthy Communities & Belonging For All.”*

The five Capstone Projects chosen are 1. Bias and Hate Incident Reporting Form 2. Pathways Programs 3. Faculty Recruitment 4. Equitable Patient Access and 5. Language Access. Each J.E.D.I. Capstone Project Group is paired with an administrative leader at UVAHS that serves as a Sponsor/Operational Specialist to work towards presenting salient recommendations and effectively implementing proposed recommendations. Groups will present as part of The UVA Health Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Recognition Week Celebration from January 12 - January 19, 2024 in honor of the theme: The Constant Pursuit of Justice. These presentations are in person and open to the UVA Community.

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The J.E.D.I. Strategist Education Program will continue throughout the Spring Semester and also launch a new training program to onboard additional instructors and facilitators as the program prepares to expand throughout UVA Health.

Cohort II J.E.D.I. Dr. Jacqueline Zilliouz shared that *“The J.E.D.I. Program moves beyond value statements to forward justice and DEI work on multiple levels throughout UVA Health. By educating, training, and empowering J.E.D.I members, the program ensures principles become ingrained in Department culture, encourages and inspires work and innovation in the area, and ensures accountability.”*

Cohort I J.E.D.I. Dr. Nassima Ait Daoud Tiouririne expressed that *“The JEDI program is teaching me the skills and showing me the path to help create a space where every individual is able to thrive as themselves, where our patients can access care independently of their race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status and where we work to dismantle barriers to opportunities so our community can benefit. I particularly appreciate that as J.E.D.I., we are held responsible for disseminating DEI work efforts in our department so we become agents of change.”*

May we support and continue our commitment as a UVA Health community to The Constant Pursuit of Justice.

