Celebrating Arab American Heritage Month

April marks the celebration of Arab American Heritage month, recognizing the rich history and diverse cultures of Arab Americans. Descendants of Arab immigrants are connected to one or more of the 22 Arab nations that span the areas of northern Africa to western Asia. When considering the presence of Arab Americans in psychological research, there continues to be a lack of representation. For a significant period, Arab American psychologists could only connect with one another through informal networks, given the broader invisibility of Arab Americans in the field. Only after the events of 9/11 did psychological research on the discriminatory experiences faced by Arab Americans increase. Years later, the establishment of the Arab, Middle Eastern, and North African Psychological Association (AMENA-Psy) in the American Psychological Association (APA) marked a significant turning point in the field for this represented the first pan-Arab association. In this issue of the Psychology DEI Newsletter, we begin with spotlighting Dr. Tuppett Yates and Elizabeth Fletes for their contributions to DEI, and then provide a timeline capturing the key events that contributed to the formation of an Arab American psychology.

Student & Faculty Spotlights

Dr. Tuppett Yates is the director of the Adversity and Adaptation Lab which specializes in the intersections of clinical and developmental psychology. Dr. Yates’ research focuses on the underlying mechanisms contributing to adversity and how such factors can promote resilience among individuals, families, and communities. In addition, Dr. Yates is the founder and executive director of the UCR Guardian Scholars Program for Foster Youth, which was established in 2008. The Guardian Scholars Program was developed to provide a support system to students through programming and scholarships. Within the area of service, Dr. Yates chairs the UCR Psychology department’s DEI committee and has contributed to expanding the committee’s internal structure and the development of effective initiatives that are positively impacting the department and the university.

Elizabeth Fletes is a fourth-year undergraduate student pursuing a bachelor’s degree in biology. Elizabeth works under the guidance of Dr. Annie Ditta, in her TEACH lab, as well as Dr. Rachel Wu’s CALLA Lab. Elizabeth has conducted research investigating the motivation to learn in younger and older adults. Recently, Elizabeth was selected as a student recipient for the Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievement. Every year two graduating seniors are selected to receive this award. Congratulations Elizabeth!

UCR Psychology DEI Website:
https://psychology.ucr.edu/diversity-and-inclusion/

To nominate a deserving student or scholar who conducts research on topics related to DEI or social justice and/or who represents the work of BIPOC scholars, please complete this form.

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