Taking place during the month of April each year, Earth month started as a movement against the consumption of lead gas.

In January 1969, following a massive oil spill in Santa Barbara, California, a group of activists decided to dedicate themselves to encouraging Americans to become more proactive and environmentally conscious. Naming it Earth Day, the initiative immediately caught the attention of the media and since Earth Month was created!

First celebrated on April 4, 1970, Earth Month became a global event after 200 million participants from 141 countries joined the initiative. By 1992, the United Nations became actively involved too, which further enhanced the organization's visibility. Today, Earth Month is widely recognized as one of the most important month-long observances in the world.

It’s a time to raise environmental awareness and create consciousness around the issues that affect mother nature during this time of crisis. Every April, leaders and environmental activists from all over the world join hands to create sustainable development and offer climate solutions, to minimize our carbon footprint and prevent further harm to our planet's natural resources. Here are a few ways you can celebrate Earth Month:

1. Plant a Tree
2. Donate to a Charity
3. Save household energy for the Month

Today, Earth Month is widely recognized as one of the most important month-long observances in the world. To learn more about how you can participate this Earth Month, visit Nationaltoday.com.
Three Kennesaw State, Gabriela Citino, Dinesh Reddy, and Mohammad Jobair Hossain Faruk, are among a group of 27 chosen to participate in the Regional Centre of Expertise of Greater Atlanta's Sustainable Development Goals Futures Fellowship, aiming to make a difference in the world through sustainable development education and leadership.

The SDG Futures Fellowship seeks to educate participants on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, as well as develop leadership and professional skills. The UN’s 17 goals include eliminating hunger and poverty, along with achieving universal quality education, clean water, and sanitation as well as many more states associated with healthy and safe living.

Hossain Faruk is a computer science Ph.D. student and earned a software engineering master’s at KSU. He has prior experience working with the United Nations as an intern and said it was during that 2020 internship that he first learned about the UN's sustainability goals. “Through this fellowship, with each of our unique expertise and enthusiasm for serving the community, we’re aiming to make a small difference here that could contribute to a large difference everywhere.”

Reddy, a KSU graduate student in information technology who grew up in India, said he’s seen the human impacts on the environment there and abroad.

“I see the changes. I used to go swimming in the rivers back home, but now there’s too much pollution,” Reddy said, noting that he's always researched the carbon footprint of his lifestyle – from purchases to travel, and even Google searches. “We don't realize how much impact even the most mundane of our actions can have on our environment.”

Reddy said he will use his information technology background to help partner Greenhouse Accelerator, a company dedicated to growing sustainability startups in Atlanta, scale its business infrastructure during his time in the fellowship.

Citino, a KSU Journey Honors College student with a journalism major and international affairs minor, was the only undergraduate student chosen for the 2022-23 fellowship at KSU. Continued on pg. 3.
Citino, who is a native of Brazil, said the fellowship connected with her passion for international affairs and sustainability across the globe. “I am an immigrant myself, and I think it’s impossible to talk about sustainability without talking about migration and immigration. So, I have a bit of my own background, knowledge, and experiences to bring to this fellowship,” Citino said.

Citino is working with partner Re’Generation Movement to develop best practices in local communities for peacebuilding and empowering young refugees and immigrants to excel through education and become leaders in their areas of passion.

The SDG Futures Fellowship runs each year from October to April. Applications and information can be found at rcega.org.

KSU Student Earns Prestigious Goldwater Scholarship

Kennesaw State University junior Derek Price II has been awarded a Barry M. Goldwater scholarship, presented each year to the nation’s top undergraduate scholars in the sciences, mathematics, and engineering.

Price, a mechanical engineering major from Stone Mountain, Ga., came to the Southern Polytechnic College of Engineering and Engineering Technology (SPCEET) with Zell Miller and Lockheed scholarships—and with an overwhelming enthusiasm for math and science. However, after meeting with fellow engineering students his first semester as a freshman set Price on his path toward research, which he pursued through KSU’s First-Year Scholars program.

“He demonstrated that he could not only handle the upper-level engineering coursework efficiently but also excel in any course material presented to him,” said Professor Khalid. “I was impressed by his willingness to work above and beyond what is required from him, and I am confident that he will be an asset to any organization he joins.”

Price said he has loved math and science for as long as he has gone to school, and he wants to pass that love along to other minority students, hoping to inspire the next generation of underrepresented students to courageously pursue careers in STEM.

“I would encourage undergraduates to challenge themselves and gain hands-on experience through research,” Price said. “KSU has so much to offer in terms of classes, research and extracurricular activities, and I’ve gained so much from participating fully.”

Price also participates in the KSU Journey Honors College, where Dean Karen Kornweibel has had a front-row seat to watch Price grow into a top-flight researcher. “We are incredibly proud of Derek, who is the fourth Kennesaw State undergraduate—and third honors student—to receive a Goldwater since 2019,” she said. “Derek’s award is an excellent testament to his significant academic accomplishments, to KSU’s dynamic undergraduate research culture, to the dedication of faculty mentors across our institution, and to the efforts of our Office of National and International Scholarships and Fellowships.”

The Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Program was established by the United States Congress in 1986 to honor Sen. Barry M. Goldwater. The purpose of the program is to provide a continuing source of highly qualified scientists, mathematicians, and engineers by awarding scholarships to college students who intend to pursue careers in these fields.

Price is one of 417 recipients selected this year and becomes the fifth Kennesaw State student to earn a Goldwater scholarship, joining Jiexi Liao in 2013, Biya Haile in 2019, Trae Dunn in 2020 and Angel Vasquez in 2022.

To read more about this incredible student, visit here!
DDIE Celebrates Three Graduating Diversity Ambassadors

Javeria Ali is a Political Science major, who has served as a Diversity Ambassador for one year. Serving as a member of Pi Sigma Alpha, KSU Political Science Club, National Society of Leadership and Success, Women’s Foreign Policy Group, and Muslim Americans in Public Service, Javeria is an active member of the KSU community, who consistently sought opportunities to create a culture of belonging and inclusivity. On being an ambassador, she said, "my involvement as a diversity ambassador has been instrumental in shaping my collegiate journey." She added, "it has enriched my understanding of diverse perspectives, cultures, and identities, and has empowered me to be an advocate for inclusivity and social change on campus."

As a Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship recipient and Bagwell Center for the Study of Markets and Economic Opportunity Undergraduate Research Fellow, Javeria plans to continue her education by pursuing a graduate degree in International Affairs at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in the heart of Washington, D.C. "My favorite quote is 'maybe if everybody in leadership was a woman, you might not get into the conflicts in the first place. But if you watch the women who have made it to the top, they haven't exactly been non-aggressive - including me,' because it aligns with my values of promoting gender diversity in leadership and education."

Noelle Ford, who is a part of KSU's Academy for Inclusive Learning and Social Growth, has served as a Diversity Ambassador for two years. Through her role, Noelle has leveraged her position to help make KSU a more accessible campus by advocating for automatic restroom doors in Willingham Hall and updating the campus bridges that were causing mobility concerns. "Being an ambassador has shaped my college experience because it has given me the confidence to speak up for myself," says Noelle. "It also has also shaped my college experience by meeting new people and being able to connect with them."

As she looks to the future, Noelle will begin working at PGA Superstore as a Sales Associate, while working to develop her own disability consulting firm. Noelle shared, "My favorite quote is 'pray, hope and don't worry. Worry is useless. God is merciful and will hear your prayer.' I love this quote because it reminds me to pray more and worry less since I literally worry about everything. I know that it is hard for me to do but I am working on it every day since God commands me to be at peace 24/7." Looking back on what she will miss most about KSU, Noelle said, "I will miss so many different things about KSU such as all my friends and all the teachers and staff that I have met at my time here at KSU."

Citlalli Solis is a Political Science major, who has served as a Diversity Ambassador since its inception in 2020. "My favorite quote is 'today's tears water tomorrow's gardens' because it serves as a reminder that while obstacles may seem hard in the moment, there is great reward upon overcoming them."

As a first-generation student, Citlalli has done just that! Serving as a member of Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority, Inc., Epsilon Alpha, and Po Sigma Alpha Honors Society, Citlalli is a 5x Dean's List Honoree, a Goizueta Scholar, and was recently accepted into law school after passing the LSAT.

"Being an ambassador has allowed me to expand my knowledge and outlook on the world. It has allowed me to connect to the campus and exposed me to the richly diverse community!" Following graduation, Citlalli plans to a Juris Doctorate, and begin her career as a Public Service Attorney before running for office! Looking back on her time at KSU, Citlalli favorite memories include joining her sorority and attending the Homecoming concert featuring Meg the Stallion. "I will truly miss KSU! Especially the friends and mentors I've gained along the way!"
DDIE Outreach Program makes Headlines for Boosting Student Success & Support

"We were all in lockdown, and I was in a dorm by myself when people were sent home," says Carlos Moreland, who started his collegiate career during COVID-19. "Those were tough challenges for the beginning of my freshman year. It was very hard learning online; I failed three classes and had to withdraw from another."

Rather than finding study partners in the classroom and enjoying social life with new friends, the Kennesaw State University student found himself very much alone. But Moreland found academic and social support through KSU’s Strategic Outreach and Diversity Initiatives department, designed to meet the needs of students who are either high-achievers, HOPE scholarship recipients, first-generation or from rural or urban backgrounds. The program works with about 1,300 students, giving them the help they need to cross the graduation finish line. It has been a lifesaver for Moreland, who lost his HOPE funding during that tumultuous first year.

"Through SODI, I got a graduation coach who got me back to my academic studies. I got HOPE back, and I got into a community study group of others my age who can help me study but who are also looking to make friends and connections."

"With roughly 43,000 students, KSU can be a challenge for newcomers looking to find their niche," said Chief Diversity Officer Sonia Toson. "So along with academic support, SODI programs provide a range of services for life outside the classroom, including taking advantage of our mental health and wellness programs, and finding the right kind of housing." She continued, "One of the mainstays of the program is graduation coaching. Each student is assigned a graduation coach or ‘life coach for college students’. That individual support, paired with the other initiatives, has made a positive impact."

Snellville native Camille Warren said SODI has been a major factor in her college success. The Criminal Justice major has been a HOPE scholar since starting at KSU three years ago. "It’s been really beneficial to have counselors and cheerleaders who help with academics and to know people who share majors and can mentor you through," she said. "While it’s heavily academic, we do get to build friendships through having neighbors or roommates who are also in SODI and by attending the events they host. It’s been great for me to have a close-knit community of friends."

"Our retention and graduation rates have exceeded our overall KSU statistics: Kennesaw is about 47%; we're closer to 60%," said Dr. Toson. "We're now also starting to see higher alumni engagement. We think we've got a great model for student success."

For more information on SODI programs and initiatives, visit https://diversity.kennesaw.edu/strategic-initiatives/index.php
SEVEN PRACTICES FOR BUILDING COMMUNITY FOR STUDENTS VIRTUALLY

Most colleges and universities have traditionally provided in-person programming and support to strengthen bonds between students and build a sense of community.

These activities, such as campus-wide events, one-on-one advising appointments, career development workshops, and mentorship programs, help students develop a sense of belonging at the institution, improve their academic experience, and boost their chances of graduating. These programs are especially important for students from historically underrepresented backgrounds, whose experiences of exclusion on campus can impede their progress to graduation.

Yet, in spring 2020, many colleges and universities abruptly closed their campuses in response to the spread of COVID-19, preventing them from hosting any in-person activities, including classes, athletics, and student-centered events. As a result of many institutions focusing on shifting from in-person to distance learning formats, many students, especially lower-income students, and students of color, felt disconnected from their institutions and their peers, and voiced a need for additional communication and support, especially from financial aid and academic advising staff.

As such, here are seven steps colleges and universities across the country can take to promote a sense of belonging when students engage remotely:

1. Meet student’s basic needs.
2. Keep students informed using various communication platforms.
3. Use peer mentors and student leaders to cultivate a sense of community.
4. Give students ample opportunities to share their experiences, and demonstrate they are heard by following through with appropriate support.
5. Engage parents and families, providing them with tools and resources to support their students.
6. Increase collaboration to ensure that students are at the center of all decisions.
7. Demonstrate care and compassion.

To learn more on how to build community with students virtually, please visit the Chronicle of Higher Education.
On February 13, 2023, the Division of Diverse and Inclusive Excellence announced the online version of their highly requested Inclusive Hiring Training. The training, which was primarily taught by a member of the division, is now available to all faculty and staff members who are eligible to participate in the hiring process. Additionally, the training only needs to be taken once annually and participants will receive a certification upon completion.

To access the inclusive hiring training:

- Follow this link to access the KSU Inclusive Hiring Training channel: https://share.percipio.com/cd/HFIBa14IA
- If prompted, log in with your KSU NetID and password.
- Click Watch to start the inclusive hiring training.
- Once complete, follow the directions below to download your completion certificate.
  a. Click your name to open the Personal Profile
  b. In the dropdown menu, click Activity.
  c. The Activity page will load. Locate the completed Inclusive Hiring Training.
  d. Click the Download Certificate button next to the course you wish to access a certificate of completion. Follow your device’s download settings to view and print your certificate.

If you have any issues with accessing or completing the training, please click here for help.

If you experience any technical issues with the training module, please contact the KSU UITS Service Desk at (470) 578-6999 or email service@kennesaw.edu.
The Division of Diverse and Inclusive Excellence
Spring 2023 Virtual Trainings

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LEADING THE WAY

Alumni Highlight - Josh Robinson
For most people, hospitals and healthcare facilities are a necessary evil, but to Kennesaw State alum and award-winning designer, Josh Robinson, they represent hope.

Recently, The NYC Journal named Robinson to its “Top 10 Architects to Look Out for in 2023” list. While relatively early in his career, Robinson’s portfolio already spans the country and, according to the publication, includes a “breathtaking body of work” focused on destigmatizing healthcare environments. “My parents worked in hospitals throughout my life, so I saw hospitals in all their glory and all their mystery,” said Robinson, a 2019 graduate from the College of Architecture of Construction Management (CACM), “My sister and I learned how amazing hospitals are, so I was shocked by how many people were terrified of them. I made it my goal to heal beyond the hospital.”

Robinson started his deep dive into the designs of healthcare systems during the year and a half he spent on his thesis at Kennesaw State, working closely with CACM associate professor Pegah Zamani. “Josh and his incredible journey embody the exceptional evolving career pathway I wish for each of our students,” Zamani said. “As his former thesis advisor to his current research collaborator, I have traced his deep commitment to excellence and leadership. And I know the best is yet to come.” Currently, Robinson is working on a multibillion-dollar project for a massive hospital expansion in the Northeast, and the rising star is excited about his future.

LEADER LINES
EACH MONTH YOU CAN LOOK FORWARD TO A SHORT QUOTE OR MESSAGE THAT HAS A SPECIAL MEANING FOR ONE OF OUR KSU LEADERS. THIS MONTH’S QUOTE COMES FROM DIRECTOR OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES (MARIETTA CAMPUS), RANDALL P. BOGARD!

Quote: "Work hard in silence, let success be the noise!"

The quote defines how I have approached my career and life. My village showed me that being successful required hard work and being good to others.

In observing my village, I noticed that no one ever sought accolades or praises from other. They were just always satisfied with giving their best and helping others. Since middle school, I have stayed true to the idea of hard work and being humble in my approach, and I try not to take my journey for granted.

I apply this in my leadership every day by working hard behind the scenes to advocate for my team and diligently to keep tasks off their plate that will prevent them from connecting with students and achieving the goals of their area."
Whether just getting started or a diversity warrior, these resources are sure to encourage, inform, and motivate you to support diverse excellence here at KSU and beyond!

READ - THE FUTURE WE CHOOSE

WATCH - EATING OUR WAY TO EXTINCTION

LISTEN - REAL TALK: DIVERSITY IN HIGHER ED

CONTACT US
KSUDIVERSE@KENNESAW.EDU