

D'YOUVILLE UNIVERSITY

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

DEIB Membership & Bio Sketch

Participant	Role on Committee	Role at DYU	Biography
Megan Whelan	Chair	SHP Dean	<p>My name is Megan Whelan. I serve as the Dean of the School of Health Professions. I earned a B.S. in Human Nutrition from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and completed a Dietetic Internship at the University of Rhode Island. I have been a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist since 1999. I also hold an M.S. in Nutrition and a Ph.D. in Curriculum, Instruction, and the Science of Learning from the State University of New York, University at Buffalo. I am a qualitative researcher, and my research focus has been to critically examine diversity, equity, and inclusion in health profession education and practice to inform equity efforts. I am also interested in the impact of access to food and nutrition services on food security, health outcomes, and perceptions of health in underserved communities. My research has led me to my role as the lead nutrition researcher on several grants providing food and nutrition access at D'Youville's Health Professions Hub on the west side of Buffalo and as the Principal Investigator for the 3.25 million dollar HRSA Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) grant. The HCOP grant purpose is to recruit, retain, and graduate historically underrepresented students from health profession programs such as PA with the aim for graduates to return to their communities to serve as health professionals. I also currently serve on the Board of Editors for the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and as a patient family partner for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation's Quality Improvement Learning Network.</p>

<p>Tereka Baltimore</p>	<p>HCOP Representative</p>	<p>HCOP Project Manager</p>	<p>Over the past 20 years, I have mentored and worked with diverse youth including high-risk, youth with developmental disabilities, and those who are seriously and emotionally disturbed. I am driven by providing mentorship and servicing youth, identifying their strengths, and building on their areas of weakness. In January 2016, I accepted a position at Say Yes Buffalo as a Family Support Specialist (FSS) where I was tasked along with two of my colleagues to design and implement a pilot mentoring program called, "Youth Empowerment and Supports" (YES) at three Buffalo public high schools. I also served as the Say Yes Buffalo Scholar Mentoring Supervisor. In this role, I was responsible for recruiting, training, and matching mentees who were HS seniors and college students with volunteer mentors in the program. I am empathetic and dedicated and can assess the needs of each student to link them to a mentor and community-based services and or support. I take pride in ensuring the increase of the scholar mentee's chances for successful learning experiences, personal growth, persistence through college/post-secondary, graduation, jobs, and self-sufficiency. The best part about being a youth advocate is being able to assist the students and their families with "acknowledging their weaknesses while focusing and building on the strengths!"</p>
<p>Steven Cicero</p>	<p>Faculty Representative</p>	<p>PA Faculty Member</p>	<p>My name is Steve Cicero. I am an alumnus of the DYU PA program, proudly graduating with the class of 2019. I have over four years of experience in hospitalist medicine and continue to work full-time in a nocturnal capacity. Complementing my clinical role, I have also been privileged to contribute as a full-time educator at my alma mater for the past 3 years. My approach to education is grounded in the philosophy that the most exceptional PAs are first assembled in the classroom. As such, I strive to cultivate a learning environment where students are not only exposed to a comprehensive range of medical knowledge, but are also encouraged to embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion as integral components of their practice. I am committed to ensuring all my students feel valued, respected, and empowered to succeed, so that - when the time inevitably comes - they can extend the same care to their future patients and communities. Beyond my role on the PA DEIB committee, I am excited about the prospect of building a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive university environment as a whole; in alignment with this commitment, I am eagerly pursuing a credential from the Council of Independent Colleges, focusing on "Fostering a Culture of Belonging." I look forward to leveraging this experience to advocate for meaningful change across the PA program, institution, and medical community as a whole.</p>

<p>Denise DiRienzo</p>	<p>Institutional Representative</p>	<p>Chief Mission Officer</p>	<p>I am an experienced and passionate leader who has dedicated over two decades to fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive campus environment. With a proven track record of integrating the university mission across all facets of student life, I have developed and implemented innovative initiatives that blend research, student success, service, the university's mission, and a drive for social equity. This strategic vision has consistently led to the creation of transformative programs that benefit both the student body and the broader community. As a micro-credentialed DEI Leader through BELONG (Council of Independent Colleges) and a Founding Board Member of the BELONG National Advisory Board, I have demonstrated a strong commitment to building inclusive relationships with diverse communities. These efforts have resulted in a more welcoming and supportive campus environment. I have also successfully secured over \$100,000 annually in grants to support mission-driven programs. The expertise I have gained in grant writing has enabled the development and implementation of numerous impactful projects. As the lead communication contact for internal and external media, I effectively communicate the university's mission and vision. I also have become a strong advocate for service learning and have developed and directed curricular and co-curricular opportunities that connect academic development with real-world experiences. These programs enhance student learning and prepare them for successful careers. A few of my experience highlights include being the chair of the Institutional Bias Committee and leading efforts to promote a more inclusive campus environment. Secondly, I oversee campus ministry and programming which provides support to the diverse student body of all faiths. Through my dedication and expertise, I feel I have made a lasting impact on the institutions I have been proud to be a part of, fostering environments where all students can thrive and succeed!</p>
<p>Nicole Cwiklinski</p>	<p>Staff Representative</p>	<p>PA Program Coordinator</p>	<p>My name is Nicole Cwiklinski and I serve as the Clinical Program Coordinator for the PA Department. In my role, I am dedicated to creating an inclusive and equitable educational environment. I pride myself on my strong communication skills, as well as my organizational abilities. These skills are crucial as I work collaboratively with diverse groups of students within our program. I am committed to the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion and am actively seeking training opportunities to further my understanding and improve my application of these important principles in our academic setting. My goal is to help foster an inclusive culture that not only welcomes but supports and celebrates the diverse backgrounds of everyone in our department.</p>