



NEW ASSOCIATE DEAN LEADS THE SCHOOL IN DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & BELONGING



To achieve a more just and equitable future for all, Kim Warren knows we not only need to look forward, to the world we want to see, but also backwards, at the forces that have shaped the present. As a historian, she sees the rich lessons that can be learned from the past and how we can draw from them to create sustainable change in the years to come.

“When facing a crisis, I often think about what historical patterns have led to this moment of challenge,” she explains. “I am always thinking about how the past informs the present, but more importantly, how we can have a more lasting impact on the future.”

Now, as the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare’s new associate dean for diversity, equity, and inclusion, Warren, Ph.D., will use her lens as a historian and researcher of race, gender, and social reform to help achieve the school’s goal of creating a more just and equitable world.

“I’m excited to join a team that has already put social justice as its center objective,” says Warren, who joined the school in June 2020. “I want to not only help make our community more socially just, but also make our state, the Kansas City metro area, and our university more socially just as well.”

*With background in history, service, and leadership,
she will guide the school’s work*

“One of the challenges with any work that is labeled with the words ‘diversity,’ ‘equity,’ or ‘inclusion’ is that folks might assume that the person who holds a DEI title can fix all of the problems that a community has experienced. That’s not how it works. I don’t have all of the answers, but I do have a personal and professional commitment to use higher education as a platform that encourages people to work together rather than rip apart each other by amplifying division.”

-Kim Warren, Ph.D., associate dean for diversity, equity, and inclusion

WARREN DRAWS FROM WIDE RANGE OF EXPERIENCE

While new to the school, Warren is not a newcomer to KU or to community engagement. She joined the KU faculty in 2004 and has held joint appointments with the departments of History and Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies. She has served as director of undergraduate studies and director of graduate studies in two departments and has been a faculty fellow in the Center for Teaching Excellence. She will retain her appointment with the Department of History while also serving as the school’s associate dean.

In addition to providing leadership and vision, Warren will also help expand the school’s footprint in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) research by contributing her own scholarly research and by continuing to support current DEI-related work the school is already producing.

Before coming to KU, Warren served with the United States Peace Corps in the Slovak Republic, was a field coordinator for AmeriCorps in the Kansas City metropolitan area, and was the director of the Center for Service Learning at Rockhurst University in Kansas City, Missouri. She received her bachelor’s degree in American studies from Yale University and her master’s degree and doctorate in history from Stanford University.

SHE’S EXCITED FOR THE SCHOOL TO LEAD THE UNIVERSITY IN DEI WORK

“My vision is that everyone in the school will elevate their use of diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies in all of our work, research, and teaching,” Warren says. “Embracing a myriad of voices and experiences, identifying the strengths of different voices and experiences—those methods are at the core of social work, so the school is poised to lead the rest of the university with this work.”

One of Warren’s strategies is to partner with other leaders in the school and across KU to help students and community members make significant strides in dismantling systematic inequality.

“In order for our school to lead KU’s campus, we will need to collaborate with other units such as the Center for Teaching Excellence, the School of Law, and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences,” she says. “The idea is to foster a university-wide climate that welcomes a broad range of students from different backgrounds and also institutionalizes commitments to diversity.”

To start with, she’d like to see the faculty and student population in the school be more representative of the diversity in America. “It’s important for the school to provide lots of role models for students representing different experiences and ways of thinking,” she explains. “What we know in business and in higher education is that the more diverse the voices in the conversations, the better solutions to those problems.”

She also wants potential students to see that if they are equipped with a degree in social welfare, they will be able to solve the challenges they see around them and be a part of creating positive change. With a degree, they will be prepared to do things like lead nonprofits, become counselors, or work with populations they care about deeply.

As Warren looks at the opportunities before her and the school, she knows there is a lot of work to do. But she’s excited for the opportunity to make meaningful progress. “The School of Social Welfare has already made great strides in breaking down hierarchies and bringing more people to the table of decision-making,” she explains. “My job is to continue to pull together resources and strategies that will help our social work community bring about sustainable change, sustainable empowerment, sustainable pathways to success.”



TONI JOHNSON CENTER FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

The University of Kansas, School of Social Welfare (KUSSW) dedicates The Toni Johnson Center for Racial Justice to Dr. Toni Johnson, our beloved colleague, friend, and professor. Dr. Johnson was a member of the KU School of Social Welfare faculty from 2005-2016. Dr. Johnson committed her life to social, racial, and economic justice for youth and their families. As a practitioner, researcher, and professor, Dr. Johnson aspired to be a social change agent to increase the inclusion and equity of all people, with a particular focus on African American families. She was dedicated to supporting students in and out of the classroom, including her role as the Director for the Multicultural Scholars Program. She received the Gene A. and Gretchen Budig Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2012. This Center represents KU School of Social Welfare’s commitment to forward Dr. Johnson’s life work by promoting student involvement and engaged scholarship in the areas of race and social justice.

MISSION

Promote an educational environment engaged in racial and social justice



KU SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WELFARE

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SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WELFARE

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2021 Associate Dean DEI

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