

N. J. Akbar, Ph.D.

Associate Vice President, Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
 Kent State University
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SUMMARY

Life-long learner with 13+ years of experience leading diverse teams/organizations and creating equitable learning environments (K-16) focused on increased systematic impact to dismantle racism and bias for marginalized populations and communities.

EDUCATION

Ph.D. – Cultural Foundations of Education

August 2019

Focus Areas: *Sociology of Education and Multicultural Education*
 Kent State University, Kent, OH

Dissertation: *Black Male Collegians Cultivating Success: Critical Race Aspiration Ethos* - (A study exploring the lifelong impacts of K-12 parental engagement)

https://etd.ohiolink.edu/!etd.send_file?accession=kent1563497136309066&disposition=inline

Research Interests: Schools and Racial Equity Change, Parent Engagement, Black Males, Academic Achievement from K-16, Education Marginalization, School to Prison Pipeline and Educational Policies Post-Brown v. Board of Education.

M. A. – Educational Leadership for Higher Education Student Affairs

April 2009

Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI.

B.S. – History & Language Literature and Writing for Secondary Education

June 2007

Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI.

PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

2009 – Present

Kent State University (Kent, OH)

Associate Vice President-Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (2020 – present)
 Assistant Dean, Academic Diversity–University College (2015 – 2020)
 Interim Project Director, McNair Scholars Program (2017 – 2018)
 Interim Project Director, Student Support Services (2015)
 Director, Office of Diversity Outreach & Development – College of
 Education, Health & Human Services (2012 – 2015)
 Interim Director, LGBTQ Student Center (2011 – 2012)
 Assistant Director, Student Success Programs (2009 – 2012)

2020 – Present

Board of Education, Akron Public Schools (Akron, OH)

Vice President, Board of Education (2020 – present)

2007 – 2009

University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, MI)

Career Advisor, The Career Center (2008-2009)
 Graduate Intern/Resolution Assistant, Office of Student Conflict
 Resolution (2007-2008)

2007 – 2008 **Eastern Michigan University (Ypsilanti, MI)**
 Supervisor, Summer Incentive Program - Holman Learning Center (2008)
 Graduate Assistant/Academic Support Assistant, Holman Learning Center
 (2007-2008)

2000 – 2003 **Wayne State University (Detroit, MI)**
 Research Assistant, Biobehavioral Research Laboratory, Psychology

SELECTED RELEVANT EXPERIENCES

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY – Kent, OH **2009 – Present**
A Carnegie Research extensive classification; Named one of the Top 200 Universities in the World serving approximately 41,000 undergraduate and 5,500 graduate students throughout an eight campus system and one podiatric medicine college located in northeast Ohio.

Associate Vice President **2020 - Present**
 Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Responsibilities

As Associate Vice President, assist the Vice President in leading the division on administration of strategic planning, assessment, research and student success; oversee regional campus engagement for diversity initiatives, University Diversity Action Council, diversity graduate student research programming, equity scorecard, grant writing and the anti-racism website and resources; serve as the divisional representative to student retention, persistence and graduation; consult with all university divisions on equity strategy, assessment and planning; evaluate programs and services.

Report to the Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion/Chief Diversity Officer.

Assistant Dean, Academic Diversity Success **2015 – 2020**
Interim Project Director, McNair Scholars Program **2017 – 2018**
Interim Director, Student Support Services **2015**
 University College

Responsibilities

As Assistant Dean, oversee Success Coaching, McNair Programs Office, Student Support Services Office, TRIO grants and Academic Diversity Outreach program; supervise three (3) professional department Director-level staff directly and 20 professional, administrative and graduate staff indirectly; serve as a liaison to the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; responsible for providing leadership for the vision and strategy of diversity support efforts for student retention, persistence and graduation; coordinate professional development opportunities for academic diversity services staff within all of the 9 colleges; consult with academic deans on diverse student services within their colleges; evaluate programs and services.

Report to the Dean, University College.

Key Accomplishments:

- Developed the Dynamic Education and Engagement of Diverse Students unified commitments framework for engaging diverse students on campus; former

President has named it as one of the Presidential Priorities and a University-Level Initiative and appointed as the Co-Chair.

- Developed support services within all ten academic colleges at the university, which included approximately 7 new staff members committed to supporting diverse students.
- Led innovative implementation of renewed federally funded, TRIO Student Support Services and McNair Scholars Program grant to serve more students and engage them along their entire college career with the intent of increasing student's success and graduation.
- Successfully written grants that were funded for more than \$5,326,000 to assist underrepresented student retention for first generation and low-income students to remove barriers of completing their degree.

Director, Office of Diversity Outreach & Development
College of Education, Health & Human Services

2012 – 2015

Responsibilities

As Director, manage and maintain the day to day operations of the Office of Diversity Outreach and Development; serve as the college's diversity officer; supervise one (1) full-time and four (4) part-time staff members, responsible for providing leadership for the vision and strategy of the diversity recruitment and retention efforts for the college; develop and market retention and recruitment programs for the college, represent the college at recruitment fairs and events promoting the undergraduate and graduate academic programs; develop and maintain partnerships with school districts in northeast Ohio and community agencies to target underrepresented populations; evaluate programs and services.

Report to the Dean, College of Education, Health & Human Services.

Key Accomplishments:

- Partnered with City Year Cleveland to create an Alumni University Partnership MOU between City Year and Kent State University.
- Assisted to recruit Kent State students to apply for to become Corp members.
- Increased freshmen to sophomore student retention from 75% to 86.7% (**+11.7% increase**) in two years through intrusive and intentional programming.
- Developed department initiatives and successfully received support for hiring administrative support staff and student staff members.
- Developed and sustained partnerships with local school districts for the college utilized in the larger outreach efforts and grant agenda.
- Developed and coordinated an increase in diverse graduate student enrollments.
- Successfully co-wrote a grant for more than \$465,000 to assist students in Akron to receive college credit in Math and English.

Assistant Director, Academic Support Services

2009 – 2012

Office of Student Success Programs – Undergraduate Studies (*now University College*)

Responsibilities

As Assistant Director, coordinated academic support services with primary focus on the 4,000+ incoming first year students each year; manage the Faculty Referral: Early Alert intervention system; developed Linked Courses, the university's interdisciplinary

learning initiative for freshmen; coordinated the university's first intentional second year retention initiatives; developed and coordinated the Provost's Leadership Academy (PLA), a freshman leadership program for academically talented students; coordinate support for faculty on academic support initiatives and interventions to improve student success; served on the university-wide crisis response team; taught at one section of First Year Experience course.

Report to the Associate Director and Director of the Office of Student Success Programs.

Key Accomplishments:

- Achieved 85% retention for 550 first year students taking Linked Courses compared to the university's 78% overall freshmen to sophomore retention rate.
- Expanded and streamlined support for the Faculty Referral: Early Alert system by developing policies that were utilized by all eight campuses doubling usage by faculty while adding a staff referral and reporting mechanism for the first time.

AKRON PUBLIC SCHOOLS – Akron, OH

2020 – Present

Fourth largest Ohio public school district with over 21,000 undergraduate and almost 5,000 staff members. The Board of Education is responsible for providing the vision for the district, setting goals, setting educational policies, allocating resources for the district and hiring and evaluating the Superintendent and Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer.

Vice President, Board of Education

2020 – Present

Co-Chair, Legal Contracts and Board Policies Committee

2020 – Present

Elected Member, Board of Education

2020 – 2024

Responsibilities

As Vice President, represent the board and members at various meetings with district administration, teacher's union, external contractors, community members and chair the board in the absence of the Board President. As Co-Chair of the Legal Contracts and Board Policies committee, develop, review and revise district level policies to set the direction for the school system.

Key Accomplishments:

- Developed the Board's Resolution on Declaring Racism a Public Health Crisis and collaborate with over ten districts across the country on developing their resolutions and next steps for policy development.
- Revised the Public Participation policy to remove restrictions requiring two day written advanced notice prior to addressing the board and eliminating the vetting process of comments shared with the board.
- Led the board's COVID-19 employee pay resolution to maintain payroll of employees at levels pre-pandemic to prevent unemployment and reduced compensation.
- Leading the board's response to implementing racial equity conscious practices within various components of the district.
- Drafting the Racial Equity and Employee Resource Groups policies for the board to adopt later this year.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN – Ann Arbor, MI

2007 – 2009

A Carnegie Research extensive very selective public institution classification; Named one of the Top 20 Universities in the World serving approximately 43,000 undergraduate, graduate and

professional school students located in South Central Michigan.

Career Advisor, The Career Center
Division of Student Affairs

2008-2009

Responsibilities

As Career Advisor, managed direct student service advising in a large fast-paced office; advised students on self and career exploration, advanced education and job searching issues; served as the liaison to at least one department on campus for the office.

Report to the Assistant Director for Counseling and Advising, The Career Center

Key Accomplishments:

- Developed and led the department's efforts for increased outreach to first generation and veteran students.
- Created a checklist, "Career Advising: Where Do I Start?" Targeted to under-represented students.
- Between one other advisor, managed 60% of direct service hours each semester.
- Rated "very satisfied" with the quality of service received by students 92% of the time.

EXTERNAL PROJECTS & GRANTS (\$9 Million+ in private and federal funding)

Fiscal Agent/Principal Investigator, *TRIO Student Support Services Grant*,
Award funded by U.S. Department of Education, August 2020.

Award: \$2,638,005 (*Funded 2020-2025*)

More Information: <https://timryan.house.gov/media/press-releases/congressman-tim-ryan-announces-grants-student-support-eastern-gateway-community>

Principal Investigator/Int. Project Director, *Kent State University McNair Scholars Program*,
Award funded by U. S. Department of Education, Spring 2017.

Award: \$1,307,780 (*Funded 2017-2022*)

More Information: <https://www.kent.edu/einside/news/kent-state-receives-five-year-grant-renewal-underrepresented-student-programs>

Key Contributor, *Next Wave of Student Success*, Award funded by KeyBank Foundation, Fall 2016.

Award: \$1,000,000 (*Funded 2017-2021*)

More Information: <http://www.kent.edu/kent/news/success/keybank-foundation-gift-support-programs-increase-recruitment-retention-and-graduation>

Key Contributor/Institutional Lead, *Evaluation of University Completion Grants*, Sub-award from lead institution - Temple University. Award funded by U.S. Department of Education, Spring 2017.

Award: \$60,000 (Funded by 2017-2019)

Principal Investigator, *Kent Completion & Success Grant*, Award funded by Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corp., Fall 2016.

Award: \$200,000 (Funded by 2016-2018)

Principal Investigator, *Expanding Horizons Project*, Award funded by Kent State University Foundation, Spring 2016.

Award: \$16,870 (Funded for 2016-2017)

Fiscal Agent/ Interim Principal Investigator/Interim Project Director, *TRIO Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program*, Award funded by U.S. Department of Education, August 2015-August 2017

Award: \$1,138,899 (Funded for 2012-2017)

Fiscal Agent/Interim Principal Investigator/Interim Project Director, *TRIO Student Support Services Grant Program*, Award funded by U.S. Department of Education, August 2015-December 2015.

Award: \$2,216,060 (Funded for 2015-2020)

Principal Investigator, *Kent Completion Project*, Award funded by Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, Spring 2016.

Award: \$50,000 (Funded for 2016-2018)

Co-Principal Investigator, *College Today: Advancing Math and English Skill Attainment to Decrease College Remediation*, Award funded by Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corp., Fall 2014.

Award: \$468,000 (Funded for 2015-2017)

Principal Investigator, *College Bound Initiative: Educating, Engaging and Exposing Low-Income Students and Parents to College*, Not Funded by U.S. Bancorps, Fall 2013.

Award: \$30,000

PUBLICATIONS

Refereed Journal Articles & Book Chapters

Clark, R., Dogan, R., & Akbar, N.J. (2003). [Youth and Parental Correlates of Externalizing Symptoms, Adaptive Functions, and Academic Performance: An Exploratory Study in Preadolescent Blacks](#). *Journal of Black Psychology*. 29 (2), 210-229.

Piatt, E., & Akbar, N.J. (*In Press*). Learning and Coping: The Miseducation of Lip Gallagher. In Jennifer Boggs Weber and Pamela Hunt Kirk (Editors), *Shameless Sociology*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing (anticipated early 2021).

Seeberg, V. & Akbar, N. J. (*In Press*) “Discussing Student Achievement and the Family.” In V. Seeberg (Ed.) *Black American Students’ Achievement in the Suburbs: Academic Success through Family Engagement* (Anticipated early 2021)

N. J. Akbar (*Forthcoming*). “Fixing the System, Not the Student or Family: Dismantling Racism and Institutionalizing Equity by Leveraging Your Board Leadership.” In Todd Mealy and Heather Bennett (Eds.), *A Race-Conscious Pedagogy Future: Essays that Forge a New Path for Equitable Schools*. RCP Publishing (anticipated early 2021).

N. J. Akbar, Jennifer Martin & Christina Magoulias (*Forthcoming*). “Underresourced, Underfunded, and COVID: Schools seeking Racial Equity during a Pandemic.” In Todd Mealy and Heather Bennett (Eds.), *A Race-Conscious Pedagogy Future: Essays that Forge a New Path for Equitable Schools*. RCP Publishing (anticipated early 2021).

Research Projects and Manuscripts In Progress or

N. J. Akbar, Elizabeth Piatt & Anthony Ferguson, Jr (*in progress*). “Black Perspectives on Racism Post George Floyd’s Murder.”

N. J. Akbar, Jennifer Martin, Christina Magoulias, Kay McChesney (*in progress*). “Reaching Equity through a Review of Funding Practices”

Jennifer Martin, Christina Magoulias, Kay McChesney & N. J. Akbar (*in progress*). “Evidenced Based Funding in Illinois: On the Road to Equity.”

N. J. Akbar (2020). “Parental Engagement of Successful Black Male Collegians.” Manuscript submitted for publication.

N. J. Akbar, Elizabeth Piatt, Adam Cinderich, Peter Jeffy (*in progress*). The Success of a TRIO Student Support Services Program for First Generation and Low-Income Retention and Graduation Success

TEACHING AND ADVISING

College Courses Taught:

CULT 69570: Multicultural Education: Theory and Policy (2017) *Master’s level course/Co-Instructor*

US 10097: Destination Kent State First Year Experience Course (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2018)

US 20201: Destination Kent State Student Success Leader Training (2010, 2011) *Guest Instructor*

Student Organization/Program Advising & Coordination:

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. Epsilon Delta Chapter (2012 – Present)

Black United Students (2019 – 2020)

Summer Experience for Emerging Diverse Scholars (2013 – 2015)

Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society in Education Delta Beta Chapter (2014 – 2017)

Network of Diverse Educators Program (2013- 2015)

Focus on the Future (2010 – 2012)

Male Empowerment Network (2010-2013)

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, EMU Chapter (2007-2008)

AWARDS AND HONORS

- Outstanding Young Alumni, Eastern Michigan University Alumni Association (2017)
- Significant African American Male Honoree, Akron Chapter of Ohio Black Women's Leadership Caucus (2017)
- Harold K. Stubbs Humanitarian Award in Education (2016)
- 30 for the Future, Greater Akron Chamber of Commerce (2015).
- Brother of the Year, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. (Akron, OH) (2011).
- Val DuMontier New Professional Award, Association of College Personnel Administrators (ACPA) (2010).
- Outstanding Mentor Award (2007).
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Award, Eastern Michigan University (2006).
- Army Achievement Medal (AAM), Michigan Army National Guard (2004).

RELEVANT CIVIC AND COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES

2020 – present	Vice President, Akron Board of Education
2020 – present	Board of Directors Member, Final Farewell Project – Akron, OH
2019 – present	House of Zoe, Inc. (501c3) – Akron, OH Member, Board of Directors
2018 – present	Alpha Library Committee (501c3) – Akron, OH Vice Chair, Board of Directors
2018	Member, Akron Public Schools' Student Discipline Committee
2017 – 2018	Project Grad – Buchtel High School Mentor
2017 – 2019	A+ Program – Barber Elementary Mentor
2017 – present	Akron Urban League Young Professionals Paid Member – Advocacy Committee
2017 – 2019	Buchtel High School Parent Teacher Association Community Member
2015 – 2017 2014 - present	Member, Akron Public Schools' School Counselor Advisory Board Alpha Core of Excellence (ACE) Mentoring Program Founding Program Director (2014-2016) Mentor (2016-present)
2012 – 2015	Member, Akron Public Schools' BECOME Scholarship Committee
2012 – 2015	Member, Akron Public Schools' Healthcare In Progress Committee

- 2009 - present** **Alpha Phi Alpha Homes, Inc., Board of Directors**
General Member
- 2009 - present** **Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Akron Alumni Chapter**
Midwest Regional Chief of Staff and Sr Advisor to VP (2019 – present)
Chapter Director of Membership (2019 – present)
Chapter Parliamentarian (2018-2019)
Regional Trainer for Membership Development (2016 – present)
Chapter Historian (2016 – 2018)
Midwest Regional Chairman, Youth Leadership Development Institute
(2012-2016)
Host Chapter Chair, Midwest Region’s Youth Leadership Development
Institute (2010-2011)
Director of Education and Chair of Scholarship Committee (2010-2012)
Member, Scholarship Committee (2009-2010)
- 2002 – 2007** **Human Resources Specialist, Army National Guard (E-2 through E-4)**

PRESENTATIONS

Invited Speaker

- Akbar, N. J.** & Lawless-Andric, D. (2018). Developing a Diversity Plan. National Conference on Race and Equality in Higher Education (NCORE). New Orleans, LA.
- Akbar, N. J.** & Lawless-Andric, D. (2017). *Driving Institutional Diversity*. American College Personnel Association (ACPA) National Conference. Columbus, OH.
- Williams, M., **Akbar, N. J.**, Tribuzi, S., & Wray, J. (2016). *Marginalization of Under-Represented Populations in Online Courses*. American Educational Research Association National Conference, Chicago, IL.
- Akbar, N. J.** (2015). *Keynote Speaker – Permission Grant: Be Yourself and Show the World* Kent State University LGBTQ Student Center, Lavender Graduation, Kent, OH.
- Akbar, N. J.** (2015). *Keynote Speaker: You Have What it Takes*, Waverly Elementary School, Cleveland, OH.
- Akbar, N. J.**, Litam, S., & McKinney, R. (2015). *Panelist: The Business of Diversity*. American Association for Colleges for Teacher Education Conference, Atlanta, GA.
- Akbar, N. J.**, Donnellan, G., Schwitzgebel, P., Winter, C., Pitsenbarger, M., Diaz, S., & Ramharrack, S. (2014). *Panel Moderator: Intersectionality of Identity and what school leaders and teachers might consider throughout their school practices and policies to improve student learning*. Building Bridges Conference, John Carroll University, University Heights, OH.
- Akbar, N. J.** (2013). *Getting Yourself Ready to Help Prepare Your Students*, Kent State University Academic STARS Mentor Training, Student Multicultural Center, Kent, OH.
- Wilson, T. & **Akbar, N. J.** (2010) *Male Students of Color in Higher Education*, Kent State

University and University of Akron's KASADA Annual Conference, Kent, OH.

Akbar, N. J. (2010). *Finding the Inner Will to Succeed: Overcoming the Odds*, Kent State University Soup and Substance, Student Multicultural Center, Kent, OH.

Coffey, R.N. & **Akbar, N.J.** (2009). *Putting Things Right: The Use of Restorative Justice Circles to Resolve Campus Conflict*, Michigan College Personnel Association State Conference, Mount Pleasant, MI.

Akbar, N. J. (2008). *What Are You Waiting For: Mentor*, Men of Color Leadership Conference, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

Posters

Akbar, N. J. (2015). *An Exploratory Case Study: Perception Patterns of Parental Engagement on Black Male College Decision Making*. AACTE Holmes Scholars' Poster Presentation, Atlanta, GA.

Akbar, N. J. & Jones, S. M. (2009). *Comparison of Developmental Education Services at Community Colleges and Universities*, Eastern Michigan University Graduate Research Fair, Ypsilanti, MI.

Akbar, N. J., Dogan, R., & Clark, R. (2002). *Parental Correlates of Externalizing and Internalizing Symptoms and Academic Performance in Preadolescent Blacks*. Wayne State University Non-Graduate Research Fair, Detroit, MI. 1st Place Poster Presentation Award.

Akbar, N. J. & Clark, R. (2001). *Parental Correlates of Externalizing Symptoms and Academic Performance in Preadolescent Blacks*. National BioMedical Symposium, Norfolk, VA. 2nd Place National Poster Presentation Award.

SELECT SERVICE AND CITIZENSHIP

- University College Assistant Dean Search Committee (2015).
- Director, Exploratory Advising Center Search Committee (2015).
- University Diversity Action Council [UDAC] (2013 – Present)
- Co-Creator & Lead Mentor, Male Empowerment Network (2010 – 2013)
- Kent State University's Martin L. King, Jr. Celebration Committee (2010 – present).
- Chair, Coordinator of Student Success Search Committee (2012-2013).
- Kent State University's LGBTQ Student Center Advisory Board (2012 – present).
- Student Multicultural Center Advisory Board (2011 – 2013).
- Kent State University's Women's Center Advisory Board (2010 – 2012).
- Chair, Student Rights and Responsibilities Review Committee (2010).
- Director of Center for Student Involvement Search Committee (2010).
- Volunteer Coordinator, Kent State University's Ally Training (2009 – 2011).
- Kent State University's Multicultural Recruitment and Leadership Group (2009 – 2011).
- Co-Chair, Kent State University's University Persistence Committee (2009-2011).
- Kent State University's Veteran Student Services Committee (2009-present).

- University of Michigan Council on Veteran Student Services (2008-2009).
- Chair, EMU 's Celebrate Your Differences Committee (2005,2006)
- Co-Chair, Eastern Michigan University's Community Creed Task Force (2004-2007).
- Chair, EMU's Dr. King Step, Song, Speech and Breakfast (2004, 2005).
- EMU Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. Celebration Committee (2004 – 2008).
- University College's Primary Representative, UDAC (2015-present)
- EHHS Diversity Committee (2012 – 2015).