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# Burke and Powell Earn Inclusive Excellence Leadership Awards

April 10, 2020

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Meghan Burke and Adriane Powell have been named 2020 recipients of the third annual Illinois Wesleyan University Inclusive Excellence Leadership Award.

The award recipients, announced virtually to campus on Friday, April 10, were nominated by students, faculty and staff, and selected by The University Council for Diversity (UCD).

## Meghan Burke

An associate professor and the chair of sociology and anthropology, Burke co-developed and directed Illinois Wesleyan’s Engaging Diversity pre-orientation program, a three-day intensive program for incoming white students to deeply consider white privilege and antiracism, to prepare them to work as partners for social and racial justice. She also serves as a Posse mentor and facilitates community discussions regarding issues of systemic inequality.

A student nominator wrote, “As one of her mentees for the past three years, her guidance has provided a substantial change in my own identity and has developed the drive to understand my past experiences and how they relate to my ability to create change. Her support has given me the confidence to become a leader and provide my own ways of creating inclusiveness among campus related issues that my passions align with.”

A colleague nominator said, “Dr. Burke is a tireless advocate for including students and others who face marginalization in a variety of ways, dedicating her time and energy, in particular, to students of color. Through conducting workshops at the school on inclusion, both for faculty as well as students, serving on various elected and volunteer committees, and advocating for students within the system, Dr. Burke has dedicated her career to combatting the systemic racism found in education and other institutions.”

Burke’s areas of specialty are social theory and race. Burke is the author of three books: *Racial Ambivalence in Diverse Communities: Whiteness and the Power of Color-Blind Ideologies*, about racially diverse neighborhoods in Chicago; *Race, Gender, and Class in the Tea Party: What the Movement Reflects about Mainstream Ideologies*; and most recently, *Colorblind Racism*.

Burke earned a bachelor’s in sociology from Grand Valley State University, and a master’s and Ph.D. in sociology from Loyola University Chicago. She joined Illinois Wesleyan’s faculty in the fall of 2009.

## Adriane Powell

Illinois Wesleyan’s Director of Alumni Engagement, Powell collaborates with colleagues in and across the University to create and maintain pathways for alumni participation that advance the goals of the University. Powell works closely with the IWU Women’s Council, the Pride Alumni Community, and the Minority Alumni Network.

A nominator wrote, “Adriane is a connector in the true sense of the word, and is inclusive in her thinking, work and honoring of people’s skills, abilities and limitations. She is adept at bringing together diverse groups within the cohorts she is working with, and is able to coordinate, build consensus, and delegate while also shouldering tasks, encouraging and honoring the work of others and moving projects forward.”

The nomination continued, “Asking critical questions about who has been included and excluded, providing space for individuals to share experiences that can be rooted in sadness and hurt, helping us all to hear, understand and validate other realities of IWU and to invite folks back to our broader community while challenging and modeling how to make space for all, Adriane leads by example.”

Powell earned a bachelor’s in philosophy from Illinois State University. She joined the staff at Illinois Wesleyan in February of 2010 and was promoted to Director of Alumni Engagement in November of 2014.

## About the Inclusive Excellence Leadership Award

The Inclusive Excellence Leadership Award – presented to a faculty member and staff member annually – is intended to recognize outstanding contributions made by individuals that champion diversity, inclusion, and sustained commitment at Illinois Wesleyan University. The Inclusive Excellence Leadership Award is intended to recognize the commitment of Illinois Wesleyan faculty and staff who have made exceptional efforts in celebrating diversity and demonstrating a commitment to advancing inclusion to create a safe and supportive community.

Awardees display understanding of the dynamic issues surrounding the intersectionality of race, gender, gender identity, ethnicity, religious heritage, national origin, socioeconomic status, disability, and sexual orientation. Past winners include: Assistant Professor of Nursing Wendy Kookan and Senior Administrative Assistant to the Provost Sharla Brown-Ajayi in 2018, and Assistant Professor of Nursing Amanda Hopkins and Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs Brandon Common in 2019.

Alumni, students, staff and faculty will once again be invited to submit nominations next year. The University Council for Diversity (UCD) and the previous recipient of the award will select awardees based on submitted nominations.

