



Spring 5-25-2023

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### Recommended Citation

Perez, Julia, "Dakesa Piña Selected as IWU's First DEI Leader" (2023). *News and Events*. 4300.

<https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news/4300>

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# Dakesa Piña Selected as IWU's First DEI Leader

May 25, 2023

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Dakesa Piña has been selected to serve as Illinois Wesleyan University's inaugural Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, effective July 1.

Piña is currently the Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at the Illinois State University College of Education, where her work has focused on systemic and sustainable change through evidence-based practices specifically regarding influence, communication, accountability and relationships.

"I am excited to join the Illinois Wesleyan community in its efforts to provide the most

enriching, progressive, vibrant and welcoming community possible for its students, faculty and staff," said Piña.

During her time at ISU, Piña has been repeatedly recognized for her DEI work. Most recently, she was named the first recipient of the Higher Education Diversity Equity and Inclusion Leadership Award from the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE).



Dakesa Piña has been named the inaugural Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Illinois Wesleyan.

Piña earned a Ph.D. in marriage and family therapy at Texas Tech University, a master's in marriage and family therapy at Indiana State University and a bachelor's in psychology at Bowling Green State University. Prior to her current role, she served as a Staff Counselor at Student Counseling Services at ISU; was a Countering Domestic Violence Adult Counselor at Mid Central Community Action in Bloomington; and directed clinical services at the Children's Advocacy Center of the South Plains in Lubbock, Texas.

As a trained therapist, Piña is an expert at coaching individuals and groups through conflict resolution, identifying personal bias, and building empathy, compassion and humility.

Illinois Wesleyan President S. Georgia Nugent said creating a cabinet-level position devoted to diversity has been a key priority as the University continues to work toward realizing the aspirations of the IWU mission.

"To become a more inclusive, equitable and just community, we must all work together," said Nugent. "I look forward to welcoming Dr. Piña into the Titan community and our leadership team."

*By Julia Perez*