

# Diversity Digest



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# Message From The Chief Diversity Officer



## **Robin Kelley, Ph.D.**

Chief Diversity Officer

Dear Gonzaga Community,

This February has presented us with an opportunity to recognize and celebrate Black History Month. Black History Month is a time to reflect on and honor the contributions, achievements, and resilience of Black/African American individuals throughout history and in our present communities. The University mission is grounded in the Jesuit values of social justice, solidarity, and cura personalis. We are called to reflect on deepening our understanding and commitment to equity and inclusion.

This month, we encourage you to begin engaging in the events, discussions, and initiatives happening across campus and locally that increase your awareness and knowledge about Black history. These opportunities are a way to celebrate Black excellence and examine racial injustice and how we can be positive agents of change.

I hope you learn from the stories included in the Diversity Digest about Black leaders, history, and experiences. Our mission calls us to be people for and with others. We aim to support the GU community where everyone feels seen, heard, valued, and empowered.

In solidarity and gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robin Kelley".

Robin Kelley, Ph.D.

# BLACK WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

## Charity Adams Earley



Charity Adams Earley led the first women African-American military unit overseas during World War II. After attending Wilberforce University, one of the top African-American universities at the time, Earley learned about a new military expansion, the Women's Army Corps, and decided to join. She was eventually promoted to Major, and was the highest ranking female officer there. In 1944, her unit was stationed overseas and tasked with organizing and sending undelivered mail that had been backlogged. Her unit worked 24/7, and handled over 65,000 pieces of mail per day. These efforts significantly boosted morale amongst the American forces and were crucial in the success of all war efforts. Upon returning to the United States she earned the title of lieutenant colonel, and after discharge from the military she continued her work in education. Charity Adams Earley truly paved the way for black women in the military and for black people in the fields of all leadership.

# NOTABLE BLACK WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Click on the images to learn more



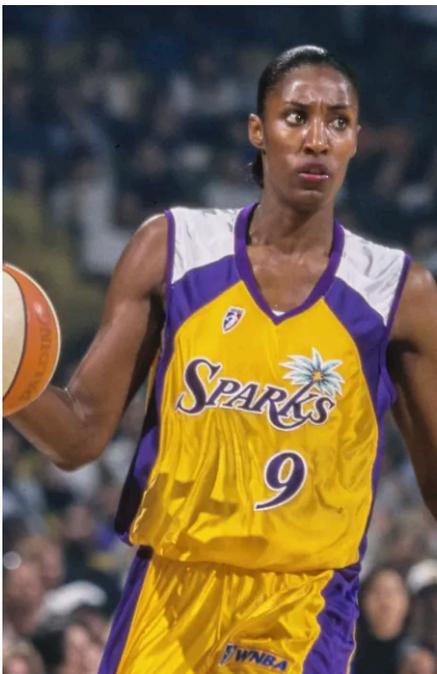
Marsha P. Johnson



Tarana Burke



Maya Angelou



Lisa Leslie



Kamala Harris

"You may shoot me  
with your words,  
You may cut me  
with your eyes,  
You may kill me  
with your  
hatefulness,  
But still, like air, I'll  
rise."

- Maya Angelou

# INTERSECTIONS OF RACE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Black History Month is observed throughout the month of February, which aims to bring awareness to the important contributions Black people have made as well as honor their rich culture. Black women in specific have paved the way to solve many social injustices present in our society while facing a disproportionate amount of adversity. This adversity includes an extremely high rate of intimate partner violence and sexual violence.

45% of Black women experience intimate partner violence and sexual violence throughout their life, which occurs at a much higher rate than white women (36%) and men in general (28%). While violence is much more prevalent among Black women, they are often given the least amount of resources and support. The intersectionality of race and gender-based violence is important to recognize in order to best find solutions and give support to victims. When Black women seek help or try to find an escape from abuse, they are often ignored or criminalized. In too many instances have Black women been incarcerated for simply defending themselves or for their responses to trauma, like running away or struggles with substance abuse. Instead of being met with support, they face blatant ignorance or jail time and legal issues.

These issues simply scrape the surface of the injustices Black women face. The National Domestic Violence Awareness Project coined the phrase: "No Survivor Justice Without Racial Justice". It is impossible to address gender-based violence without acknowledging the intersectionality of the issue and raising awareness to the uniquely challenging circumstances that Black women face in these cases. As allies, it is our role to empower these women and let them know that they are heard and supported. Only with awareness and action can progress truly be made.

## READ THEIR STORIES:

[IN HER OWN WORDS: MARISSA ALEXANDER TELLS HER STORY](#)

[ERICA SHEPPARD: A TEENAGED VICTIM](#)

[SHE NEVER HURT HER KIDS, THE FAILURE TO PROTECT](#)

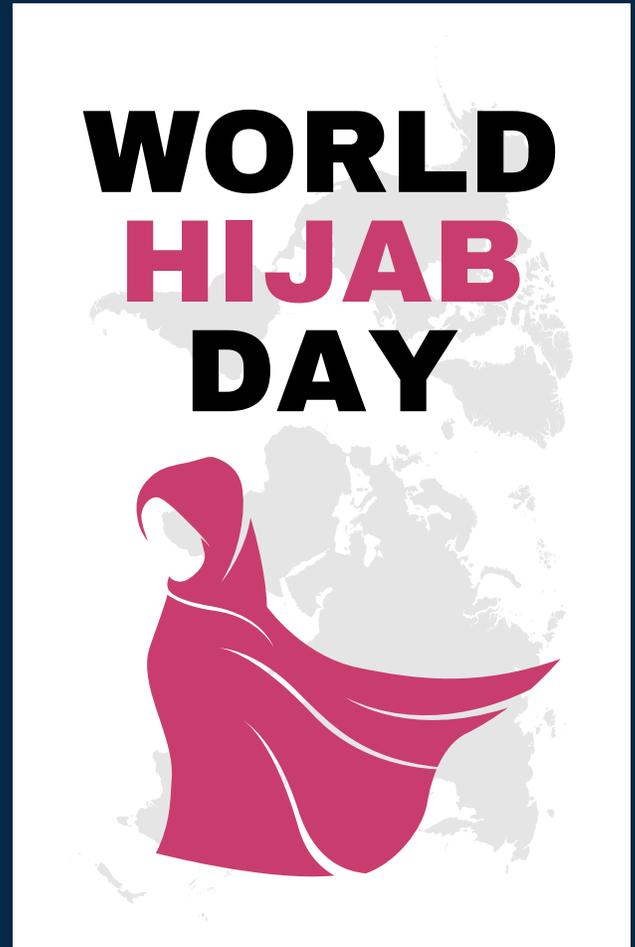
# EDUCATION CORNER

## World Hijab Day

World Hijab Day is a global movement dedicated to raising awareness and fostering understanding about the hijab and the experiences of Muslim women who choose to wear it. Established in 2013, this day on February 1st, invites people of all backgrounds to engage in conversations about religious freedom, cultural identity, and the challenges faced by hijab-wearing women, including discrimination and stereotypes. By learning about the significance of the hijab and standing in solidarity against Islamophobia, we can cultivate a more inclusive and respectful society. The Muslim Student Association at Gonzaga University is a club that fosters a sense of community among Muslim students and promotes awareness of Islamic culture on campus. For more information or to get involved, connect with Gonzaga's Muslim Student Association below:

*Email:*  
[MSA-at\\_GU@outlook.com](mailto:MSA-at_GU@outlook.com)

*Instagram:*  
[@msaat\\_gu](https://www.instagram.com/msaat_gu)



# EDUCATION CORNER

## Black History Month



Black History Month originated in the United States as the Civil Rights Movement gained momentum in the 1960s, there was a growing demand to expand the recognition of Black History. In 1970, educators and students at Kent State University proposed extending Negro History Week into a full month. By 1976, President Ford officially recognized Black History Month, encouraging Americans to honor the contributions of Black individuals throughout history. Today, Black History Month serves as a time for education, reflection, and celebration of Black culture, achievements, and historical contributions. It also highlights the ongoing struggles for racial equality and justice. Each year, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History selects a theme for Black History Month, focusing on different aspects of Black life, activism, and activism. This year's theme is "African Americans and Labour." Gonzaga University celebrates Black History Month at Foley Library, a Black Voice Symposium at Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center, and the Black Student Union Club will host their annual BSU Dinner for students and community members. To learn more about events through Gonzaga University click on the link below.

<https://www.gonzaga.edu/news-events/stories/2025/1/28/celebrating-black-history-month-2025>

# EDUCATION CORNER

## International Day of Women and Girls in Science

International Day of Women and Girls in Science: Recognized by the United Nations, this day on February 11th, highlights the indispensable contributions of women and girls in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Historically underrepresented in these fields, women continue to break barriers and drive innovation. However, challenges such as gender bias, lack of representation, and unequal access to opportunities remain. This day serves as a call to action to promote inclusivity in STEM, celebrate the achievements of women in research and discovery, and inspire young girls to pursue careers in science. Learn more about organizations at Gonzaga University that empower women in STEM below:

### **Gonzaga SACNAS**

The Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science is an inclusive organization aimed at creating a diversity-focused STEM community for students.

*[@gonzagasacnas](#) on Instagram*

### **WiSEN Women in STEM Education Network**

WiSEN and Gonzaga aim to foster a collaborative environment centered on co-mentoring and critical dialogue to empower minoritized women in STEM. This network is committed to systematic change and inclusivity to create a diverse and equitable STEM community.

*Learn more about WiSEN [here!](#)*

### **Gonzaga SWE Society of Women Engineers**

The Gonzaga SWE empowers everyone to achieve, lead, and succeed in the engineering industry. They provide resources for networking and mentorship. Check out their Instagram to learn more.

*[@gonzagaswe](#) on Instagram*



# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



## Adrianna Alfaro

Junior, History and Solidarity and Social Justice  
Community Engagement Coordinator on the GSBA DEI team

### **Can you tell us a little about your academic journey at Gonzaga? What are you studying, and what drew you to your major?**

My name is Adrianna Alfaro, and I am a third-year history major with a minor in solidarity and social justice! I was first drawn to my major in my senior year of high school when I read an article about lifting up silenced voices of the past and about the importance of uncovering histories that had long been excluded from the popular narrative due to the exclusion of marginalized identities from record keeping. Since then, I have had the privilege to take a multitude of fascinating history classes here at GU with crossovers in WGST and solidarity and social justice!

### **What inspired you to get involved with GSBA, and how did you become the Community Engagement Coordinator for the DEI team?**

I was inspired to work in GSBA because I wanted the opportunity to work alongside a group of students who were passionate about serving the student body and committed to making GUs campus and community welcoming, inclusive, and memorable! I was interested in the Community Engagement position because I had the amazing opportunity to participate in the CCE's youth initiative programs my first two years at GU. Now I am passionate about starting and boosting initiatives alongside others that reflect the patience, love, and support the greater Spokane community has met GU with and that highlights that we are who we are because of where we are!

### **What does your role as Community Engagement Coordinator entail, and what initiatives have you been working on?**

As the community engagement coordinator, I help plan events in coordination with both on and off campus resources that assist in connecting GU students and initiatives with the greater Spokane community in addition to helping connect clubs with community service opportunities! Currently I am interested in kick-starting a "renters rights" initiative that highlights GU renter's rights when signing off campus housing agreements while also centering community relations and emphasizing neighborly etiquette!

### **Why is DEI work important to you, and how do you see it making an impact on campus?**

DEI work is important to me because as GU students we have the incredible opportunity to be among and work alongside a diverse student body that represents so many experiences outside of our own. For this reason, it is important to highlight that all experiences are valid and important and uplift voices across campus. Everyone has the right to enjoy the GU community in a way that makes them feel safe, included, and accepted and in sparking change within our pocket of community we can go forth into the world with an ability to accept, support, and lift up all those we have the privilege to interact with in our future communities.

### **What advice would you give to students who want to get more involved in DEI efforts at Gonzaga?**

My best advice is to follow paths you are passionate about. Diversity is a gift that we are surrounded with across a number of spaces and there will always be opportunities to evolve the spaces we are passionate about to serve our ever-changing communities. Be flexible, patient, and willing to learn from others. There are opportunities everywhere whether in classes, clubs, or offices, there are people on campus who are willing to support and guide you on this journey.

# FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



## Rhonda Kae Young, Ph.D., PE

Professor of Civil Engineering  
Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs

Dr. Rhonda Kae Young has been a part of Gonzaga's engineering faculty since 2015, bringing over two decades of experience in civil engineering. She is passionate about transportation safety, infrastructure equity, and student learning. In her role as professor and associate dean, she helps students connect technical knowledge with real-world applications, shaping the next generation of engineers.

### FROM INDUSTRY TO ACADEMIA

Dr. Young's journey into engineering began in high school. She earned her undergraduate degree in civil engineering and pursued graduate studies, eventually spending 13 years teaching at a state university. Wanting to focus more on undergraduate education, she moved to Gonzaga, drawn by its strong sense of community and student-centered approach.

Before coming to Gonzaga, Dr. Young conducted extensive research in Wyoming, focusing on improving road safety in rural areas. Her work included developing Connected Vehicle Technology applications to enhance roadway safety in adverse weather conditions. She was also heavily involved in projects aimed at reducing wind-related crashes on Wyoming highways, improving transportation resilience in areas prone to extreme weather.



*Dr. Young and students at Gonzaga in Delft learning about various sustainable features in Rotterdam*



*Dr. Young and students touring Tomatoworld's greenhouse*

## A PASSION FOR TEACHING

Dr. Young enjoys teaching all of her classes, but transportation engineering stands out as a favorite. She loves challenging students to rethink the infrastructure they use every day. Many enter her class with assumptions about roads and traffic, but by the end of the semester, they develop a deeper appreciation for the complexities of transportation systems and their impact on society.



2023 ASCE Symposium

## ENGINEERING WITH A PURPOSE

In her recent work, *Teaching First-Year Students to See Infrastructure Issues as Equity Issues*, Dr. Young explores how engineering decisions shape communities. She introduces students to the idea that infrastructure—often overlooked—is a major factor in access to healthcare, education, and economic opportunities. Her class takes a hands-on approach, including riding Spokane's public buses and engaging with community members to hear firsthand how infrastructure affects their lives. Students also conduct case studies on topics such as road safety, public transit, and digital infrastructure, encouraging them to think beyond traditional engineering approaches.

## BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Dr. Young is also committed to community engagement. She actively participates in projects like Habitat for Humanity, helping build homes in Deer Park. As an avid skier and cyclist, she understands firsthand the importance of safe and well-designed transportation systems. Her research continues to focus on using technology to improve roadway safety, applying insights gained from her work in Wyoming to urban and rural environments alike.

## MAKING AN IMPACT

Dr. Young is proud of her students and the work they go on to do. Her oldest child has even followed in her footsteps, pursuing a career in civil engineering. Through her teaching and research, she continues to inspire students to see engineering as more than just designing structures—it's about building stronger, more inclusive communities.

# STAFF SPOTLIGHT



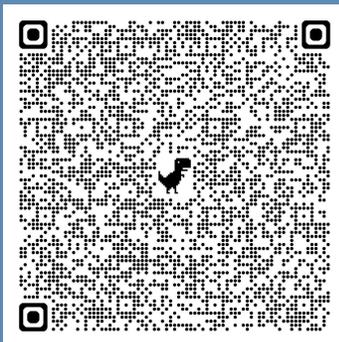
## Sarah Harmon

Staff Director of the Center for Civil and Human Rights  
Lincoln LGBTQ+ Rights Clinic – Supervising Attorney  
Gonzaga University School of Law

Sarah Harmon is the Staff Director of the Center for Civil and Human Rights and the Supervising Attorney for the Lincoln LGBTQ+ Rights Clinic at Gonzaga University School of Law. With a deep commitment to social justice, Sarah leads initiatives that advocate for civil rights and provide legal services to LGBTQ+ individuals. Her work emphasizes empowering marginalized communities, fostering inclusivity, and advancing human rights through legal education and practice.

*"I love ensuring safety, but it's also about fostering a sense of community where everyone feels supported and cared for."*

*- Sarah Harmon*



[View the full interview here.](#)

# STUDENT CULTURE CLUB SPOTLIGHT

## Black Student Union

Founded in 1979, Gonzaga's Black Student Union (BSU) was established to stand as a safe space for black students and to promote political awareness and the social & cultural well-being of black students. This year, BSU is working on collaborating with members in the Spokane community. The club is developing a mentorship program with black high school students in the greater-Spokane area this semester. They will be hosting a luncheon annually to foster fellowships and community.

Last year, BSU hosted their annual dinner themed "A Cultural Explosion: Exploring the Black Diaspora". This year, BSU's Dinner Chair, Yene Bereket, wanted a unique and creative theme, which led to the development of the theme, "Soul Train". This year's event will be held February 15th and includes various performances, including spoken words, dances, and their annual lip sync battle. To learn more, contact BSU through email or Instagram:

[gonzagabsu@gmail.com](mailto:gonzagabsu@gmail.com)  
[@gonzagabsu](https://www.instagram.com/gonzagabsu)



[Check out last year's Annual BSU Dinner Here!](#)

# MEDIA RECOMMENDATIONS



## ***Hidden Figures***

*Movie*

Three brilliant African-American women at NASA -- Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan and Mary Jackson -- serve as the brains behind one of the greatest operations in history: the launch of astronaut John Glenn into orbit, a stunning achievement that restored the nation's confidence, turned around the Space Race and galvanized the world.

## ***Becoming by Michelle Obama***

*Book*

From her childhood in the South Side of Chicago, work as an executive, and the demands of motherhood, read about the story of Michelle Obama and her experience overcoming social barriers to become the first African-American woman to serve as first lady.



## ***The Color Purple***

*Movie*

Torn apart from her sister and her children, Celie faces many hardships in life, including an abusive husband. With support from a sultry singer named Shug Avery, as well as her stand-her-ground stepdaughter, Celie ultimately finds extraordinary strength in the unbreakable bonds of a new kind of sisterhood.

# WHAT'S HAPPENING?

## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS

### Office of Inclusive Excellence

#### Envision Healthy Love

**About:** Drop by for crafting & discussion about healthy relationships

**Where:** OHP, Crosby Center Room 206

**When:** February 14th, 2025, 12 - 12:30 PM

#### IELA Workshop 5

**Where:** 153 College Common (Hub)

**When:** February 7th, 9am-3pm

#### IELA Workshop 6

**Where:** 153 College Common (Hub)

**When:** February 21st, 9am-3pm

### Cultural Club Events

#### Vietnamese Student Association's Têt

**About:** Hop on the Tet Express to 'Echoes of Tet: The Road Home'. Indulge in traditional food, stunning performances, and cultural displays.

**Where:** Hemmingson Ballroom

**When:** February 1st, 5:30 PM - 8:00 PM

#### Asian American Union's Night Market

**About:** Night Market is on the way! Join us for this year's theme, "Ethereal Legends that Transcend Us, the Essence of our Tigers, Nagas and Dragons!"

**Where:** Hemmingson Ballroom

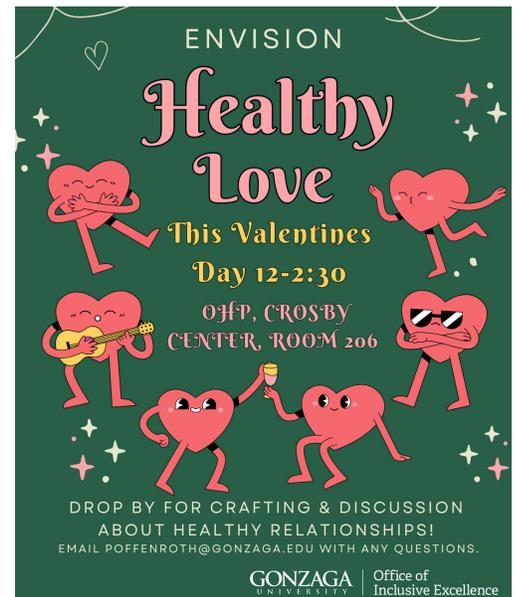
**When:** February 8th, 5:30 PM - 8:30 PM

#### Black Student Union's Annual Dinner

**About:** Tell your mama, tell your papa, tell your siblings, WE GOING TO SOUL TRAIN! Join BSU for their annual dinner!

**Where:** Hemmingson Ballroom

**When:** February 15th, 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM



# WHAT'S HAPPENING?

## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS

### **Jewish Student Union's Oneg Aviv**

**About:** Join us for a night of celebrating Jewish culture with food, music and performances!

**Where:** Hemmingson Ballroom

**When:** February 23rd, 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM

### **Campus Events**

#### **ODC Dance: The Velveteen Rabbit**

**About:** ODC Dance brings Margery Williams' classic tale of a well-worn stuffed rabbit to life through music, dance, and splendid narration. Brimming with wit, festive costumes, and endearingly madcap characters, this production is a beautiful way to introduce kids to storytelling and dance. Reserved Seating

**Where:** Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center, 211 East DeSmet Avenue, Spokane, WA 99258

**When:** Saturday, Feb 01 and Feb 02 2025 at 2:00 PM

**Cost:** \$14



#### **The Garment of Praise World Premiere**

**About:** The Garment of Praise is the world premier of an opera composed by Kevin Waters, S.J. on the miraculous arrival of John the Baptist. Fr. Waters is the former Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. The opera is set before John is born, a story of hope, communion, loss, and return between people who love one another and seek the depths of peace and renewal. In the quiet, an angel of mercy speaks.

**Where:** Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center, 211 East DeSmet Avenue, Spokane, WA 99258

**When:** Friday, Feb 07, 2025 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

**Cost:** \$35 adults, \$25 seniors, \$10 students

#### **Wind Ensemble Concert, Themes and Motifs**

**About:** Gonzaga University Wind Ensemble, conducted by Peter J. Hamlin will include music by Gustav Holst, Ryan George, David Maslanka, and Arturo Márquez with guest soloist, Dr. Kevin Hekmatpanah.

**Where:** Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center, 211 East DeSmet Avenue, Spokane, WA 99258

**When:** Thursday, Feb 13, 2025 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM

**Cost:** \$10-15 (GU Faculty/Staff and Students are eligible for Free tickets at the Box Office or by using Promo Code: FREEGU)

# WHAT'S HAPPENING?

## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS

### **Gonzaga Symphony Orchestra Featuring Steven Isserlis**

**Where:** Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center, 211 East DeSmet Avenue, Spokane, WA 99258

**When:** Friday, Feb 07, 2025 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

**Cost:** \$35 adults, \$25 seniors, \$10 students

### **Gonzaga Day 2025**

**About:** Celebrate the spirit of the Gonzaga community with alumni and friends around the world through chapter events, game watches, volunteer opportunities, and socials! Show your Zag pride and join the fun on Gonzaga Day—follow Zag Alumni & Friends on Instagram @zagalumni to stay connected and share your experience!

**When:** Saturday, Feb 22, 2025 All Day

### **Meow Meow**

**About:** International siren and comedienne extraordinaire Meow Meow brings her glorious brand of subversive and sublime performance to Spokane. The spectacular crowd-surfing queen of song creates an unforgettable evening of exquisite music and much mayhem. Reserved Seating Recommended for ages 18 and up - Mature Audiences Only

**Where:** Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center, 211 East DeSmet Avenue, Spokane, WA 99258

**When:** Sunday, Feb 23, 2025 7:30 PM

**Cost:** \$42-\$66



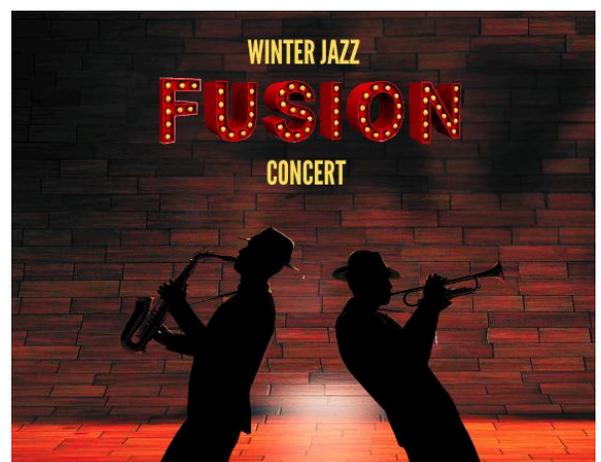
### **Winter Jazz Fusion Concert**

**About:** Join us for a tune or two from each of our seven jazz ensembles at Gonzaga!

**Where:** Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center, 211 East DeSmet Avenue, Spokane, WA 99258

**When:** Friday, Feb 28, 2025 7:30 PM - 8:30 PM

**Cost:** \$15 (GU Faculty/Staff and Students are eligible for Free tickets at the Box Office or by using Promo Code: FREEGU)



# WHAT'S HAPPENING?

## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS

### Spokane Events

#### Spokane Lunar New Year ANHPI Business expo

**About:** Live Performances, Red Envelopes, Fireworks, Vendors, Cultural Exhibits, and so much more!

**Where:** 334 W Spokane Falls Blvd Spokane, WA 99201-Spokane Convention Center

**When:** February 1st, 12-7 pm ending with fireworks beginning at 7 pm

#### Wednesday @ The Winery

**About:** We offer live music concerts on many Wednesdays. The artists vary so please see our website to see our full list. You are welcome to bring snacks, dinner or hors d'oeuvres to enjoy at your table. We have complimentary ice water and water bottles for purchase as well. All seating is first, come first served. Although we do not serve food, you are welcome to bring in your own to enjoy at your table. Please no outside water bottles or beverages.

**Where:** Barrister Winery, 1213 W Railroad Ave Spokane, WA 99201

**When:** Every Wednesday from 7-9PM

#### Joseph Edwin Haeger's STRINGS -Book Signing

**About:** Come down and listen to Joseph Edwin Haeger read from his new novel alongside other literary superstar readers Mark Anderson and Charlie Byers. Author hangout from 4-6, reading from 6-7. About STRINGS: "In the aftermath of an explosion, William finds himself consumed with worry for his unborn child. These unraveling fears are the driving force behind STRINGS — offering glimpses into alternate realities with distinct speculative flavors — and provide an intimate look at what it takes to shape another human being."

**Where:** 411 W 1st Ave, Spokane, WA 99201- Jupiter's Eye Book Cafe

**When:** Feb 7th at 4-7PM

#### Chinese Lunar New Year at the Fox

**About:** The Spokane Chinese Association will return to the Fox Theater in 2025 for its annual celebration of the Lunar New Year, with performances showcasing traditional Chinese music, dance, art and martial arts. Along with performances from Spokane's Korean, Japanese and Hmong communities, the Feb. 8 show will feature the ceremonial dragon dance, martial arts and tai chi demonstrations, and traditional Chinese music from renowned pianist Archie Chen. Enjoy a free cultural fair earlier in the day and enter a raffle to win \$1,000.

**Where:** Martin Woldson Theater at the Fox-1001 W Sprague Ave

**When:** Feb 8th

**Cost:** \$13 - \$23

# WHAT'S HAPPENING?

## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS

### Valentine's Day Ice Skating Special

**About:** Surprise your sweetheart with a magical Valentine's Day ice skating date at the Numerica Skate Ribbon! Glide hand-in-hand under the twinkling lights for just \$14 (over 50% in savings!), including admission and skate rentals for two.

**Where:** Numerica Skate Ribbon at Riverfront Spokane  
-507 N Howard St  
Spokane, WA 99201

**When:** Feb 14th doors open at 11AM

**Cost:** \$14



## Holidays

### Black History Month

A period dedicated to celebrating and recognizing the achievements and contributions of African Americans throughout history.

### National Cancer Prevention Month

Observed every February to educate the public about cancer prevention and early detection.

### American Heart Month

Observed in February to raise awareness about heart disease.

### National Groundhog Day

February 2nd

### Super Bowl Sunday

February 9th

### Valentine's Day

February 14th

### President's Day

February 17th



## OFFICE OF **INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE**

Thanks for reading this month's Diversity Digest!

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Questions? Comments? Have an idea for an article?  
Email us at [inclusiveexcellence@gonzaga.edu](mailto:inclusiveexcellence@gonzaga.edu)

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