

For immediate release
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Largest Cohort of North Star Collective Faculty Fellows Named

New England Board of Higher Education Fellowship Offers Community, Mentorship and Professional Development for Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) Faculty

Boston, MA – The North Star Collective, an initiative of the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE), has named its largest cohort yet of 31 Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) faculty fellows, drawn from the Collective’s 18 member institutions.

Now in its third year, the North Star Collective Fellowship is a semester-long fellowship created by BIPOC faculty for BIPOC faculty in New England. Grounded in tenets of reparative justice, the Fellowship promotes racial trauma healing by providing a nourishing community of care, mentorship, and professional development for Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) faculty in all fields.

The New England Board of Higher Education established the North Star Collective in 2021. In addition to the Faculty Fellowship, the North Star Collective provides programming for institutional members to collaborate, share best practices, and problem-solve on issues related to faculty racial equity on their campuses. These include in-person, one-day gatherings for campus administrators, staff, and faculty working on racial equity for faculty on their campuses.

The 2024 North Star Collective Faculty Fellows are:

Ebenezar Afarikumah (Goodwin University, CT, Business Administration)

Suzanne Angeli (University of Maine, ME, Molecular and Cell Biology)

Bodunrin Banwo (University of Massachusetts Boston, MA, Education Leadership)

Perla Barbosa (Salem State University, MA, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages/ TESOL)

Alexia Buono (University of Vermont, VT, Early Childhood Education)

Melissa Colón (University of Massachusetts Boston, MA, Education)

Mohammadmehdi Danesh (University of Hartford, CT, Architecture)

Jimoh Fatoki (Roger Williams University, RI, Management)

Chantrell Frazier (Framingham State University, MA, Chemistry)

Meng Guo (Eastern Connecticut State University, CT, Accounting)

Nandita Gurjar (Rhode Island College, RI, Elementary Education)

Myrlene Jean-Venant (Simmons University, MA, Social Work)

Seokyoung Kang (University of Bridgeport, CT, Biology)

Nabin Malakar (Worcester State University, MA, Physics)

Ana Marcelo (Clark University, MA, Psychology)

Miguel Montalva Barba (University of Massachusetts Boston, MA, Sociology)

Kaushik Mukherjee (Worcester State University, MA, Business Administration)

Vanita Naidoo (Salem State University, MA, Sociology)

Nahyun Oh (Eastern Connecticut State University, CT, Management)

Jonix Owino (Sacred Heart University, CT, Psychology)

Ashlie Perry Banerjee (Endicott College, MA, Criminal Justice and Security Studies)

David Ramírez (Rhode Island College, RI, Spanish and Latin American Studies)

Forrest Rodgers (Framingham State University, MA, Sociology & Criminology)

Seung Whan Ryu (Sacred Heart University, CT, Management)

Lara Salahi (Endicott College, MA, Journalism)

Zeina Salame (University of Vermont, VT, Theater)

Gohar Siddiqui (Clark University, MA, Screen Studies)

Stefano Tijerina (University of Maine, ME, Management)

Nayomi Walton (University of Hartford, CT, Nursing)

Brittany Williams (University of Vermont, VT, Higher Education)

Maurice Williams Jr. (Bridgewater State University, MA, Educational Leadership)

The fellowship runs from January to May 2024.

The Founding Co-Directors of the North Star Collective are Dr. Tatiana M.F. Cruz and Dr. Kamille Gentles-Peart. Dr. Cruz is an Assistant Professor and Interdisciplinary Program Director of Africana Studies and Women's and Gender Studies at Simmons University and Dr. Gentles-Peart is Professor of Communication and Media Studies at Roger Williams University and a Fulbright U.S. Scholar. Together, they lead all aspects of the collective's work including consultation with collective member institutions and the fellowship.

With the addition of 31 new fellows named in 2024, a total of 80 faculty members across New England's public and independent colleges and universities have or will participate as fellows. The fellowship provides a support network for BIPOC faculty to help navigate the challenges they face in their academic careers, promote mental wellness and health, and foster a community of care for fellows' holistic wellbeing.

"We are thrilled to be in our third year of the North Star Collective and to help facilitate communities of care for faculty of color in the region," Co-Directors Cruz and Gentles-Peart commented. "The response we received this year is an indication of the ongoing need for restorative spaces for faculty of color in academia. We are grateful for the support of our partners who make this possible."

The North Star Collective is funded by institutional members (listed above) and generous support from the Hildreth Stewart Charitable Foundation and the Boston Foundation.

About the New England Board of Higher Education

[The New England Board of Higher Education](#) advances equitable postsecondary outcomes through convening, research and programs for students, institution leaders and policymakers. Our vision is that everyone in New England will have lifelong access to affordable, high-value postsecondary education.