Dear Butler Community,

Each year in February, Butler University honors our founder, abolitionist Ovid Butler, with activities that celebrate our founding values of diversity, inclusivity, and equality. Planning for the 2023 Founder’s Celebration, to be held February 7-9, is well underway and there are several updates that I would like to share with you.

**DEI in Action at Butler University—Forum (February 7)**

I will facilitate a forum for sharing current DEI trends and updates on Butler’s efforts to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as progress toward the goals of the Butler Beyond Strategic Priority 5: *Create an intentionally diverse, inclusive, and equitable learning and working environment.*

This open forum will be held Tuesday, February 7, at 4:00 PM in the Atherton Union Reilly Room. For those who are unable to attend in person, the forum will be livestreamed at butler.edu/live and the recording will be made available online.

**Ovid Butler Founder’s Award and Keynote Address (February 8)**

Last year, President Danko bestowed the inaugural Ovid Butler Founder’s Award—which recognizes and celebrates individuals or organizations who embody our values of innovation, excellence, diversity, equity, and inclusion—to Sigma Gamma Rho International Sorority, Inc. We are currently accepting nominations for people and organizations that you believe are worthy of consideration this year for this very important award. Please submit nominations using this online form. All nominees who are not chosen for the award in 2023 will be considered for the award in 2024.

The Ovid Butler Founder’s Award will be presented Wednesday, February 8, at 7:00 PM in the Atherton Union Reilly Room. The event is free and open to the public.

**Butler DEI Champions Awards (February 8)**

We are also accepting nominations through Friday, January 20, for the inaugural Butler DEI Champions Award, which recognizes a Butler University program, person, and practice that is advancing Butler’s efforts toward DEI & Innovation. Awards will be given for each of the following categories. You can nominate:

- A PERSON who consistently demonstrates a commitment to Butler’s founding mission through their University service to students, faculty, and staff.

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and/or staff. Their active engagement exemplifies the founding principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion and they are innovative and thoughtful in how they work with others.

- **A PRACTICE** that actualizes the Butler mission and is utilized to intentionally uphold the tenets of diversity, equity, and inclusion. This practice should include, but is not limited to, process improvements and/or revamping systems or policies which seek to minimize barriers, inequities, or injustices to members of the Butler community.

- **A PROGRAM**, such as a special event or initiative (new, improved, or existing), that reflects the tenets of diversity, equity, and inclusion and advances the Butler mission through innovative support or service to minoritized identity groups or provides education about social justice and/or DEI issues.

Please help us make this inaugural award series a success by nominating deserving students, faculty, staff, offices, student organizations, etc. for one of the above categories. The DEI Champions Award will be presented during the same event as the Ovid Butler Founder's Award on February 8 in the Atherton Union Reilly Room. Please submit your nominations using this online form; questions about the DEI Champions Awards can be submitted to founderscelebration@butler.edu.

**Founder's Service Day (February 9)**

"Service is the rent we pay for being. It is the very purpose of life..." (Marian Wright Edelman)

In support of our mission, February 9 will be an opportunity for the entire Butler community to engage in service opportunities to benefit our campus and the local community. The Division of Student Affairs is finalizing details for a community service project for which students, faculty, and staff can volunteer. Details about the project, and how to register, will be provided as soon as they are finalized. You can also find information on the Founder's Celebration website.

Although I’m in my first year at Butler University, this will not be my first first Founder’s Celebration. As a member of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc., I had the pleasure of attending last year when our sorority was awarded the inaugural Ovid Butler Founder’s Award. I was moved by the pride that those in attendance from the Butler community obviously felt about the institution’s founding values and Butler’s continued commitment to DEI efforts. In fact, it’s one of the first things that attracted me to Butler University. Our annual Founder’s Celebration is a perfect opportunity to proudly remember our past, celebrate our recent accomplishments, honestly assess opportunities for improvement, and plan our path forward. I hope you will join our students, faculty, and staff as many of our Founder’s Day activities as your schedule allows.

Sincerely,

Khalilah A. Shabazz, Ph.D.
Vice President & Chief Diversity Officer