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Diversity Champion

University of Dayton

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Diversity Champion

The University of Dayton has named Lawrence A. Q. Burnley, an experienced university administrator for diversity initiatives, as the University's first vice president for diversity and inclusion, effective July 1.
Burnley is currently chief diversity officer and associate vice president for diversity, equity and inclusion at Whitworth University in Spokane, Washington, a private liberal arts college affiliated with the Presbyterian Church. He has served in that role since 2010. He also is an assistant professor of history at Whitworth, regularly teaching courses on African-American history.

"We are thrilled to have attracted Larry Burnley to Dayton and are confident he will be a terrific partner and leader in helping our University become more diverse and inclusive," said Eric F. Spina, University of Dayton president-designate, who steps into his new role July 1.

"The breadth and depth of his experience is particularly impressive, including collaborative strategic planning for enhancing diversity, work with faculty on curriculum and pedagogical development, collaboration on diversity recruitment initiatives for faculty and staff, and support of enrollment management and student affairs in recruiting and supporting students of color and other underrepresented groups," Spina said.

In his new role, Burnley will oversee the University of Dayton's efforts to create a more equitable and inclusive campus community and workplace.

"Dr. Burnley is a national leader in conversations about diversity and inclusion in American higher education," said Provost Paul Benson. "Of particular importance for the University is his breadth of work on multiple dimensions of diversity, including interfaith relations and disability, among many others."

Burnley said he is looking forward to joining the University of Dayton community.

"The opportunity to join others within the University of Dayton community to advance mission-driven strategies related to diversity and inclusion is an honor," he said. "There's significant momentum and a strong foundation throughout the institution upon which to build at the University in this area. Being a part of a senior leadership team that understands the inextricable connection between diversity, inclusion and excellence is a recipe for success!"

From 2005 to 2009, Burnley was associate dean for multicultural programs and special assistant to the provost for diversity affairs at Messiah College in Grantham, Pennsylvania. At both Whitworth and Messiah, Burnley was the inaugural chief diversity officer.

In addition to a doctorate in education from the University of Pennsylvania, Burnley has a master's of divinity degree from the Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis. He specializes in drawing intellectual and theological perspectives together to enhance diversity, both on and off the college campus.

"Larry brings a wonderful combination of experience, passion and collaborative spirit to the new vice president's role," said Amy Anderson, executive director for the Center for International Programs, who co-chaired the search committee with Thaddeus Hoffmeister, associate dean for academic affairs and professor in the School of Law. "His values and vocation toward social justice are a great match with our mission and who we aspire to be as a Catholic and Marianist community."
A Cleveland native, Burnley earned his bachelor’s degree in African-American Studies with a concentration in history from the University of Cincinnati. His research specialties include multicultural issues in education; African and African-American church history, church administration and pastoral care; and the history of American education, with a focus on African-American education during the antebellum, reconstruction and progressive eras.

Burnley's wife, Naima Quarles-Burnley, is an attorney and currently serves as president of the Spokane chapter of the NAACP. She is a graduate of Oberlin College and the Antioch School of Law in Washington, D.C. The Burnleys have one son, Thulani Rashad.

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