
TORREGANO APPOINTED PENNWEST DIRECTOR OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS INSTITUTE COLLABORATIVE



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Dr. Michelle Torregano, associate professor of childhood education, has been appointed Pennsylvania Western University's director of the Frederick Douglass Institute Collaborative.

In 1995, Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education established the FDI Collaborative, which includes all PASSHE universities. Its purpose is to develop innovative programs to achieve optimal outcomes for underrepresented minority students and faculty at the

undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral levels, facilitating their progress toward meaningful careers.

“FDIs deliver information and programs, and advocate for scholarships and research in alignment with the State System’s and universities’ strategic plans,” said Christa Cobb, assistant vice chancellor and interim chief of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion for the State System. “FDIs support the development of the next generation of university professors and leaders.”

Frederick Douglass (1818-1895) was a distinguished American orator, abolitionist and social justice advocate, and one of the most consequential civil rights leaders of all time.

Torregano said she was honored to be the 2010-2011 FDI visiting scholar at the California campus and has been an active member of the institute since her arrival. Previously she was active in recruitment of faculty at conferences, participation in forums and programming.

“My goals for the institute are to recruit and mentor faculty of color as they enter the professoriate, to create an inclusive community, to foster understanding, awareness and respect for diverse cultures, and to infuse the great legacy of Frederick Douglass and other civil rights leaders into the PennWest University culture through research, conversations and classroom activities,” Torregano said.

She is supported by FDI associate directors on each of the PennWest campuses:

- Clarion – Dr. Joseph Croskey, associate professor and director of PennWest’s Act 101 programs;**
- Edinboro – Adrienne Dixon-McCullum and Gabriella Locke, assistant professors of counseling;**

- **California – Darla Timbo, associate professor of psychology.**

Torregano holds a Doctor of Education degree from Penn State. Her master’s degree in educational administration and supervision and her bachelor’s degree in elementary education and teaching are from Xavier University of Louisiana.

“I stand on the shoulders of great leaders, trailblazers and personal mentors who saw potential in me that I didn’t see in myself,”

Torregano said. “My work in community service – the Black Association of South Hills for Women and Sisters Place – provides an opportunity to work for social justice in underserved communities.”

Her interests focus on arts and culture, children, civil rights and social action, education, and human rights.

Several FDI Collaborative events are planned for the spring semester at PennWest. A John Lewis Essay Contest will be held on all three campuses during February, which is Black History Month. The Clarion campus will host a Frederick Douglass Birthday Bash in February and the PASSHE Frederick Douglass Conference and Debates April 3 and 4.

Successes of the FDI Collaborative include offering teaching fellowships to graduate students who are pursuing careers as university faculty and who are entering the final year of a terminal degree or doctoral programs; providing opportunities for student scholars to work with faculty to conduct research and/or provide support to projects and programming; and student participation in FDI Collaborative’s annual Douglass Conference and Debates, supporting their gain of critical knowledge and skills in the art and science of debate and persuasion.

For information about the FDI Collaborative and contact information for campus directors, visit www.passhe.edu/fdi.