



Shawn O'Leary speaks at the Conversations with Changemakers event on Jan. 26.

O'LEARY RECEIVES DARTMOUTH MLK SOCIAL JUSTICE AWARD

SHAWN O'LEARY, DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE FOR DIVERSITY, Inclusion and Community Engagement at Dartmouth's Geisel School of Medicine, received the Holly Fell Sateia Award, one of four Martin Luther King Jr. Social Justice Awards given as part of the Dartmouth community's month-long celebration honoring the life and legacy of the civil rights leader.

The Holly Fell Sateia Award, established in 2011 by former Dartmouth College President Jim Yong Kim and Provost Carol Folt, honors the legacy of Holly Fell Sateia (MALS'82), vice president for institutional diversity and equity, emerita, and to recognize diversity as a vibrant part of the Dartmouth mission. This award "pays tribute to a faculty or staff member at Dartmouth who is an enthusiastic and effective leader in advancing diversity and community."

"Shawn has dedicated over two decades of his life supporting and advocating for our future health-care leaders," says Stephanie White, MD, Geisel Diversity Liaison for Student/Resident Advising. "His tireless dedication to the students at Geisel is that glue that ensures our students thrive, feel included, and go on to make significant impacts in communities across the country."

"The fortunate part for us is that despite his longevity in the field of social justice, he continues to have a true passion and commitment for continuing to fight for health equity," White

says. "We have many great faculty members at Geisel and considering some of life's greatest lessons are discovered outside the classroom, Shawn is among the best."

O'Leary, who oversees the medical school's diversity programs and is dedicated to Geisel's mission of promoting an environment of unity and respect, is an academic advisor to the Urban and Rural Health Scholars programs. Also, as an advisor to minority students and student groups, he works to ensure the success and retention of all minority students, faculty, and staff.

O'Leary recently started work on the Learning Collaborative on Culture, a project aimed at increasing diversity in health professions schools across the state. He was also chosen by Geisel students for induction into the Gold Humanism in Medicine Honor Society for Outstanding Mentorship.

"I regard Shawn as the Geisel faculty's behind-the-scenes MVP," says Spencer McFarlane, JD, a second-year Geisel student in

the Urban Health Scholars program.

"After traveling with him last summer to Cleveland, Bethesda, and New York City for medical school recruitment fairs, I came to realize just how responsible he is for the diverse student body we have at Geisel," McFarlane says. "He lays the groundwork necessary for recruiting the best and the brightest minority candidates. And his door is always open for students to drop in practically anytime, often times lending an ear to students in need of a safe space."

Before coming to Dartmouth, O'Leary served as assistant director of the Wabanaki Native American Center at the University of Maine. Prior to that, O'Leary—who is a member of the Bois Forte Band of Ojibwe in Northern Minnesota where for generations his family has harvested wild rice—worked in his home state at the Center of American Indian and Minority Health at the University of Minnesota School of Medicine in Duluth.

O'Leary was chair of the Indians into Medicine advisory board and served as liaison between the UM medical school and 34 reservation communities across four states. He also worked to promote the educational needs of first-generation American Indian students through the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe's Education Talent Search Program.

True to form, O'Leary is quick to deflect the praise that accompanies this distinguished award. "This isn't so much about me as it is about the people who've come before me, from the original group of students who petitioned to establish this office to our current students who put their heart and soul into our programs and activities," he says. "To me, this award is a celebration of all we've done and continue to do together."

When asked what he has been most proud of during his tenure at Dartmouth, O'Leary says: "I've seen a culture shift to a higher level of inclusiveness and acceptability of differences that has allowed us to diversify our student body—for the past four years, our incoming classes have been comprised of 25 percent minority students, almost twice the national average of all medical schools. That's been very exciting to see."

TIM DEAN