

Georgia Southern University Becomes First Institution to Certify Executive Cabinet in Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Twelve Members of the President's Cabinet Completed an Executive Level Prep Course and Standardized Exam through the Institute for Diversity Certification (IDC)

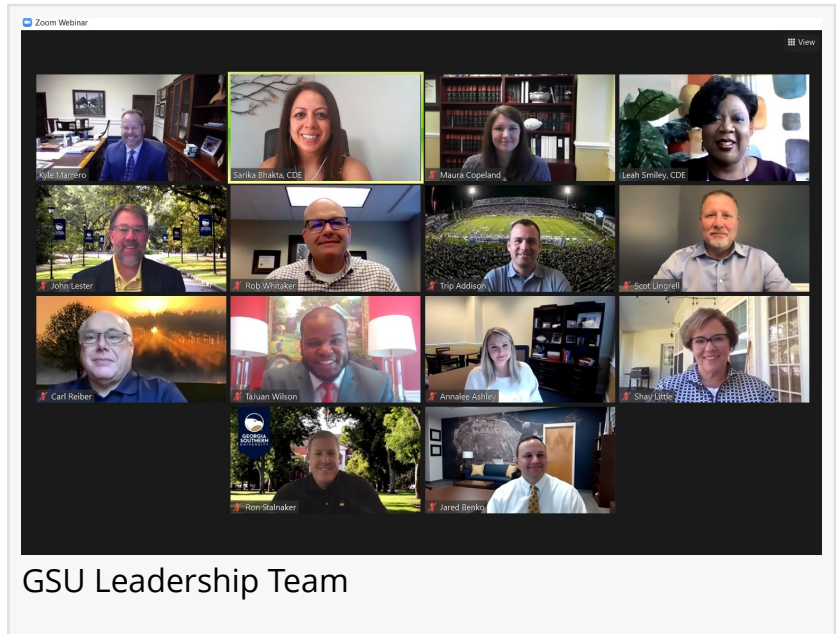
STATESBORO, GEORGIA, USA,
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EINPresswire.com/ -- The President's Cabinet at [Georgia Southern University](https://www.gosul.edu/)

recently embarked on a journey to model lifelong learning, prepare the campus for the next generation workplace, and establish global leadership in Equity, Diversity and

Inclusion (EDI). Twelve (12) members of the Cabinet completed IDC's rigorous Certified Diversity Executive (CDE)[®] credentialing program, which consisted of a 21-hour prep course, a peer review of the institution's Inclusive Excellence Action Plan, and a 170-question standardized exam. Dr. Tajuan Wilson, Associate Vice President, Inclusive Excellence and Chief Diversity Officer at Georgia Southern University says, "Inclusive Excellence is only achieved when true diversity, equity, and inclusion are woven into the very fabric of everything we do as an institution. For this reason, certification served as an important first step in our efforts to achieve Inclusive Excellence as identified in our forthcoming Inclusive Excellence Action Plan."

Dr. Wilson initially discussed certification with Sarika Bhakta, President of [Nikeya Diversity Consulting LLC](https://www.nikeyadiversity.com/), who became an IDC licensee in early 2020. After the conversation, he pitched the idea to Georgia Southern's Executives. Dr. Wilson said, "A critical first step in our journey to achieve inclusive excellence begins with training our entire senior leadership team. I approached President Marrero and the rest of the President's Cabinet with the idea and everyone was immediately on board." Bhakta states, "EDI leadership starts at the top. Sometimes we operate as if our good intentions will automatically have a positive impact on everyone, but great intentions can still produce unfair outcomes. The EDI certification process reinforces the need to be intentional about equitable and inclusive results, which the President's Cabinet at GSU is



GSU Leadership Team

demonstrating in action as they strategically strive to leverage diversity as an asset."

Dr. Kyle Marrero, President of Georgia Southern University says, "As I reflect on the progress we've made at Georgia Southern in the last year – I am proud of the steps we have taken here, but we must continue our fervent resolve to be agents of change. We ALL must be committed to promoting a safe and welcoming environment at Georgia Southern." Marrero adds, "I am very proud of the commitment shown by Georgia Southern's leadership team for investing their time in this training, and for being the first university cabinet to pass the exam to become Certified Diversity Executives. This is just one small step we can take in our path to becoming a university known for valuing the diversity of all people, communities, and disciplines with an unwavering commitment to equity and inclusion."

IDC's executive certification covers 16 competencies including self-awareness; leadership blind spots in EDI; race, power and privilege; supplier diversity; unconscious bias; disruption, agility and innovation through diversity and inclusion; demographic change; and the next generation of EDI work. Marrero notes, "This training is directly tied to our university-wide strategic vision of growing ourselves to grow others. I hope we can help model an inclusive nature, commitment to accountability, and a recognition that change can only happen if we are all involved."

Leah Smiley, President of IDC, says, "I'm glad that we were able to partner with Nikeya Diversity Consulting LLC to facilitate this certification program. Too often, organizations simply certify their Chief Diversity Officer. Yet because there's no commitment from the top, true culture change never becomes a reality. Georgia Southern is in a unique position to have everyone on the leadership team serve as a champion for inclusive excellence." Wilson agrees. He says, "We know that bold action is required to change the narrative with respect to matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion at Georgia Southern University. We also recognize that a critical element of a paradigm shift from diversity, to diversity, equity and inclusion is education. For us, this training represents a first step in our commitment to ensuring a more equitable environment for our students, faculty, staff and alumni."

IDC is the #1 provider for diversity certification in the world, with thousands of candidates and designees, representing the corporate, nonprofit and government sectors in 48+ U.S. states and 17 countries. Additionally, IDC has had multiple certification candidates from America's elite institutions, including Harvard, Stanford, Cornell, MIT, Duke, Columbia, Emory, Drexel, University of Texas, University of California, University of North Carolina, and the University of Alabama, to name a few. Nevertheless, Georgia Southern is the first institution to certify the entire President's Cabinet. Dr. Wilson says, "We recognize that substantive change starts with the decision makers. I'm honored to have my colleagues join me in the process of earning our Certified Diversity Executive credential and I am proud of the dedication, effort, and commitment they have all demonstrated along the journey."

To consult with Sarika Bhakta, CDE, at Nikeya Diversity Consulting about your EDI program, contact her at sbhakta@nikeyadiversity.com or visit: www.nikeyadiversity.com.

For more information about the Certified Diversity Executive (CDE)[®] credentialing process, visit www.diversitycertification.org.

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