



## Student Diversity and Inclusion Services FAQs

### 1. What does Student Diversity and Inclusion Services (SDIS) provide for students?

Student Diversity and Inclusion Services (SDIS) promotes diversity and social justice awareness for all students through personal interactions, leadership and training opportunities, and various sponsored and co-sponsored educational programs. We aim to ensure the retention and graduation rates of students of color (i.e., Asian/Pacific-Islander, Hispanic/Latino/a or Chicano/a, African American, and Native American/American Indian) are equitable, and to maintain an inclusive and welcoming environment for all.

### 2. How do I get involved with Student Diversity and Inclusion Services? What type of programming is available?

SDIS programs are open to all students. Programs are advertised on [TommieLink](#), as well as on social media. Find and follow us by our usernames:

- Facebook: U of St Thomas SDIS
- Instagram: Uofstthomassdis

A wide variety of programming is available throughout the year. The Diversity Activities Board (DAB) is a student programming board that creates events every month for the campus community. Here are examples of DAB and SDIS programs:

- Cultural Dinners: The St. Thomas Cultural Dinners, such as Africa Night, Nuestra Noche, Hmong New Year, Asia Night, Soul Food Dinner, Ramadan Iftar Dinner, DESI night, the International Dinner and others, celebrate our underrepresented communities and highlight students within the St. Thomas community for their accomplishments and leadership as members of these communities. In addition, the dinners invite students to share their cultural heritage and highlight contemporary social issues of their respective communities.
- Movies that Matter: Cinematic movies or documentaries followed by a dialogue with the focus on social identities or social issues.
- Linkages Mentoring Program is a peer-to-peer mentoring program to help incoming first year students stay connected with a current upperclassman from UST. Mentors and mentee are supported throughout the year through monthly workshops, social connecting programs, and academic resources.
- Reaching Excellence in Academics and Leadership (REAL) is a selective, five-week academic and co-curricular orientation program for first year incoming students who are members of groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education (including students of color, asylees, refugees, and permanent residents). Founded in 1998, the REAL Program is designed to acquaint 16 students with campus life, resources and services, and to provide experience with college-level coursework. **All participants will**

**earn 5 credits by taking two college courses (FYEX 100 and THEO 101- required for all students) at no cost.** The program is offered to replicate a typical semester as a St. Thomas student.

- Purple Couch is a weekly dialogue on topics that are focused on the heritage month and/or student led conversations about any topic.

### 3. How do you support LGBTQ+ students?

SDIS supports LGBTQ+ students by offering programs and support throughout the year: The Qmmunity program serves students with annual events to honor history and celebrate LGBTQIA+, BIPOC and cultural icons, with an annual Lavender graduation, networking, student success resources, outings into the community and more. Student Diversity and Inclusion Services also has a Qmmunity space for students to go and be themselves and find a warm and welcoming place to build community.

- Themed Nights are student led events to create a sense of belonging for LGBTQAI+ students to increase their network, connection, and engagement on campus.
- Pride Week- Is a week-long celebration in October in the awareness of our LGBTQ+ community and National Coming Out Day.
- Queer Straight Alliance– Is a student organization which mission is to foster respect and equality for LGBTQ+ students and supporters on campus.

A LGBTQ+ Liaison Counselor, Dr. GiGi Giordano, works in the Counseling and Psychological Services at UST.

### 4. What scholarships opportunities are available from SDIS Office?

- Dease Scholarship Program: The Dease Scholarship Program is named in honor of St. Thomas' 14th President, the Reverend Dennis Dease. Father Dease initiated this program to increase access to a St. Thomas education for students historically underrepresented at the university. These four-year full-tuition (and required student fees) scholarships are awarded to approximately 10 students who attend urban high schools demonstrate high financial need, and also demonstrate commitment to academic excellence, leadership, and their communities.
- Good Trouble Legacy Scholarship: The scholarship was established to support undergraduate students whose identities are underrepresented at the University of St. Thomas or whose studies focus on racial and social justice. George Floyd, a black man, was killed at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer. During Mr. Floyd's memorial service, universities were called upon to create a scholarship in his memory that will support efforts to create a more just and equitable world. This scholarship is only awarded to third year students.