

Question Time

Recently the university announced the speakers for the 2019-2020 Omnibus Speaker Series, marking the 25th year of this signature program on our campus. Since its inception 25 years ago (including this year's slate), there will have been a total of 135 speakers brought to campus as part of the series, 43 of whom have been women. 43 out of 135. In other words, less than 32%. There have been, in fact, three years when no women were brought to campus as Omnibus speakers. If one accounts only for more recent years, the percentage of women speakers actually goes down. Looking at only the past 10 years, the percentage drops to 27%. Looking at the period since 2013-2014, the percentage drops to a mere 23%. No year since 2012-13 has included more than one woman speaker (2016-17 included no women). LGBTQ and racial minority representation over the 25 years fares little or no better, with the exception of a few remarkable years early in the series during which the university appeared committed not only to representational diversity but to diversity as a topic addressed by the speakers themselves. Given that one of the four aspirations of our new Strategic Plan is to "embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion," what will you do as Chancellor to address the embarrassing lack of gender equity and the lack of diversity overall in Omnibus, our signature lecture series and major community engagement activity?

J. Badia