

CARA OKOPNY, PH.D.

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CORE COMPETENCIES

- Project management
- Training, evaluation, and curriculum development
- Relationship building
- Diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging
- Qualitative and quantitative research
- Leadership development and coaching

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

NeighborHealth

Director of Workforce Development

Nov 2022 – March 2026

- Oversee the organization's Education and Training Institute and budget while managing a team of eleven, responsible for clinical and non-clinical student placement, staff training and development, tuition reimbursement, compliance training, Learning Management System, and community workforce development, including career pipelines and English-language courses for community members.
- Creating an Emerging Leaders program to prepare hi-potentials for future leadership roles.
- Created an alternative Americorps program, recruiting new student interns and college partners.
- Created an in-house Pharmacy Technician pipeline program to recruit, onboard, and train incumbent and external applicants to begin careers in healthcare.
- Manage an innovative grant-funded “learn and earn” career pipeline program training 12 Medical Assistants per year, culminating in permanent job placements in partnership and a 90% matriculation success rate.
- Established a deep career pipeline for underserved and underemployed immigrant communities of Boston, from: Health Aide, Pharmacy Technician, Medical Assistant, and Nursing in partnership with local universities and community groups.
- Launched a quarterly Speaker Series to educate clinicians, non-clinicians, and community members about health inequities across healthcare.
- Significantly increased tuition reimbursement benefit with a pre-payment option to create greater access to educational opportunities for lower-wage workers across the organization.
- Created a robust monthly inclusive leadership training program educating managers on topics including inclusion, conflict, communication and feedback.
- In partnership with an outside vendor, developed an advanced leadership training program which includes a leadership roundtable, training, and mentorship component.
- Revamped all new staff onboarding from pre-onboarding to the one day Orientation program, working with various Departments including HR, Compliance, and Employee Health.
- Member of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Council.
- Using Articulate 360 create all mandatory and supplemental training supporting staff across Departments.

Columbia Care

Learning and Development Consultant

July 2021 – Nov 2022

- Helped develop 2022 Strategic Plan including an assessment of market needs, professional development programs, and program evaluation methods.
- Managed and facilitated monthly virtual leadership development program for managers on topics including communication, diversity, and coaching.
- Instituted frequent post-training session surveys and data collection process to evaluate training program impacts.
- Oversaw large working group to revise and pilot company’s Learning Management System.
- Led large working group to universalize the onboarding experience including an employee reference guide and quick product guides. Created on-demand e-learning modules using Articulate 360.
- Created Gender Identity and Pronoun training for managers.
- Managed, edited and created content of internal communications for three company newsletters.
- Member of Diversity Committee and co-lead of Affinity sub-committee charged with supporting and strategizing with leads of Affinity groups to grow membership and visibility in the organization.

Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Training Supervisor, Training and Development Unit (T&DU)

July 2020 - July 2021

- Drawing on Adult-learning principles and virtual training background, proposed a new virtual training module and schedule and served as team co-lead of module development housed in Adobe Captivate LMS.
- In partnership with colleagues, created, conducted, and analyzed nine hours of focus group data from 45 participants. Presented data and best practices to leadership and colleagues to improve future virtual training programs.
- In partnership with Unit Leadership, Diversity Officer, Training Supervisors and Office Supervisors, developed state-wide “Impact of Race and Intersectionality on Poverty” training initiative, including training curriculum, strategy plan, capacity building, and roll-out plan.
- Recommended, created, and assessed survey data from 60 plus respondents of first-ever virtual training program.
- Member of the Diversity Council, served on the Client-Inclusion Committee and Workforce Inclusion Committee.
- Mentored two employees for DTA’s pilot Mentorship program.

KCL Consulting, Boston, MA
Independent Consultant

Feb 2019 - May 2021

- Created solo and partner-based consulting organizations--from business plan, website/marketing materials, and client development efforts.
- Developed and led virtual training and consultation sessions for representatives from non-profits, business, and education regarding: conflict and workplace dynamics and workplace communication during Covid-19.

Dell Technologies, Hopkinton, MA
Senior Analyst Customer/Technical Training, Global Diversity & Inclusion

March 2020 - July 2020

- Part of a global team committed to supporting Employee Resource Groups, HBCU partnerships and pipelines, equity and inclusion training, and employee development programs.
- Partnered with Human Resources, Learning and Development, and Global Diversity and Inclusion teams to develop and support women leaders.
- Revamped numerous long-term project goals, adjusting deliverables and timelines due to Covid-19.
- Consulted with outside vendors to develop, assess, and scale numerous gender, ethnic, and cultural empowerment programs.
- Acting as an internal vendor, briefed Dell Business Units on women’s development program offerings.
- Helped launch and curate content for all-virtual sponsorship and development program to support underserved employees.

Cambridge Women’s Center, Cambridge, MA
Board Member, Board of Trustees

March 2018 - March 2020

- Helped develop strategic plan, mission statement, Center procedures, and decision-making processes.
- Assessed applicant materials, interviewed, and hired Director and Development Officer.
- Spearheaded effort to recruit, evaluate, and onboard diverse group of Board members, doubling membership.
- Conducted performance reviews of Director and Development Officer, set future benchmarks and SMART goals.
- Assessed applicant materials, interviewed, and onboarded Director and Development Officer.

American University, Washington, DC & Boston, MA
Professor, Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies-Critical Race, Gender, and Culture Department

Jan 2014 - May 2019

- Course topics: gender, race, class, sexuality, poverty, education, U.S. history, and politics.
- Certified in instructional design in 5-week University program for Blackboard LMS and Kaltura Media.
- Developed course plan, materials, and evaluation methods for six different courses at the undergraduate and graduate level while managing Department responsibilities, and own research projects.
- Coached, trained, assessed, and evaluated over 150 graduates and undergraduates per year.
- Helped students advance their leadership skills, with many earning scholarships and graduate school admission.
- Helped found Department, articulating bylaws, marketing plan, and learning goals.
- Conducted performance evaluations of colleagues for promotion consideration.

University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Baltimore, MD
Professor, Political Science

Jan 2015 - May 2016

University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Baltimore, MD
Resident of Rome, Italy

Oct 2009 - Aug 2012

- Planned highly-complex doctoral dissertation with 200 data points, data metrics, and analysis from abroad.

University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Baltimore, MD
Cultural and Religious Diversity Coordinator, Mosaic Center

June 2008 - Sept 2009

Grand Valley State University, Grand Rapids, MI
Professor, Liberal Studies

August 2005 - May 2009

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Language, Literacy, and Culture, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

M.A., Women's Studies, University of South Florida

B.A., Liberal Studies, Grand Valley State University