

Dr. Halcyon Lawrence, associate professor of English and inaugural dean's faculty fellow for diversity, equity, and inclusion, had just begun her fifth year at Towson University. Dr. Lawrence held a bachelor's degree from the University of the West Indies at St. Augustine, an MSc and a PhD from the Illinois Institute of Technology.

In mid-October 2023, Dr. Lawrence was a few months into her fifth year at Towson when she came down with what she thought was a bad case of strep throat. A few weeks later, she had died, having spent her final days with her beloved sister, who had flown in from Trinidad, and her pastor, who prayed with her just moments before she passed away. In her wake, she left so many grieving communities, from her home in Trinidad to the various US cities that became homes to her as she built an academic career through positions that spanned from Chicago to Atlanta to Baltimore. Halcyon's area of expertise was technical communication, a discipline that focuses on the communication possibilities and challenges that arise at the interface between humans and technology. When asked by her long-time research partner and friend, Liz Hutter, why she was so interested in technical communication, Halcyon responded with delight: "It's all about the user!" The user that occupied much of Halcyon's research was the English speaker against whose accent speech-recognition technology was biased. She is recognized as a trailblazer in her discipline through her academic publications and publicly engaged work, from podcast interviews to consulting work in the community. Her curiosity and focus on the user experience extended beyond her research and into the classroom, the faculty office, and the committee or department meeting. In these spaces, too, she would think about who is heard and who is conditioned to speak themselves inauthentically. This disposition made her an invaluable mentor, teacher, advisor, and colleague. Halcyon had an unerring ability to see those rendered invisible, hear those not understood, and acknowledge their work. Her curious, incisive lines of questioning made it possible to take on challenges in the realm of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Her compassionate validation of her colleagues and students suffused our Towson community with care, warmth, and joy. We will remember her best by carrying on her practice of acknowledging the good things happening around us, of asking our students to tell us their stories, of finding much to delight in and much to continue working on.

Erin Fehskens

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