



Vanessa is a NAMI National Board Member (2018-2021) & the Chair of the Strategic Alliances & Development Committee (2019-2021). Vanessa is a people & culture expert who specializes in development of organizational effectiveness through employee and community engagement. Vanessa believes in the inverted leadership pyramid which means those in the field are at the top of any organization's structure and must be supported by local, state, regional and national leaders.

Vanessa is the North Texas/Oklahoma District Manager for Nordstrom's off-price business – Nordstrom Rack and Nordstrom Rack.com where she leads business development & employee experience. Vanessa is a subject matter expert on employee engagement, diversity, inclusion, belonging and serves as a Diversity Inclusion Belonging National Leadership Council member for Nordstrom.

Vanessa also serves on the UTD Diversity Advisory Council at the University of Texas at Dallas (2019-2021). As an advocate for diversity, inclusion, community and employee engagement, she has spoken on these topics in various settings. Her most recent speaking engagements have included Mental Health for Minorities at Radio Caravan, KERA 90.1's Mental Health Listening Session & the Dallas Maverick's Women of Mavs Empowering Network (W.O.M.E.N) inaugural Women's Symposium. She has hosted Employee Resource Group Events for and on behalf of NAMI National and NAMI North Texas in partnership with and supporting relationships with companies like Boeing, AMN Healthcare, The Hartford, AT&T & Nordstrom.

The work that Vanessa does for NAMI is inspired and fueled by her resolve to support what NAMI does to ensure people get help early and get the best possible care. She is grateful for the caregiver and survivor support her family has received from Nami and the development work she supports aligns with helping NAMI lead the conversation in communities nationwide.

Prior to moving to the United States 24 years ago, she was born and raised in India. She is a graduate of Osmania University and studied Mass Communication, PR and Journalism at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai. She is a SHRM Certified HR Professional & obtained her D&I certification from Cornell.

Board Service and Volunteer Experience

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) – 2018 to present
Strategic Alliances and Development Committee Chair (2019-2021)
Board of Directors and 2nd Vice President (2019-2020)
CEO Search and Selection Task Force
CEO Onboarding Workgroup

VANESSA FERNANDES, SHRM-CP (She/Her/Hers)

HR Workgroup

D&I Workgroup

Strategic Plan Committee Member (2018)

Finance & Audit Committee Member (2018, 2019)

University of Texas at Dallas – 2019 to present

Diversity Inclusion Belonging Advisory Board Member

Dallas Mavericks - 2019

Women of MAVs Empowering Network Symposium Speaker

North Dallas Chamber of Commerce – 2020

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force

NorthPark Center – 2016 to 2020

Board of Directors Member

United Way of Austin 2014 to 2015

Board of Directors Member, Women's Leadership Council Member

Recognized for Corporate Philanthropy in 2015