Screen shows white background with orange and black OSU-OKC and Diversi-FIVE Portraits logos. Two lines of black text below the logos read, “Staff Portrait: Dezzarae Francis.” Small video camera view of Emily and Dezzarae in the upper right-hand corner of the screen with each having their own video camera window stacked vertically on top of each other. White background is present throughout the video.

**EMILY:** Hey everyone this is Emily from the OSU-OKC Disability Services and Diversity Office. Welcome to another of our awesome and exciting Diversi-FIVE Portraits series where we get to talk with cool people on campus to hear their story and learn what inspires them, in five minutes or less! For accessibility we've got a descriptive transcript of this Diversi-FIVE Portraits posted right above the link to this video. Today we've got one of our awesome staff members with us Dezzarae Francis. Thanks for being with us today.

**DEZZARAE:** Hi, how are you?

**EMILY:** I'm good, thanks! So start off by telling us about yourself.

**DEZZARAE:** Ok, so like you said I am Dezzarae Francis, as I am currently the Counselor Coordinator for Project SOAR on campus. And I come from a really big family, and so I just am very people oriented and love getting to know people. I have four children and I have 14-and-a half nieces and nephews. The half is because one's on the way. So yeah, I just love spending time and getting to know people. I also like doing new things and trying and learning new things. One of the new things I've currently been doing is getting into anime, something I never thought that I would be interested in. So I just finished watching Avatar The Last Airbender and just started The Legend of Catarrh. So that's very interesting. And I hope to get more in depth into anime.

**EMILY:** We'll definitely talk more about that one day. I'm right there with you with the love of anime. That's super cool. So tell us what inspires you.

**DEZZARAE:** (excited gasp) People inspire me. My students inspire me. There's something about listening to a person's story and finding out where they came from and how they've got to where they are now, and then what their end goal is. That just inspires me so much to kind of continue to do the work that I do, and to share my story so that hopefully you know, students can learn something from me. But in the end I usually end up learning a lot more and being inspired more from their stories.

**EMILY:** You do a great job with that. I know that we share some of the same students that we both support and partner with. And every time I talk with the students they're so complimentary about you, how much you listen to them, and support them and encourage them. That's wonderful. So, how do you personally shape the culture of diversity and inclusion at OSU-OKC?

**DEZZARAE:** I try to shape by just offering a safe space for students. I want students to be able to have a place where they can come in and talk about their feelings whether it be you know, about social justice or whether it be about what's currently going on, you know in our community or in our country. I feel like students need that place where it's going to be non-judgmental, for them to come down and you know, talk, express their selves, and ask questions. I think that's probably one of the most important things is allowing students to ask questions with them not being worried about you know, if someone's judging them, if someone's saying, "You know, I don't agree with that," but just sitting there and having those real conversations and letting people know that you know, we're all different but we can also find different commonalities between each other and we can start there and we can build and progress.

**EMILY:** I love that you create that safe space for students because I know that you know, in the wonderful conversations I've had with students in my own job, a lot of their experiences and their backgrounds and their stories have really resonated with me. And so I love that you create that space for them to just be themselves. That's super cool.

Screen changes and multiple lines of text read,“Want to be one of our Diversi-FIVE Portraits? Let’s Connect! Emily Cheng, Director of Disability Services and Diversity, Student Center, Room 136. (405) 945-3385. [emily.cheng@okstate.edu](mailto:emily.cheng@okstate.edu).” The word “Diversi-FIVE” is displayed as the same orange and black Diversi-FIVE Portraits logo.

**EMILY:** All right friends, so here's the power question. Would you like to be a guest on Diversi-FIVE Portraits? Reach out to me, I would love to hear from you. Until next time, take care of yourselves and those around you.