

OCCA Equity Call to Action

As OCCA continues its work related to equity, diversity, and inclusion, it is time to take action as an organization and emphasize our role in advancing this work. This is intended as a deliberate and intentional effort to indicate our commitment to racial and social justice. The following is intended as a framework to guide our roles as OCCA board members, association employees, and in our personal and professional lives in enacting these values. The work is ongoing. The time for action is now.

Board Statement and Call to Action

The legacy and continuation of institutional racism and systemic oppression towards Black, Indigenous and people of color inform the experiences of communities that our member colleges seek to serve. The Oregon Community College Association (OCCA) board, and the educational institutions we represent, are committed to learning and understanding both individually and collectively the diverse communities we serve and how best to meet their needs. We denounce all acts of racism, xenophobia, and oppression.

We commit to creating campuses where race, ethnicity, intersectional identities and socioeconomic differences are no longer predictors of success and well-being. Yet, Oregon Community College boards of education are predominantly white individuals while 30% of our students identify as persons of color. 15% are Pell eligible.

As an association representing the 17 Oregon community colleges, we commit to the following to advance our work toward a just, racially diverse, and equitable community and state. We acknowledge that equity work is ever evolving and as such, recognize this statement as a living document:

1. Support the OCCA Board Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee to:
 - a. Develop tools and resources for elected board members to use to actively engage and recruit people of color in our communities to increase their participation and representation on our boards of education
 - b. Support OCCA and all community college board members in their own individual and collective learning around racism and bias within our institutions and society
2. Ensure that issues of diversity, equity and inclusion, social justice, and antiracism are central to all OCCA board member training and new board member onboarding in order to embed and enact equity as a core value of OCCA
3. Conduct regular systematic reviews of OCCA bylaws, board policies, operational practices and strategic goals to uncover any instances of racism or biases
4. Commit to shared learning as a board (e.g., read and discuss books as a part of our meetings, commit to attending virtual learning opportunities, and provide opportunities for learning for elected board members statewide)
5. Advocate with state and federal lawmakers to ensure strong investments in education

- and to enact policies that seek the elimination of systemic racism and all forms social injustice and economic inequality in our institutions, state, and nation; and
6. Work to strengthen our relationships with external organizations that can help support access and success for our students from historically excluded, underserved and underrepresented communities.

OCCA Mission Statement

As social and political landscapes shift, the OCCA Board considers the association mission statement a living document worthy of ongoing review. This will ensure the statement reflects our commitment to take active measures to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of our work on behalf of community colleges.

OCCA Mission Statement:

Leading with racial equity, we advocate, communicate, and collaborate to strengthen community colleges for the benefit of Oregonians particularly those historically underserved or systemically marginalized in higher education.

Mission Statement and Call to Action adopted October 2, 2020

Revised and adopted as Living Document December 4, 2020

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