

## **Lower Columbia College and the Washington State Community and Technical Colleges Stand Against Racism**

At their June 2020 meeting, the Washington state community and technical colleges (WACTC) presidents unanimously passed two resolutions (links below). The first resolution firmly and unconditionally denounces a history of violence and systemic injustices against Blacks. In the second, we denounce discrimination, xenophobia and harassment against our Asian and Pacific Islander communities.

- [Resolution Denouncing Violence against Blacks in America In support of Black Students, Faculty, Staff, and Communities](#)
- [Resolution Denouncing Anti-Asian Discrimination Caused by COVID-19 Pandemic in support of Asian American and Pacific Islander Students, Faculty, Staff, and Communities](#)

Lower Columbia College has done a great deal of work over the past several years to address equity, diversity and inclusion. Around 2013, LCC formed a standing committee to address pertinent issues of race, gender and identity. About the same time, we created an international student program to increase diversity and cultural awareness on our campus. Later, we made diversity, equity and inclusion an institutional priority by making it one of our strategic initiatives. Last year, LCC adopted an institutional plan around this work and have implemented support and engagement opportunities for our underrepresented students.

In addition, our Human Resources and Legal Affairs office recently rewrote our policies and practices, and updated the way we draft job descriptions to include equity and inclusion. As a result of incidents of insensitivity, discrimination and harassment on our campus two years ago, we created a Bias Response Team to quickly respond to aggressions against our students and support the victims of that aggression. Since 2011, LCC also instituted two major initiatives, Achieving the Dream and, more recently, Guided Pathways, to close equity gaps on our campus.

Recent events, both nationally and locally, illustrate that our work is incomplete. As an institution of higher learning, Lower Columbia College needs to do more. We need to lead our campus and our community in this important work. LCC needs to look at its own policies and procedures, and all the ways in which we teach and operate, and identify and dismantle the systemic barriers we may have created for people of color and other underrepresented populations. Our students deserve to be safe. We want them to be successful.

In the last several days, community partners including Goodwill Industries and the Community Foundation for Southwest Washington, have reached out to its community partners to collaborate on issues of race and social justice. We gladly join them, and other willing partners, in this necessary and important work.

Today, we stand with other community partners to pursue diversity, equity and inclusion on our campus and in the greater community. We will begin this journey by first listening to those who have been victimized by bigotry, insensitivity and violence.

Sincerely,

Chris Bailey, President