

Newsletter

April 10, 2020

Message from the Director

by Javier Cervantes



Welcome to the EDI Newsletter

I'm pleased to introduce the next iteration of our [Department of Institutional Equity, Diversity & Inclusion](#) (EDI) newsletter. At the end of spring 2014, we last published a newsletter called *Inclusion Quarterly*. The current version will be similar, yet unique. The EDI is committed to utilizing this forum as a way to keep people connected and up-to-date with the goings-on in the world of EDI work.

The intent of this newsletter is to update readers on institutional achievements that make the college a more inclusive and equitable place. The newsletter can also be a space where students, LB employees and community members alike receive ideas about how to build on their existing skills when it comes to being more culturally fluent and competent.

Why do I say this? Because EDI work is evolutionary, nuanced and requires a lot from each and every person engaged in EDI--and I mean a lot of deep contemplation, self-exploration and critical self-work.

I appreciate your taking the time to read and engage in the efforts of the EDI.

EDI Engages LB Community Amid COVID-19 Pandemic

The global COVID-19 pandemic has changed how our department is responding to the needs of equity for students, college employees and community members. Although things are a bit different, EDI has stepped up with programs and resources and will continue to evolve daily.

Department Programs for Spring 2020

Daily mindfulness prompts	Online student programming
Update equity resources for undocumented students	Virtual EDI drop-in
Virtual Spanish discussion circles	College of Choice check-ins with Latino students

What's wrong with this picture?

by Heather Morijah



More than ten people in the room? Less than six feet between them?

Well, both. This is a scene from the EDI during a Black History Month presentation by Oregon State University's Dorian Smith. This is what the EDI **should** look like.

Remember February? When we could still come to campus? When we could still go . . . anywhere at all? After less than a month, that feeling of personal freedom is already starting to fade--and I don't like it one bit.

Like so many other challenges, though, the situation we've all found ourselves in is providing me with some Aha Moments. You know what those are: the lightbulb comes on, either spontaneously or as a result of something you've heard or read. Aha Moments can be super cool, but they can also be super uncomfortable. For me, lately, they've been the latter.

What I learned during Black History Month--which has really been hitting home, pardon the pun, in the past few weeks--is this: my White privilege (or "White lady fairy dust," as we jokingly call it in our department) allows me to feel resentful *about not being allowed to do what I want where I want, when I want to do it*. But get this: Black and Brown folks have to think about this **every day**--not just sheltering in place during a global pandemic.

Every day, Black and Brown folks worry about being pulled over by the cops on their way to or from the grocery store. Every day, Black and Brown folks worry about the possibility of being shot in a Wal*Mart because they were holding a BB gun they pulled off the shelf. Every day, Black and Brown folks worry about their Black and Brown kids being the target of bullying--or far worse. Every day, everywhere, Black and Brown folks know they're being scrutinized more closely than White folks. Every day, Black and Brown folks wonder if they'll be targeted for something

And what you may not realize is that most Black and Brown folks *adjust their behavior accordingly to mitigate the potential of something bad happening*. And they tell their kids to do the same thing.

My White privilege protects me from this. If you're White, it protects you too. I'm not saying White privilege doesn't feel good, because it allows me to **not** have to think or worry about things Black and Brown folks think and worry about. If you look up the word itself, you'll see what I mean:

priv-i-lege

noun

a special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group

Yes, privilege feels mighty good indeed--but it also feels icky, because it comes at the expense of those who **don't** get to enjoy it as well.

So, what can White folks do about it?

1. Acknowledge it's there. Know that you're not a bad person for admitting it. You didn't actively request White privilege; if you're White, it just happened.
2. **Want** to do something about it. Why would you want to change the status quo? Because it's unfair, and it's been that way for a very long time.
3. Gently point out to other White people that White privilege is a thing. I say "gently" because we're not very good at hearing this, much less accepting it as truth.
4. Actively read, participate, interact and learn. The [Corvallis-Albany NAACP](#) and our own [Estudiantes del Sol Club](#) are both great places to start. Or visit the EDI (Forum 220) when the opportunity permits.
5. Journal your journey. Writing stuff down can help you sort through your feelings. It's also gratifying to be able to look back through the years and see how far you've come.
6. Be kind to yourself: remember that this is ongoing self-work that will challenge you for the rest of your life. Understand that there is no quick-and-easy miracle antidote to hundreds of years of systemic oppression of people of color and the corresponding conveyance of White privilege. We have a lot of work to do, but we're doing it together. Team Fairy Dust For All!

I'm not sure how we're all going to come out the other end of this pandemic. My optimism comes and goes. I'm trying to feel a lot more appreciation for what I do have (a home, a garden, a loving spouse and our fur-children) and less anger and resentment about being told not to go anywhere. But it isn't easy.



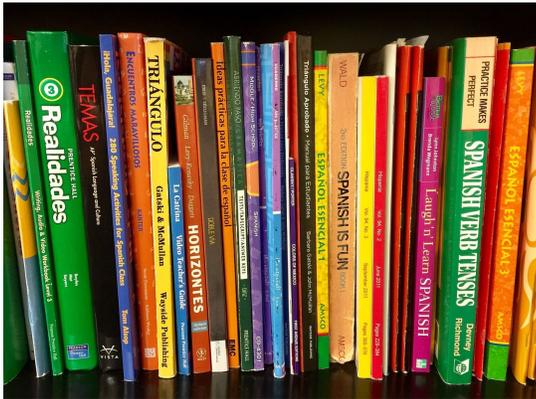
College of Choice Initiative for Latina/o/x Students

by Tania Mendez

LBCC recognizes that Latina/o/x students represent the fastest-growing demographic in the college's service district. As a result, LBCC actively strives to make the college their first-choice institution upon graduation. This effort is an attempt to increase the enrollment, presence and completion rates of Latino students at LBCC.

Estudiantes del Sol club is the "Latino/x" club at LBCC, and it has helped students engage with their Latina/o/x peers. Club members say "somos una familia" (we are a family): they invite anyone interested in joining to attend club meetings. Estudiantes del Sol will continue to meet virtually every week on Wednesday from 1-2PM.





Spanish Language Circle Rises Again!

... And we're back. Bringing you a virtual conversation circle around which to practice your Spanish conversational skills. All levels are welcome! Our first effort was on Friday, April 3, with seven folks participating from the comfort and convenience of their own home devices. On Wednesday, April 8, six people conversed

en español. We're going to keep trying different day/time combinations to find what works for most people; *watch your email for announcements and links to the Zoom meetings.* You can also contact [Heather Morijah](#) if you'd like to receive a Google Calendar invite each time.

“Thank you for your messages of choosing hope, positivity and kindness. I look forward to reading your messages each day, so I hope you keep it up!

I would add for the weekly email of good moments:

‘Even during all that is happening, I feel gratitude. I feel gratitude for the hard work of so many of our LBCC family to find solutions. Recently, I had Zoom meetings with other faculty to problem solve how to arrange and plan parts of our classes that previously have been in a lab/workshop model. We created solutions for the students to work collaboratively on similar assignments online without the lab/workshop model.

When we work together, we can definitely achieve more!’”

--Julene Hamilton, English Dept. faculty

