



Citrus College Conversation and Call to Action
June 9, 2020
2:45 – 4:45 p.m. via Zoom

205 Attendees Including:

Dr. Geraldine M. Perri – Superintendent/President

Dr. Martha McDonald – Vice President of Student Services

Board of Trustees Present

Trustee Patricia A. Rasmussen, President
Trustee Susan M. Keith, Vice President
Trustee Joanne Montgomery, Clerk/Secretary
Trustee Barbara Dickerson, Member of the Board
Trustee Edward Ortell, Member of the Board

Dr. Martha McDonald opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending. She expressed the purpose of the forum was to allow a platform for conversation regarding the current events and state of the nation. She then introduced Board of Trustees President, Dr. Patricia Rasmussen.

Dr. Rasmussen expressed her thanks to the group for their participation, and the joint support of the Board of Trustees. Board members were in attendance to listen to staff and faculty concerns. Dr. Rasmussen reviewed information from the CCC Call to Action Forum held Wednesday, June 3, 2020. She assured the intent of the Board and administration to dedicate efforts to progressive change for Citrus College.

Dr. Martha McDonald then introduced Superintendent/President, Dr. Geraldine Perri.

Dr. Perri expressed her support to the college's Black faculty, staff, students and community members. She noted that the college would be working in alignment with the State Chancellor's Call to Action to take measures to address structural racism by an assessment of college policies, plans, curriculum; the campus environment - both inside and outside the classroom; student outcomes data; college recruitment, hiring and promotion practices; the support services the college provides to students; the training of the college community as regards diversity, sensitivity and cultural awareness; and through additional future strategies identified by the college community. Dr. Perri indicated that she looks forward to working in collaboration with the college community to affect positive change for Citrus College and society at large. Dr. Perri thanked those individuals in attendance, and she also thanked the forum planning group comprised of representatives from college constituent groups, for their efforts in organizing this forum.

Dr. Martha McDonald then introduced guest facilitators Azizi Williams, Assistant Head of Sequoyah School in Pasadena and Emily Singer, Director of Curriculum and Support at Sequoyah School in Pasadena.

Azizi and Emily shared the following poem by Micky Scott Bey Jones:

Together we will create a brave space

*Because there is no such thing as a "safe space"
We exist in the real world
We all carry scars and we have all caused wounds.
In this space
We seek to turn down the volume of the outside world,
We amplify voices that fight to be heard elsewhere,
We call each other to mare truth and love
We have the right to start somewhere and continue to grow.
We have the responsibility to examine what we think we know.
We will not be perfect.
This space will not be perfect.
It will not always be what we wish it to be
But it will be our space together
And we will work on it side by side.*

The pair also shared their admiration for the Teaching Tolerance website at www.tolerance.org for those who may be interested in resources for learning more. Azizi and Emily then invited conversation from the attendees.

Themes of the discussion are noted below:

- Racism is present in English course material however, there is often concern on how these discussions would be perceived by students. Professors would like to have tools and resources to help them in addressing such issues and topics in a respectful manner with students.
- Faculty and staff would like to survey students anonymously in order to help gauge thoughts and concerns about pivotal issues in our current forefront.
- Faculty and staff feel that there needs to be a staff diversity page on the college website that is reflective of the student body population. Current and prospective students want to know that diversity is a priority, and not just a "buzzword" at Citrus College. This in turn will also help to drive enrollment. Students who see faculty, staff and administration from their same backgrounds to help guide them maintain hope that they can and will succeed.
 - HR needs to seize the opportunity to evaluate and restructure the entire hiring process in order to diversify staff.
 - Explore new ways to communicate to the public about our positions, training and hiring process to help attract diverse populations.
- Citrus needs leaders, and it starts from the top-down, to plant seeds of real change.
- Microaggressions
 - Some faculty, staff, students may not be aware of what microaggressions are. This is something that should be embedded in training for staff and faculty.
 - These should not be used to commend black/brown excellence. We need to validate student's true abilities as individuals, not as a racial group.
 - Microaggressions happen amongst students but also faculty, and faculty do not share these experiences with anyone other than people that look like them.
 - If you witness microaggression, speak up about it. Adjuncts are afraid if they do speak up, they will lose their job. We all need to be the models for others and we all need to disrupt bias.
 - Suggestion to provide information on examples of microaggressions and how to best correct them.
- Faculty and staff have received student feedback that they are not comfortable with Campus Safety because there is a common perception that assistance is called mostly with regard to African American students. Perhaps a training for faculty on when it is

appropriate to call Campus Safety and not so freely call in regards to people of color who are not doing anything wrong.

- We need to develop a program at Citrus that supports black students and black excellence. The idea was proposed of building a physical space, a cultural center, where students of color can gather.
 - This could provide students the opportunity to gather with others of their same cultural backgrounds – creating a sense of pride and accountability to each other.
- Citrus must strive to be a comfortable place to talk about race. Faculty need to embed more classes of global racism into our curriculum. Courses about Black, Hispanic, Asian history should not be special courses, but content that should be implemented into many Western European courses, to show students that we are aware, and not ignoring the systemic problem.
 - Recommendation to consider a Race and Racism course, as provided by Cal State University, San Bernardino.
 - Create a culture of diversity in classroom with positive images. Examples of people of color, and salient content with personal experiences.
- Faculty and staff need to be aware of how we treat each other and support each other.
 - Faculty and staff have also experienced racism on campus. This has been directed from colleagues, students, and community members.
 - Faculty can do things as small as saying hi to people of color. This alone will acknowledge their presence, reinforce their visibility, and encourage and empower them on campus.
 - Additional support programs, such as UMOJA are needed at Citrus.
 - Staff does not feel safe starting these conversations and expressing concerns. There is a feeling that they are subjecting themselves to scrutiny from students, peers, administration, when trying to express their own opinions on some key subjects; including fear of losing their jobs.
 - Suggestion was made to provide Disrupting Lies in the Classroom pamphlet for employees.
- Use frequent Ally Training for faculty, staff, and students.
 - We need to encourage and ensure that the individuals attending the Ally Trainings are more than those who are putting on the trainings.
 - How can we, as staff and faculty, encourage peers, and students to attend these sessions?
 - Empowerment also comes through language and education – the reality is that sometimes people do not realize that they are biased. We need to empower ourselves to help educate them to understand the consequences of their words and/or actions.
 - It is ok to not know what to say – but we need to allow the space for these discussions to take place, to help people find the words, expressions and language to grow together from these experiences.
 - We cannot tolerate any intolerance.
- Strategies for supporting students.
 - Faculty and staff could attend athletic events, performing arts events, etc.
 - This will empower and encourage our students to be more comfortable in the classroom.
- Citrus needs to move past a conversation and take action. We need to do better. We need to do more.
 - Platforms such as this need to be provided more than in a state of emergency.
 - Conversations need to happen frequently.
 - Always let someone know that you care.

