

SSAC Black Lives Matter Statement

To: Students, Chancellor Garcia, College Presidents, and the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education

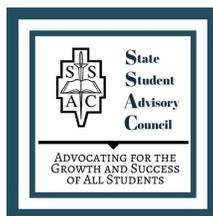
These past couple months have been difficult for all of us, we have been faced with two pandemics; COVID-19 and racism. We continue to be excruciatingly reminded of the racial injustice that exists. Like many of you, we are angered, heartbroken and tired. Tired of seeing our Black brothers and sisters blatantly mistreated, profiled and killed before our very eyes. We are starting to see the worldwide realization of our broken system. It's a system that jails a marginalized race for something another race profits off, a system that creates obstacles and hardships for black people across this country. We are tired of the years of injustice, and systemic racism that black people continue to face in this country. We are tired of the hegemonic institutions founded by white supremacy that continues to demonize, stereotype, and disable black empowerment.

We, the State Student Advisory Council will not be silent, as the voice and physical representation of over 137,000 students across the Colorado Community College System we will speak. We officially and formally condemn the horrendous acts that are the recent murders of George Floyd, Elijah McClain, Breonna Taylor, Ahmuad Arbery, Tony McDade, and the countless others. It is beyond clear, that there still remains a fundamental problem in our societies. Our students should not have to live with a target on their backs, their families should not have to worry if their children will make it home from school, the gym or simply even work. As Martin Luther King Jr said "In the end, we will not remember the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends" silence in the face of these current events are nothing but acts of anti-black-anti justice and hate. It is important to realize that these real world experiences do have an impact in the classroom. Therefore, in the name of justice, advocacy and what is right we publicly affirm that Black Lives Matter. We call on all Administrators, Executives, Presidents and Organizational Leaders of the Colorado Community College System to do the same as a system that represents the largest and most diverse student body in Colorado. We stand for peace, justice, equity and love. **We are anti-racist.**

We believe that Black lives matter, but we also understand there's more to this than just words. We call for a new era in the Colorado Community College System, an era for equity and justice. Earlier this year, we focused heavily on our Nothing About Us Without Us campaign, elevating the student voice and fighting for diversity, equity and inclusion. **Again, we say, nothing about us without us, nothing about our black students, without our black voices, without our black teachers and without our black administrators.**

We call on members and executives of the Colorado Community College System to take actions on the following:

- We call for the expansion of cultural/diversity competences coursework to be developed and offered by Fall 2020. This shall also be a requirement 3 credit hour GT pathways credit.
- Utilize desegregated data and information to create solutions to system inequities that are found via data. (Increasing Student of color retention and completion)
- Hire more FULL TIME professors of color, establishing job security rather than more adjuncts, (Research from CCA shows that students of color do well with instructors of color) (Improving the CCCS Diversity Recruitment efforts)



- Incorporate ongoing equity training into onboarding processes for employees, **security officers**, work-study's and processes for new students.
- Hire more counselors, advisors and leadership of color. Students pay tons of money towards mental health resources for their colleges. It's important that the people who make them better actually look like them and can fully understand their unique experiences.
- Create permanent positions for students of color on **ALL decision-making platforms, hiring boards, state boards, councils, committees and etc.**
- Establish diversity officers to help with these efforts across our campuses.
- Put our money where our mouth is by establishing funds outside of student fees for affinity organizations that support students of color. There are many organizations across the system that do so much for our students of color without adequate resources.
- Establish a strong title for all of these initiatives across the Colorado Community College System in collaboration with SSAC.
- Start to redefine what it means to be "Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI)", designate the funding to the students its intended for.

For Students

- We implore students to reach out to your ward representatives, city councils, mayors, state senators and representatives to show your support and engage with elected officials to demand change and to be an active part of driving solutions.
- To contact mental health professionals to help guide you through any trauma that you may be processing.
- To lean on your mentors and peer groups to support you.
- To engage in difficult and uncomfortable conversations with your institution's administration.
- To open themselves to the daily suffering of people and to educate themselves on what it means to be black or a person of color navigating a world not built for your success. Educate yourselves on what it means to be **anti-racist**.

As the leaders, and representatives of the Colorado Community College System it is OUR DUTY, Responsibility and honor to be committed to the empowerment, enrichment, representation, well-being and equitable experiences of all our students. We cannot truly represent the student body and stand for equity if we do not address the inequities on our own campuses. **There will be Nothing about Our Students of Color without the VOICES of our students of color. We stand for you all, we hurt for you all and we will FIGHT for you all. Black Lives Matter!**

Sincerely,

State Student Advisory Council

Chair

Legislative Liaison

Emanuel Walker

David Olguin