

Norco College Open Forum – Call to Action Summary

June 5, 2020/11:30am – 1:00pm

Monica Green opened the forum by thanking everyone for participating. Goal of the open forum was to create a space for dialogue, community, and action. She expressed vulnerability and shared her feelings of anger with a desire to fix this persistent problem of racism, and a frustration on not knowing how. Dr. Green acknowledged that words are simply not enough. We need action! This open forum opportunity is a chance for our college community to come together to listen and learn from each other. The following notes capture the general sentiment of the thoughts and feelings shared and ideas presented. The discussion was the beginning of many difficult discussions about what we can do as an institution to create the change we need to see in our country right now.

Dr. Green shared the following quote from former NBA star, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar:

"Racism in America is like dust in the air. It seems invisible – even if you're choking on it – until you let the sun in. Then you see it's everywhere. As long as we keep shining that light, we have a chance of cleaning it wherever it lands. But we have to stay vigilant, because it's always still in the air."

- Discussion on how to talk to students about what is happening
 - Begin by asking how everyone is doing
 - Create a safe space for students to talk about their feelings and share their experiences
 - Be vulnerable, share your feelings on the issues with your students
 - Acknowledge who is the room, their identities, and raise awareness
- Provide resources for students to know their heritage and to heighten awareness about social justice
- We need to educate ourselves and do more work as individuals
- Remember our students who are bi-racial and their unique experiences
- Create space for having difficult conversations
- The education system was not designed to help people of color succeed, we need to take this personally and acknowledge our roles.
- Recommended reading, *White Fragility*, *How to be an Antiracist* and checking our privilege
- Commit to offering more ethnic studies, women's studies courses on a consistent and ongoing basis – this was echoed by several people
- A student shared how she was proud to be a part of this community and how it supports the students
- A faculty member shared how hate has affected his life, sharing about the stress created by constant fear. "We need to do something now to alleviate this stress from our students!"

- Allow ourselves to sit in this anger and make space for hearing others stories and experiences.
- Website with a broken link for reporting discrimination, fix this, and adjust the language to help facilitate a path for students to report discrimination without making it so formal.
 - Dr. Green informed the group that a webpage would be created to house the Social Justice movement that will include a variety of resources and statements.
- We need to commit to holding these conversations more often with the help of a trained facilitator.
- Listen to our students and what they need from us before we take action. Understand what the problem is before trying to solve it.
- CORA Certification on microaggressions
- Students are noticing a pattern in history; it is disheartening and frustrating to see this racism persists. Wants to see this movement be the moment where change happens. Encouraged colleagues not to avoid the issue, but talk about it, and work to emphasize the sameness of people.
- Difficult conversations are important to have, no change comes without having them.
- A student shared about the Student Discussion Club, all are welcome. The club meets to talk about difficult topics in a safe space. There is much to be learned from listening to each other.
- Participants expressed pride and gratitude to each other for sharing so openly and honestly.
- Norco College represents the diversity of our world and it is ours to impact on a daily basis in the classroom and our respective offices. Encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity we have to engage with our students, to listen and learn from them.
- Recognize our power and influence to leverage the pain and suffering to make positive change. We have a calling, and we need to see our jobs, not as a paycheck, but an opportunity to engage.
- We are resilient and we can only grow from these experiences if we work together.
- Encourage student voices and initiatives, use the platform of the college to amplify their voices.
- Take the summer to prepare, offer a course, hold more discussion, have a plan for the fall to come together around a call to action.
- Create more opportunities to come together like this one.
- Through the sharing of our experiences we have an opportunity to be seen and through listening to each other we can be truly heard.

California Community Colleges Call to Action

1. Systemwide review of police and first responder training and curriculum. (ASCCC, CTE Deans and Faculty)
 2. Campus leaders host open dialogue and address campus climate. (CEO's, District Leaders, Campus Police, CSSO's and their Student leaders)
 3. Campuses audit classroom climate and create an action plan to create inclusive classrooms and anti-racism curriculum. (Faculty, CIO's, CSSO's, ASCCC)
 4. District Board review and update your Equity plans with urgency. (Chancellor's Office, All Campus Leaders, and District Trustees)
 5. Shorten the time of full implementation of the DEI Integration Plan (DEI Implementation Workgroup, Consultation Council and Chancellor's Office)
 6. Engage in the [Vision Resource Center](#) "Community Colleges for Change." (Everyone)
- The CCC Call to Action needs to go further, there is much to be done. We must define the Call to Action for Norco College.
 - Suggestions for a statement from RCCD Police
 - Umoja students have scheduled 'Porch Talks', one occurred yesterday, the next one is scheduled next Thursday. RCCD Chief of Police Gates will attend.
 - Recommended reading White Fragility over the summer and creating a book club to discuss this and other resources exploring white privilege
 - Add White Fragility to the Read to Succeed lineup for a college-wide discussion
 - Actions from the State Chancellors Webinar from Dr. Regina Stanback-Stroud, Chancellor, Peralta Community College District:
 - Be an anti-racist
 - Vote
 - Take care of yourself to take care of others
 - Use resources to support
 - Listen without judgement
 - Value of comfort is not valued above justice
 - Hold Forums, share ideas, and resources
 - Pay attention to language
 - Read White Fragility
 - Acknowledged that our ADJ students and faculty are hurting, this is one of our strongest programs regionally. Students may be re-thinking entering the profession of peace officer.
 - What is an actionable next step? Can we create an Ally safe space for our community's voices to be heard?
 - It was not that long ago that one of our own felt discriminated against at the college. Thankfully, things have changed but we have a lot of work still to do.
 - A taskforce will be formed to determine the next steps in our course of action. Contact Dr. Green if you wish to participate.