

# The Immediate and Lasting Effects of Racism Inbox x

Office of the President <presidents\_office@pcc.edu>

12:54 PM (9 hours ago)

to announce, current\_students

Dear PCC Colleagues and Students:

These past two weeks—within the context of these past few months—have been especially difficult for communities of color. While the global pandemic has had a profound impact on everyone, it has had a disproportionately negative impact on our nation's most marginalized and vulnerable, laying bare the entrenched and systemic inequities that are, tragically, part of the fabric of our society. The recorded U.S. COVID-19 death toll has now surpassed 100,000—a disproportionately high [proportion](#) of these deaths are Black and Indigenous Americans. As much of the country shelters in place, workers deemed as essential are overrepresented in communities of color, amplifying the risk of sickness and death from COVID-19, leading the [Centers for Disease Control](#) to outline this sociocultural clustering of health risks.

We are currently bearing witness through the news and social media to the deaths of Ahmed Aubrey in Georgia, Atatiana Jefferson in Fort Worth, and George Floyd in Minneapolis—in addition to the recent “birding while black” incident in Central Park or the disproportionate policing of black and brown folks wearing protective masks or being cited for “inadequate social distancing.” For months, we have seen the racist and xenophobic treatment of people of Asian descent concerning the novel coronavirus. The cumulative effect of these and other lived realities of our colleagues, students, and friends of color must be named and recognized; we must see and understand the trauma and exhaustion being experienced in our PCC family.

Living and working within a multiracial community while valuing cross-cultural perspectives is what compels us to share this message. It is important to not fall into despair, which is difficult when the summit toward racial justice seems increasingly harder and steeper to climb.

“Racial Battle Fatigue” (Smith, 2003) refers to the psychophysiological impact on communities of color caused by the cumulative stress of having to confront and navigate the constant racial injustices made manifest in a white supremacist society—when the dominant culture of that society silences, minimizes, or ignores this trauma. There is little relief, especially given our work in a predominantly white institution in a predominantly white state.

Portland Community College's commitment to equity, inclusion, and social justice means that we all must acknowledge our own participation in maintaining systems of oppression while working to challenge and dismantle these systems, within our own spheres of influence. In particular, **we need our white faculty, staff, and students to embrace accountability and to engage in anti-racist praxis**; our colleagues and students of color should not, must not, shoulder the burden of eradicating white supremacy. Our deep appreciation goes to all those white allies at the college who have been engaging in this anti-racist solidarity work.

And our heartfelt gratitude goes to our colleagues and students of color for showing up with courage and compassion—in the face of what seems like relentless assault. Engaging in radical self-care is an individual and collective practice of affirmation that is especially needed during times of tragedy and racial trauma.

As a reminder, the [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#) offers information, telehealth, resources and webinars to support our emotional well-being. EAP is available to all employees. Students are encouraged to connect with [PCC Counseling](#), which provides a wide array of individual, group, and culturally-specific support in partnership with our student resource centers and in virtual modalities.

For more learning, professional development, and faculty development opportunities, we ask that you start by visiting and bookmarking the collection of resources on our COVID-19 website, which will continue to be updated while the college is operating remotely. Of particular relevance is our [DEI resource list](#). Deeper reflection and resources specific to the topic of “Racial Battle Fatigue” will be available June 1st in the “Woke @ Work” blog on [Inside PCC](#).

As leaders of color, we remain dedicated to examining challenges within our consciousness and providing resources and opportunities to shift our culture toward equity and belonging. Portland Community College is transforming itself toward becoming a more equitable and inclusive organization, for all members of our community. The organizational changes that PCC began through YESS, and continues to engage through strategic planning and reorganization, is undergirded by our commitment to building a more equitable and just reality for everyone in our community, students, staff, faculty, as well as the surrounding people of the Greater Portland area. We need each and everyone of us to participate in this critical work in which everyone's life and humanity is valued equally in our society.

In Solidarity,

Mark Mitsui, President

Tricia Brand, Chief Diversity Officer

As always, this and other College announcements and information can be found on [Inside PCC](#). Please visit our [COVID-19 Resources](#) page for other updates.



Mark Mitsui, College President

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[@prezmitsui](#)



May 29, 2020

Dear Campus Community,

Our country has witnessed with horror the untimely deaths of George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery, black men whose deaths have come even as we struggle to absorb the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on minoritized communities. All around us, people of color are dying at a higher rate, making further visible the structural inequities that pervade every area of the American experience.

As Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz said, "These are things that have been brewing in this country for 400 years."

It is easy to feel overwhelmed by these events and give in to despair. But we must not give up because we know that inaction supports injustice, inequity and racism.

We must deepen our work to make our community one where justice and equity are central to who we are. We must work towards equity and justice at Portland State, in Portland, in Oregon, in America, and across the world. It will take intentional and collective action to dismantle systemic structures of oppression.

We stand with communities in Minnesota and Georgia calling for justice, and we affirm our commitment to doing our own work to ensure that justice and equity are a core part of all of PSU.

Today, and always, black lives matter.

Sincerely,

Stephen Percy, President

Julie Caron, Interim Vice President, Global Diversity & Inclusion and Title IX & ADA/504 Coordinator

Ame Lambert, incoming Vice President, Global Diversity & Inclusion