TAKING ACTION
As we prepare for commencement and the end of another term, this is a great time to remember that our success is due not only to our sustained individual efforts, but also to the efforts of our community partners. The image of community is especially relevant to me today as I write these greetings the morning following the reenactment of the historic Black Student Union walkout of 1969. I want to personally thank those who organized and showed up for this event. Your solidarity is important to the community, and it is important for us to pause, remember our past and look to our future as we continue the search for wisdom. Know that your professional contributions continue to improve the lives of many and has an impact that is enduring these 50 years later.

It is also important to acknowledge that we have a community of talented and supportive faculty and staff who are dedicated to the accomplishments of all students. This term, members of our faculty and staff were part of an incredible visit from Bernie Foster, publisher, and Jerry Foster, advertising manager, of The Skanner News. They were able to tour campus, visit our cultural resource centers and meet with President Ray and other senior leadership. We thank them for their generosity and gifts to support OSU students and the Distinguished Scholars Initiative. I would also like to thank the many faculty, staff and students across campus who served this year on the President and Provost’s Leadership Council and especially those who took the time to present to this committee. Your dedication and commitment to understand the institution’s data and to tell the unique story of the experiences of underrepresented populations at OSU is inspiring.

NCORE, the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in American Higher Education, was held the last week of May, and for the first time in its history in Portland. Oregon State University was represented at the conference with eight presentations featuring 14 OSU students, faculty and staff; three poster presentations and an engagement presentation. Congratulations to everyone who presented this year. Additionally, this fall at the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities 33rd Annual Conference in Chicago, OSU students, faculty and staff have two presentations. The first is entitled “Latinx Student Research Initiatives at a R1 Associate Member Institution” and the second is entitled “Leveraging Partnerships to Support Undocumented Students on Your Campus.”

This term also saw the launch of enhanced support services to help Native American students earn degrees online. We listened to our tribal elders and learned from them the degree offerings that are most relevant to meeting the strategic needs of our Native American communities. Thus, this initiative is designed to help Native American students navigate the higher education landscape with relevant degree offerings. Working with Ecampus, we know this initiative will have a positive impact on the lives of Oregon tribe members.
We recently learned that the black first-to-second year cohort retention average has increased from 69.4% over the last three years to 78.4%. The six-year graduation rate rose from 47.5% to 56.3%, and applications to OSU by prospective black first-year students increased 33% from fall 2018 to fall 2019. Thank you to the many individuals who go above and beyond to support black student success at OSU and who travel to engage with parents and students in Portland. Your efforts and commitment will further contribute to the success of black students at OSU. Our community of students, faculty and staff continue to impress me every day with the ways in which they share their gifts with those who need them. For this I am humbled and immensely grateful.

Finally, I hope you will join the Office of Institutional Diversity for the State of Diversity at Oregon State Address and Reception on Wednesday, June 5, from 4 to 5:30 p.m. in the MU Ballroom. We will highlight the incredible work underway across the university to advance inclusive excellence and discuss progress made on Oregon State’s Diversity Strategic Plan. If you are not able to attend in person, the event will be livestreamed and recorded. Please visit the event page for details and to register, and for livestream information.

Sincerely,
Charlene Alexander
Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer

ON THE COVER: More than 150 Oregon State faculty, staff and students participated in a recreation of the historic Black Student Union walkout on May 21. The 1969 protest led to the creation of the Educational Opportunities Program and the Lonnie B. Harris Black Cultural Center.

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A mobile display on student activism pops up on the plaza between the Memorial Union and the Student Experience Center. The Honors College winter term book club discusses “So You Want to Talk About Race.” A graduate class tackles the process of building an inclusive, equitable, respectful and welcoming environment for learning mathematics.

These are just three examples of “We Have Work to Do” in action. The Office of Institutional Diversity’s campaign to build a more inclusive community at Oregon State University can use a variety of methods — and that’s just as OID intended.

“It’s been really exciting, watching the campaign take on a life of its own in the way that colleges and units have picked it up in different ways,” says Scott Vignos, assistant vice president for strategic diversity initiatives. “We’ll present to a group on the campaign, and they’ll figure out what it means to them.”

For instance, the pop-up exhibit came out of a collaboration between OID, the Office of Student Life, the School of History, Philosophy and Religion and the OSU Libraries’ Multicultural Archives. Posters showcased examples of student activism at Oregon State, including the Black Student Union walkout in
1969, the African Students’ Association anti-apartheid movement in the early 1980s, the declaration of Indigenous Peoples’ Day in Corvallis and the students of color speak out, both of which happened in 2015. The exhibit was also displayed in residence halls, dining centers, the Native American Longhouse Eena Haws and elsewhere on campus, and there are plans to add more posters.

Vignos emphasizes that “diversity work doesn’t live in one place” and encourages everyone to think about what they can do within their sphere of influence. OID offers a “We Have Work to Do” engagement guide to get started.

Faculty, for example, can change their learning environments. Mathematics professor Vrushali Bokil developed a graduate course for teaching math in a more equitable and inclusive way. That could include the choice of textbook and examples used in class, such as theories developed by mathematicians of color and women.

“I've been really impressed with our faculty and how willing they are to think about the way they teach the materials and trying to find ways to become more culturally responsive to the diverse learners who come here,” Vignos says.

As “We Have Work to Do” continues, the Office of Institutional Diversity team keeps finding opportunities for conversations across the university. Vignos has spoken about effective bias intervention with students in the Carlson College of Veterinary Medicine and staff in the Valley Library, among other departments. OID is launching an online diversity education module that will be available to all faculty and staff. There are also plans to start a podcast series, and Vignos already has a list of potential topics and guests.

“I’m deeply appreciative for the amount of buy-in and time that we’ve been given,” he says. “I think as we continue to reach into new areas of the university and find new audiences, the capacity for the campaign to create change will continue to grow.”

Stay tuned. There’s more work to be done.

Creating Change and Community: Histories of Activism at OSU

This exhibit highlights historical moments of student activism at Oregon State University. Each panel includes background information, an overview of strategies used, and the impact and result of the student activism.
Breaking Barriers awards recognize women helping women.

Oregon State’s second annual Breaking Barriers celebration highlights the impacts women make across campus and in the community through mentoring, research and cultural connections.

Presented by the President’s Commission on the Status of Women, the Office of the Provost and the Office of Institutional Diversity, the awards recognize women who pave the way to help other women through research or advocacy, says Brandi Douglas, assistant director of outreach in the Office of Institutional Diversity.

“These women are teaching and mentoring in ways that allow women to thrive,” Douglas says.

The awards were given at a ceremony on April 22 that included a keynote address by Fay Stetz-Waters, director of civil rights for the Oregon Department of Justice. There are four categories: education, research, community builder and the Harriet “Hattie” Redmond award, which recognizes an agent of change in service of racial justice and gender equity. Faculty women who have completed the promotion and tenure process are also recognized.
The 2019 honorees:

**Breaking Barriers in Education:** Mei-Ching Lien. Lien, a professor in the School of Psychological Science in the College of Liberal Arts, created an extensive mentoring program for undergraduate students. The results include peer-reviewed publications with 42 students, 38 presenters at Celebrating Undergraduate Excellence, and 69 presenters at national and international conferences. In addition, numerous more mentees have continued their education to pursue advanced degrees.

**Breaking Barriers in Research:** Melissa Cheyney, Marit Bovbjerg and Holly Horan. Cheyney is an associate professor of anthropology in the College of Liberal Arts; Bovbjerg is a clinical assistant professor of epidemiology in the School of Biological and Population Health Sciences in the College of Public Health and Human Sciences; and Horan is a doctoral candidate in biocultural anthropology in the College of Liberal Arts. Seeking to end racial and socio-economic disparities in childbirth, the research team established the Community Doula Program to train culturally and socially matched doulas to be state-registered.

**Community Builder Award:** Sandy Goeke. A community partner and alumna of the College of Public Health and Human Sciences, Goeke started a nonprofit organization, the International Moms Group, pairing international and domestic mothers living in Corvallis to inspire friendship, language learning and cross-cultural interaction.

**Harriet “Hattie” Redmond Award:** Adejoke Omolayo Babatunde. Babatunde is an outreach coordinator for the OSU Extension Service and the College of Public Health and Human Sciences. Her initiative, My Hair, My Health PDX, brings community partners together to address health disparities among African American women. Now in its second year, the one-day event includes workshops, dancing, vendors, food tasting and other resources that encourage healthy hair, eating and active living.
Social justice is all around us. Use it to open dialogue, and drive change.

From the movies we watch to the books we read, societal issues present themselves everywhere.

Brandi Douglas, assistant director of outreach in the Office of Institutional Diversity, is exploring this connection and how it inspires us to start conversations. Read on to learn more about this and her vision for Oregon State’s future.

Q: What brought you to Oregon State?
A: I came to Oregon State to be a resident director with University Housing & Dining Services (UHDS) in July of 2011. I’ve worked in housing at other universities. When I finished my master’s program at UMass-Amherst, I wasn’t tired of the job just yet so I came out to Oregon State. I’d never been to the Pacific Northwest and I wanted to check it out.

Q: What are your responsibilities as assistant director of outreach?
A: My responsibilities can be sectioned into three categories:

1. Bias response: I co-lead the bias response team and coordinate the response protocol for all incident reports.

2. Diversity and social justice education: I facilitate, either with colleagues or alone, diversity and social justice educational workshops across the university. Currently, I organize workshops for student leaders, dialogue opportunities for the Board of Trustees, and I am lead coordinator for the Dialogue Facilitation Lab.

3. Signature events: I head the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Planning Committee. I’m also the lead coordinator for the We Have Work to Do Campaign, Breaking Barriers Ceremony and other events.

Q: Could you describe your social justice work thus far, including the development of a curriculum?
A: In my seven years at OSU, I have facilitated large dialogues, supervised (and hopefully mentored) student leaders and activists who have a strong passion in social justice. I have created/co-created and implemented social justice education-based curriculum for the following:

- Halsell Hall Gender Inclusive Programming
- Foundations of Social Justice Leadership – a course designed for social justice student leaders
- Faculty and staff intergroup dialogue
- Building and Place Name Community Engagement Workshops
• Board of Trustees and student leader dialogues
• Bias intervention training
• Dialogue Facilitation Lab

Q: What does an inclusive university look like? And how can we get there?

A: What it looks like and how we get there are not always in the same universe. An inclusive university is one that recognizes the value of every single member of the community and does their all to welcome them. This looks like giving opportunities to develop, grow and cultivate understanding and appreciating the identities that we all bring with us into this community.

How we get there is naming that we have created barriers, consciously and unconsciously, for people from communities who are academically called underrepresented. Once we have named this, we need to modify our approach. We do this by asking our students, faculty and staff from target social identities, globally and domestically, questions in which the answer will be difficult to hear. Such as, what has been your experience here? What barriers have we created that stand in the way of feeling welcomed? Lastly, we need to commit to this inquiry and subsequent modification. It’s not a one and done. It’s something we do consistently. It’s a process and a goal.

Q: Could you describe your interest in the exploration and connection of social justice through art forms like science fiction and fantasy books, television and movies?

A: Social justice is like the Force...it is all around you. Sci-fi and fantasy at first glance could seem to have no connection to social justice. Especially since the majority of television and movies do not feature people with a lot of melanin. However, it’s the content that matters.

The majority of sci-fi imagines the future of our planet, and those with good imaginations are able to weave in the societal issues that we’re facing today into those worlds. Star Trek is probably one of the best examples of this. Just about every episode no matter if it’s from “The Next Generation” or its latest endeavor, “Discovery”, social issues are a part of the plot. Doctor Who also does a good job of weaving social issues into their storyline. When one is imagining other worlds, you’re imagining new civilizations with a new species and within that species there are differences. These differences could be in race or class or gender; sci-fi and fantasy bring this up big time (Lord of the Rings anyone?). However, that is just the connection to social justice and the issues it raises. The exploration is different. The exploration comes predominately from authors of color like Octavia Butler and Nnedi Okorafor who write through the lens of their identities and write themselves into these worlds. I would recommend the book “Octavia’s Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements” to everyone.

Q: What do you envision for the future of OSU, as it relates to social justice?

A: I envision a future where more and more members of the community have the skills, capacity and courage to have the difficult conversations we need to have with each other. We need to build a better understanding of what dialogue will do. Dialogue, at its core, creates moments of conflict. In those moments of conflict we must listen out of curiosity, recognition and acknowledgment. Dialogue is not asking you to agree. Dialogue is asking you to hold up two truths that are different and asking you to see them both as valid.

Now, I’m not talking about members of our global community who don’t believe oppression or certain groups of people shouldn’t exist. Dialogue cannot help them. No, I am talking about all of the members in the middle who believe there is a way to create a better world for everyone. It’s those people that need to come to dialogue, create a space where we stay in those tough, thought-provoking and emotionally raw conversations, come to a moment where they can see the truths represented as valid and we can put that energy into an action. When that happens, change can and does occur. Sometimes it’s very small and other times it’s earth-shattering — but it happens together. That future for OSU is not as close as I would like it to be. But as long as I am here, that’s what I am going to strive to accomplish.
Asian and Pacific Islander students are a diverse and unique group. From a statistical standpoint, they represent both the highest and lowest ends of educational attainment, according to Reagan Le, assistant director for the Asian & Pacific Cultural Center and director of Diversity & Cultural Engagement at Oregon State.

That’s despite the stereotype that Asian and Pacific Islander students are expected to do well academically. Le believes that myth can cause students to struggle because they don’t receive the resources they need.

“Stereotypes hurt,” he says.

The diversity of Asian and Pacific Islander students makes it hard to represent them in a single space. The Asian & Pacific Cultural Center serves as a resource for students, staff and the community to engage on campus and online. Now, a new alumni group is forming to build on these experiences and foster a greater sense of belonging.

The Oregon State Alumni Association and the Asian & Pacific Cultural Center are building the foundation for this new group, yet to be named, that will launch later this summer and begin offering opportunities to connect starting in fall 2019.

Le says Oregon’s Asian and Pacific Islander community is relatively small. So Oregon State and the University of Oregon formed a combined alumni group to socialize. That group intends to keep meeting.

The new Oregon State alumni group will focus on mentoring, professional development and social activities, building on the resources already available through the cultural center’s 17 different groups, according to Le.

Those include a podcast, Making Waves, a storytelling anthology and social media groups.

“We want to create a sense of community for those who belong or identify as Asian and Pacific Islander,” Le says.

Suzanne Flores Phillips, director of alumni diversity and affinity groups for the OSU Alumni Association, says the new group started by talking to more than 30 alumni about their hopes and dreams. A smaller group is working on final details.

“This alumni community is just beginning to form,” Flores Phillips says. “They are going to reach out to all Asian and Pacific Islander alumni to join and promote it.”
Clau'di'a Hilderbrand thinks so. The computer science graduate student in the College of Engineering is working with other students and Oregon State faculty and staff to remove biases in the university's IT infrastructure and websites.

These biases arise when websites aren't flexible enough to support the different ways people problem-solve. Further, because of individual differences in the ways men and women problem-solve, the biases affect more women than men. Thanks to a method called the Gender Inclusiveness Magnifier, also known as GenderMag, these biases are now easier to identify.

GenderMag is a method for web and IT professionals. It includes three personas to represent ranges of differences in how people interact with technology. Web professionals choose one of the personas to find problems stemming from how different people interact with the same technology. For example, using GenderMag for a scenario like adding a friend on Facebook, the web professionals may realize that one type of user may have more trouble with the “friend” button due to the website layout, while another finds it easy to follow.

This reveals how the website is inadvertently keeping some people out of the loop.

“This method is eye-opening for developers and others involved in the design of their product,” Hilderbrand says. “They realize they've been excluding a subset of the population that doesn’t match their way of thinking.”

Hilderbrand's graduate work revolves around bringing this method to software development teams. Of everything she's discovered so far, Hilderbrand says one of the most fascinating revelations was that teams have adopted the practice of displaying these personas throughout the office and keeping them in conversation, as a constant reminder to build gender inclusive content.

Following graduation, Hilderbrand's work in gender inclusivity will continue. She plans to become a user experience designer and create new interfaces that accommodate all groups of people.

Hilderbrand's research helps us understand how biases influence and impact our daily lives. Better yet, she's working to eliminate those biases.

Oregon State extends an informal welcome at Good in the Hood.

As a way to build connections with Portland's black community, Oregon State is participating in the Good in the Hood parade for the third year on June 22.

By joining in the multicultural event, the university offers a friendly and informal greeting to prospective students and their families. It's one of many strategies Oregon State uses to reach the African American community to advance student access and success, according to Allison Davis-White Eyes, director of community diversity relations.

“We utilize the event to show our solidarity,” says Davis-White Eyes.

The parade begins at 11 a.m. near Legacy Emanuel Medical Center at the corner of North Williams and North Russell streets in Portland.

The Good in the Hood festival, featuring music, arts and food, is held June 21-23, at King School Park on Northeast Sixth Avenue and Humboldt Street. For more information, visit goodnthehood.org.
Gertrude Villaverde ’19 knew she wanted to be an engineer and chose OSU-Cascades for its signature program in energy systems engineering. The multidisciplinary program fit her interest in sustainability and addressing climate change. Originally from the Philippines and raised in Los Angeles, Gertrude moved to Bend to join the first freshman class when OSU-Cascades expanded to a four-year university in 2015.
Two years later, when the Honors College was added, Gertrude joined its initial cohort and is one of the first OSU-Cascades admitted students to graduate with the Honors Baccalaureate.

The main attraction for Gertrude was the honors thesis. It provided opportunity to complete in-depth research, write and present at a level that's more typical for graduate school. “The thesis alone made it worth it,” she says, “just the whole process of research, taking different stakeholders into account and finding solutions.”

But her experience in the Honors College and OSU-Cascades sent Gertrude in unexpected directions as well. She took a variety of classes outside her major, studying the traditional ecological knowledge of Native Americans and learning about the chemistry of pharmaceuticals in a medicinal molecules class. There were also courses to explore her creative side outside the STEM fields, like an Honors College field trip course with students from Corvallis writing about the plays she saw at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland.

“Not only did I learn a lot more, I think it made my degree program more satisfying,” she says.

Gertrude had already earned a job as a research assistant in Associate Professor Chris Hagen's lab when she asked him to be her thesis mentor. And he had a project for her: an international student design contest to develop hydrogen-based energy systems.

Gertrude and her team came up with an ingenious solution that takes advantage of excess renewable energy, meets high-energy demand periods and reduces carbon dioxide emissions. Their proposal won third place against 34 teams from around the world.

The honors thesis was not Gertrude's only opportunity to apply energy systems engineering in the real world. Like many College of Engineering students, she completed a full-time, six-month internship through the Multiple Engineering Cooperative Program. That internship led to a full-time job offer, at Energy 350 in Portland. Her internship and thesis experience — conducting extensive research and reporting on it effectively in a short amount of time — helped her land this job and will be a major portion of her work.

“They liked the way we worked with each other and how quickly the project was implemented,” Gertrude says. “They’ve been in touch since, and now I’m going to work for them.”

Both the Oregon State Honors College and OSU-Cascades are known for being close and supportive communities, and Gertrude found they more than lived up to their reputations.

“You know every single one of your professors, and every single one of your professors knows you,” she says. “You get to talk to them, walk into their office, ask questions, get advice and share accomplishments. Everyone is very supportive here, from the professors to the students. I don’t know if I would have gotten this far without my colleagues.”

The Honors College and the honors thesis “may seem daunting, but if you’re aiming for excellence, this is the way to go,” Gertrude says. “You will get more than you imagined out of this.”

She has.
LGBTQ+ community speaks in its own voice at OSU’s Queer Film Festival.

The annual festival — which had its fifth showing in February — celebrates all life experiences. It provides an avenue to speak about them in a way the mainstream media can’t — or won’t. And it encourages filmgoers to connect and start their own dialogues.

This year’s event — organized by OSU assistant professor Juan Trujillo and artist Samuel Lora — featured a range of 50+ short films from animation to experimental work to narrative shorts and music videos, and topics like youth living in queer families and the joys and challenges of personal relationships. It also serves as a vital outlet for LGBTQ+ filmmakers as one of the few festivals that only accepts work from people who identify as queer or transgender.

Juan Trujillo, assistant professor of linguistics in the College of Liberal Arts, adds that submissions from people of color are prioritized, as their work can be overlooked in larger festivals.

In addition to creating opportunity, the festival also builds community. At this year’s event, a record number of film directors arrived for showings and OSU exchange student Dongning Pu debuted his first piece — about the identities U.S. gay culture has projected on him.

“It was beautiful to feel the energy and connection in the room as we spoke with the audience after each screening as well as in our interactions outside the auditorium,” Trujillo says. “Not only have we strengthened the sense of community among Corvallis locals, we have extended that community well beyond Oregon’s borders.”

Acceptance and understanding start with conversation. And the Queer Film Festival has not only opened doors — it has opened minds.
The combined cost of raising a family and paying college tuition can add up fast. That’s why parents like Sione Filimoehala found Oregon State’s family housing option essential to completing his bachelor’s degree in 2014 and master’s in 2017.

Filimoehala, who attended OSU while caring for his daughter, says it not only made college more affordable, but also provided a great environment — including activities and field trips — for his daughter to grow up in.

“She still thinks fondly of it,” he says.

In part because Filimoehala felt so supported while a student, he works to make sure other students feel supported as well.

As a member of the Office of Institutional Diversity’s Board of Visitors, he speaks on behalf of nontraditional and underrepresented students to ensure programs like family housing continue to exist.

And he’s helping current and future students in his day job, too.

As budget and research director for the Oregon Public Universities Council of Presidents, Filimoehala analyzes legislative policies — like funding — that impact higher education throughout Oregon.

Filimoehala emphasizes part of his role is to reassure students that their voices matter. He encourages them to share their stories during presentations to the legislature because every student in every situation deserves to be heard.

“The benefit of working with universities is that we are working to lift as many people up as we can,” Filimoehala says. “And we have no shortage of success.”
Social Impact Lab extends vision for change beyond campus.

Education plays a powerful role in sparking social change. But its influence is limited when a vision for diversity, equity and inclusion is shared only on campus.

So Oregon State is making sure its vision goes farther. The new Social Impact Lab is a collaboration with community organizations, local governments, business and industry partners in the mid-Willamette Valley.

“The vision behind the Social Impact Lab is to create actively engaged partners willing to leverage all of our talents toward a greater social good,” says Allison Davis-White Eyes, director of community diversity relations at Oregon State.

In February, the Office of Institutional Diversity, in partnership with the United Way, hosted more than 120 people, including faculty and community members from Benton, Linn and Lincoln counties. Their purpose was to advance community engagement through an equity lens, which emphasizes fairness and making sure all people get access to the same opportunities.

The event featured TED-style talks highlighting the unique partnerships Oregon State has in the three-county area, followed by roundtable discussions where participants talked about what partnerships they would like to see the university pursue and where there is room to grow.

“We received excellent feedback and data,” Davis-White Eyes says.

Already, the qualitative data produced has been used to advance Oregon State’s Carnegie Reclassification, the framework for classifying colleges and universities for educational and research purposes. Oregon State is the only university in Oregon to have earned both Carnegie Classifications for Highest Research Activity and Community Engagement.

The United Way has been a key stakeholder so far, aligning its strategic planning to leverage its partnership with Oregon State. Other community organizations involved include the Corvallis/Albany branch of the NAACP, the Multicultural Literacy Center, Hewlett Packard Global Diversity and Inclusion, as well as representatives of county governments.

On campus, the Engaged Scholarship Cluster, sponsored by the Center for the Humanities and University Outreach and Engagement, is a partner. Additionally, several academic, research and outreach units are involved, including the College of Public Health and Human Sciences and Oregon Sea Grant. Participants will continue to meet in smaller groups to identify shared goals, find opportunities to work together and share talent between organizations.

Because the work of advancing equity may start on campus. But it doesn’t end here.