GREETINGS
OSU community,

Who would have thought that just a few months ago our lives — educationally, socially and economically — would be upended in such a significant fashion by COVID-19?

We have taken several steps to mitigate the spread of this virus, taking courses, meetings and events online or virtually, yet our mission remains the same. As an institution, that mission is to continue to provide an exceptional learning environment for all students and to ensure the health and well-being of all members of our community. As the Office of Institutional Diversity, we understand that our collective success is dependent on, and tied directly to, how well it values, engages and includes the rich diversity of all community members.

While we continue to examine plausible scenarios and plan for the reopening of the university, there is much to be learned from a diversity and equity lens. This pandemic has brought out the best and the worst of us. Examples of micro and macro aggressions abound. Ignorance persists as Asian Americans and international students of Asian descent are harassed on the street, in chat rooms and in other online environments. These incidents are despicable and will not be tolerated. Additionally, we witness the disproportional effects of this virus to communities of color nationally and in the state of Oregon. How we respond, recover and continue to thrive depends on the steps we take now as a community, given that a second wave of the virus is anticipated.

Like you, staff in the Office of Institutional Diversity are working from the safety of our homes. We are in constant contact with each other, building support and insisting that our university response to this crisis be humane, comprehensive and keeps the needs of all staff and students at the center of these conversations. We will continue to act for the benefit of all in a culturally responsive fashion.

The Office of Institutional Diversity invited partners from around the university to join us in reflecting on a set of guiding principles. These principles, found on the OID website, are drawn from a set of foundational statements created by the Council of Chief Diversity Officers at the University of California. They have been enhanced by Oregon State stakeholders and are used with permission of our University of California colleagues.

OID is coordinating a series of webinars in the coming weeks, focused on our “We Have Work to Do” campaign and strategies for supporting these principles. We hope you can participate.

We know that in the days to come we will have to make hard choices, but those choices must reflect the mission and values of the university. Choices that must be sensitive to the impacts to diverse communities, that call for creativity, innovation and collaboration.

Be well and be safe.
Charlene Alexander
Vice President and
Chief Diversity Officer
Oregon State’s Diversity Research Luncheon brought university scholars together to acknowledge and celebrate each other’s work. See story on page 14.

OID responds to COVID-19
See the full list of guiding principles that Oregon State and the Office of Institutional Diversity have adopted to continue supporting diversity, equity and inclusion while adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic:
beav.es/4WB

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ON THE COVER:
OSU alumna and 2019 Oregon Teacher of the Year Keri Pilgrim Ricker uses innovation and problem-solving to guide students toward health care careers through the Health Services Pathway program at Churchill High School in Eugene.
Oregon State University was founded on the premise that everyone, regardless of social status or background, has the right to a college education. More than a century ago, this meant welcoming women and racial minorities to the table. Today, this mission stretches to cover one of Oregon’s most vulnerable populations: the undocumented.

“Undocumented students have to wade through so much confusion and anxiety,” says Raina Martinez, a counselor in the Educational Opportunities Program. “They have dreams of becoming contributing members of society, but face so many challenges along the way. We make sure they know that we care.”

While there is no federal law expressly barring undocumented students from earning a college degree, that doesn’t mean it’s an easy road. According to the United We Dream Network, less than 10% continue to a university after high school. Even fewer graduate.

It’s not a mystery why. Undocumented students aren’t eligible for federal financial aid, and even those who achieve DACA status under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program are limited in what they can secure.

Others struggle for different reasons. Changing, inconsistent federal laws, language barriers and fear of deportation often prevent young immigrants from seeking, being aware of, or knowing how to access the resources legally available to them.

Enter: the Dreaming Beyond Borders Resource Center.

Housed under the Educational Opportunities Program, Dreaming Beyond Borders helps undocumented, DACA-status and mixed-status-family students overcome the hurdles in their path by providing practical support in a safe, welcoming environment when it’s needed most.

“We are a central location where these students can come together to seek support on issues that are unique to them,” says Cynthia Cruz Sanchez, Dreaming Beyond Borders’ campus ambassador. “We speak on their behalf so they feel safe, and we work on equity and inclusion in higher education as new policies arise.”

Working closely with Here to Stay, OSU’s student club for undocumented, DACA-status and mixed-status-family immigrants, and the university’s seven Cultural Resource Centers, Dreaming Beyond Borders provides academic support services, financial aid guidance and a direct connection to immigrant community groups, cultural support...
networks and legal counsel, among other resources. As Dreaming Beyond Borders’ graduate teaching assistant Alin Lazaro-Ortiz put it, “We make sure students aren’t left without answers.”

“These students demonstrate incredible perseverance and resilience,” Cruz Sanchez says. “The least higher education institutions can do is match their level of commitment and work hard to make the system more accessible.”

To learn more about Dreaming Beyond Borders and how you can support the needs of undocumented, DACA-status and mixed-status students in Oregon, visit undocumented.oregonstate.edu.
When Gursharan Kaur first arrived as a freshman on Oregon State University’s campus back in 2014, an early impression struck her clearly: “I don’t see any people of color here.”

Eager to help give underrepresented students more visibility in the community, Kaur founded DamDiverse, an Instagram account dedicated to sharing the stories of students of color in an open-ended, unfiltered way — Humans of New York-style. Her idea really took off — by the fall of 2019, DamDiverse had racked up more than 2,000 followers. But something was missing: an opportunity to connect in person. Meanwhile, across campus, Ali Al Mulla and Mohamed Alsaif — two members of Oregon State’s international student community — were having similar ideas.

Leaning on their extroversion and friendships with peers in the university’s Adventure Leadership Institute, the pair joined forces with Kaur, launching what would become one of OSU’s most successful cross-cultural mingling events to date: DamDiverse Climb Nights.

Bolstered by the fact that rock climbing is undeniably fun, DamDiverse Climb Nights provided international students a clear path to building up their social networks by connecting with peers outside their immediate circles in a low-pressure environment.

“It was so important for us to build trusting relationships with other international students,” Alsaif says. “They felt safe with us, so they were more willing to come to our events.”

And the events had other social benefits too. Not only did the Climb Nights provide a meaningful opportunity for international students to overcome the adjustment fatigue associated with attending college in a new country, they also brought some much-needed diversity into the rock climbing community at Oregon State.

“Rock climbing is a really white-dominated space,” Al Mulla explains. “And if you only see white people in a club, it can be really hard to feel safe attending, unless another person from your group comes with you.” Just one more reason visibility is so important.

Through events like climb nights and storytelling via social media, Kaur believes DamDiverse has made a lasting impact at Oregon State.

“I think we planted seeds and helped bring more representation to campus,” she says. “Students still message me to say that DamDiverse helped them know where to look for other students of color on campus. I’m proud of what we did.”

“To be truly diverse, we need to be inclusive. Everyone is different, but we can still unite as one.”

When students see a need, they fill it — eagerly breaking down barriers to make connections, even if it means scaling a 40-foot climbing wall.
Students who feel seen — and heard — are likely to persist and overcome obstacles on the path to their degree. That’s why Rosado Lausell, recruitment and diversity initiatives coordinator in Oregon State’s College of Engineering, takes time to find out what incoming students really need — considering every background, financial situation and interest. Such attention sets the foundation for their personal and educational success, long before they set foot on campus.

“Our underrepresented students are facing a lot in the college — and everywhere. From financial and food insecurity, to feeling disconnected from the college, and everything in between,” she says.

To show students they belong, it takes a step beyond the welcome mat. Rosado Lausell says many college recruitment programs have the best of intentions, but they often fail to consider how accessible and beneficial they actually are to their audience.

So she implemented a program that allows every student — and their family — to meet with an advisor the first time they visit campus. By the time they leave, their questions are answered, and they are prepared to begin their academic journey.

To solidify that relationship, Rosado Lausell stays connected with her students every step of the way. She coordinates events to build community within the College of Engineering, provides guidance and links them with organizations like the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation, STEM Leaders, College Assistance Migrant Program, the Engineering Student Council, along with scholarships and other programs.

Rosado Lausell is also dedicated to helping students define their own success. She says it is dependent on the way we build our curricula, extracurricular activities and more.

“One thing that I really hope for our students is an environment that authentically nourishes their interests,” she says. “Too often, I see how we push students to pursue goals and paths that WE define for them, instead of allowing students to do it themselves.”

In the future, she plans to expand her outreach efforts to include K-12 schools, particularly in communities that don’t currently have opportunities to learn about engineering.

For Rosado Lausell, nothing is more fulfilling than seeing her students thrive.

“I’m lucky to work in a field that can directly impact students’ lives,” she says. “I don’t often get to see the immediate impact of my work, but just knowing that maybe I helped one student reach their goal is rewarding.”
Equity Matters —
in life and in death.

With dignity and respect — this is the way we all hope to be treated in our lifetimes. But what about after we pass? Who advocates for us when we can no longer speak for ourselves?
As the Office of Institutional Diversity’s Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act coordinator, Dawn Marie Alapisco acts as one such advocate, preserving the rights of Indigenous ancestors temporarily in the care of Oregon State University and ensuring equity prevails, even after death. Keep reading to learn more of her story.

Q: What brought you to Oregon State?  
A: I came to OSU as a student in 2008...more years ago than I really want to admit. At the time, I planned to get my advanced nursing degree, only to fall in love with anthropology. It gave me the opportunity to be as fastidious as I needed to be and gave me enough variability that I knew I wouldn’t get bored. Oregon State was the first place where I felt I belonged. Being both biracial and a dwarf impacted by Autism Spectrum Disorder and skeletal abnormalities, that is truly meaningful in both my personal life and in my professional development.

Q: What are your responsibilities in OID?  
A: As the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act Coordinator, I wear many hats — curator, cultural resources manager, bioarchaeologist and tribal liaison, just to name a few. I primarily work with the 574 federally recognized tribes in the United States to find cultural affiliation for any native human remains and cultural items in OSU’s care. And I try and get them home to their tribes as expeditiously as possible.

Q: Why is this work meaningful to you?  
A: Having access to human remains is a privilege, not a right, and it’s important to remember that the individuals in our labs were once living, breathing humans with lives as complex and dynamic as our own. Unfortunately, right now, there is a large disparity in how bodies from those of European descent are treated after death, compared to how bodies from Indigenous people have been treated. NAGPRA is a first step toward change, in that it gives tribes and lineal descendants rights to their ancestors for the first time. It really comes down to the basic ethos that all humans are equal. My job as the NAGPRA coordinator (and as a human being) is to help make sure that we go beyond equal and reach equitable.

Q: What does an inclusive university look like? And why does this matter?  
A: No one has truly been able to achieve that yet, in my opinion. I know that we are working hard at it, but there are so many things that need to happen, one of which is increasing representation. Incoming students, staff and faculty need to feel like they are not alone. Without diversity and inclusion, we run the risk of a “one-voice narrative.” [In higher education], we need to hold ourselves to a higher standard.

Q: What is something that has always been true about you?  
A: I am blunt and not necessarily always as politic as I should be (my husband says my blunt honesty is both my greatest asset and my worst fault). That said, I have found that in this work, my ethics and mores surrounding the subject of repatriation, inclusivity, transparency and personal responsibility make what might be taken as rude come off as a passionate appeal. I am also a natural caregiver and love music and reading.

How has Oregon State changed since you first started working at the university?  
A: I have seen many changes throughout the time that I have been at OSU, both as a student and as an employee. The Office of Institutional Diversity is a direct result of students of color speaking out, and the administration not just listening but hearing and understanding what was being communicated.

I think in general, the move toward more inclusivity and visibility of nontraditional students (though I think this term is a bit out of touch) has been gaining momentum all around campus, and I could not be happier about that!

What do you envision for the future of Oregon State?  
A: OSU has some very interesting challenges ahead. With the COVID-19 closure, our faculty and staff have been working tirelessly to ensure our students have a world-class OSU education while making sure all of Beaver Nation stays safe. But if I have learned anything in the 12+ years I have been here, it is that Beavers are resilient and creative beings. They always find a way to make good things happen!
WHERE SHE LEADS, MORE WILL FOLLOW.

Completing her Ph.D. at Oregon State, Pipiet Larasatie is determined to make a way that’s open and inclusive for all.

Larasatie, a first-generation college student from Indonesia, came to Oregon State and the College of Forestry because she wanted to study forest products marketing and innovation. She has done that, but she’s also taking the concept of innovation farther.

In a male-dominated field, with fewer students seeking degrees and careers in forestry, Larasatie is focusing her doctoral dissertation on increasing gender diversity in the forest sector — an important step toward modernizing forestry’s image and attracting young talent.

“When it comes to diversity, equity and inclusion in forestry, you need a network,” she says.

It takes a network to build one

A major challenge Larasatie found in her research is encapsulated in the title of one of her studies: “The ‘Catch-22’ of Representation of Women in the Forest Sector.” To attract more women to work in the forest sector, the industry needs to have more women working there.

Larasatie identifies women-specific networks and mentorship as two ways to increase gender diversity. She practices both. Her lab team — a graduate student, a visiting scholar from China and two undergraduates — are all women. Larasatie also created #womeninwoodscience, an online space where women in the industry can build virtual community.

“Increasing gender diversity is no longer a right thing to do, but becomes a smart thing to do,” she says.

A role model has multiple roles

Mentoring for Larasatie extends beyond forestry. Working as a consultant for Oregon State’s Graduate Writing Center, she uses her experience publishing academic articles and writing grant and fellowship applications to help graduate students through the writing process, as well as in navigating their academic life. English is her third language, and Larasatie says it helps her have varied strategies when helping other non-native English speakers with their writing.

Larasatie also calls herself a Ph.D. mom, which is both factual and figurative. She gives credit to Oregon State’s Family Resource Center and student family coordinator Kristi King for providing vital support that has allowed her to pursue her Ph.D. while also caring for her 6-year-old daughter. In her lab and elsewhere in the College of Forestry, Larasatie finds students feel comfortable talking to her and asking for advice about academic and nonacademic life.
Larasaite (far left) helped organize the inaugural meeting of Women in Wood Science and Engineering/Women in Wood Products at Oregon State in 2019. Photo by Michelle Maller

“I am motivated to be a role model,” she says. “I want to convey the message that women do not need to choose between family and reaching their career dreams. They can do both if they want to.”

Her own dream is to become a university professor. Larasatie remains on track to graduate this year despite the disruptions caused by COVID-19. And while the pandemic has frozen the academic job market for now, she remains undeterred. “I love to do research. I love to teach. And at the same time, I love to be a mentor,” she says. Through hard work and a network of mentors, Pipiet Larasatie has learned to excel at all three.

Pipiet Larasatie believes science should be communicated. In addition to her published research (below), forest sector website and #womeninwoodscience on social media, she has appeared on KBVR-TV’s Spotlight program and the Inspiration Dissemination podcast series on KBVR-FM.

• The “Catch-22” of Representation of Women in the Forest Sector: The Perspective of Student Leaders in Top Global Forestry Universities
• From Nude Calendars to Tractor Calendars: The Perspectives of Female Executives on Gender Aspects in the North American and Nordic Forest Industries
• What Does the Public Believe about Tall Wood Buildings? An Exploratory Study in the U.S. Pacific Northwest
• Recent Developments in Global Cross-Laminated Timber (CLT) Market
OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The 10th Associated Students of Oregon State University Congress passed JB10.32, a bill that requires the following statement to be presented at the beginning of every ASOSU event:

*Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon, is located within the traditional homelands of the Marys River or Ampinefu Band of Kalapuya. Following the Willamette Valley Treaty of 1855, Kalapuya people were forcibly removed to reservations in Western Oregon. Today, living descendants of these people are a part of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Community of Oregon (grandronde.org) and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians (ctsi.nsn.us).*

Multiple Oregon State departments, including the Board of Trustees, have adopted the land acknowledgement. The trustees, for example, incorporate it into the beginning of each regular board meeting and at the first committee meeting of the day. Many OSU staff and faculty have also added the land acknowledgement to their email signatures.

This statement is accessible to everyone and available at asosu.oregonstate.edu/land-rec.
Ideas and initiatives have deeper meaning when they’re acted upon. That’s why Oregon State’s Indigenous community is showing the vital importance of presenting land acknowledgements — statements that honor the present and past history of the land we reside on — in an authentic way.

“We’re not just a people of the past,” says Luhui Whitebear, assistant director of Oregon State’s Native American Longhouse Eena Haws and a member of the Coastal Band Chumash. Whitebear emphasizes that Indigenous people are still here and are active contributors to the Oregon State and Corvallis communities. The land acknowledgement itself was built on work initiated by the grassroots efforts of Indigenous faculty, staff and students.

It’s initiatives like the land acknowledgement that challenge us to think in a new way and educate ourselves about the words we say. When delivering a land acknowledgement before a meeting or event, Whitebear says we must view it as more than just a diversity check box. By doing our research — determining whose ancestral territory we’re on, learning about the tribe’s history and what they are doing today — it will show we care about our shared histories, our present actions and building a better future.

And our support for Indigenous people goes beyond the land acknowledgement itself. It includes taking time to learn about Indigenous land, languages and treaties and truly empathizing with the effects of colonization. It means getting involved with Oregon State’s Native American Longhouse Eena Haws: attending a powwow or salmon bake, speaking with Indigenous students and faculty or participating in a virtual lecture or discussion.

We can’t change the past, but we have the power to learn from it — and from one another. Together we can do better.

DISCOVER MORE ABOUT NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE:
- USDAC Honor Native Lands Guide
- Native land, languages and treaties
- Tribes and Indigenous history of Oregon
- Territorial acknowledgements and beyond
- OSU Institutional Diversity — We Are All Treaty People
Researchers hold the key to answering complex questions about our humanity. If we take the time to learn from them, we can advance our shared understanding of who we are as individuals. And it starts with conversation. The Diversity Research Luncheon generated dialogue among members of the Oregon State community — while recognizing researchers with recently published articles, manuscripts, chapters and books on topics related to diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice. The event was created through a collaboration between Charlene Alexander, vice president and chief diversity officer in the Office of Institutional Diversity, and the Oregon State Research Office.

“Faculty were extremely excited to share their work with their colleagues,” Alexander says. “I found that those engaged in diversity research were inspired by the research happening across the university and found ways to collaborate on projects with shared interest.”

Publications included topics like public health, diversity in higher education, STEM, challenges and opportunities for women in leadership and others.

During the event, Alexander, Interim Vice President for Research Irem Tumer and Provost Ed Feser spoke to 60 attendees about the vital importance of their work and the impact it will make on our future.

Before next year’s event, Alexander plans to create a video resource for those who are unable to attend the event in person — including a snippet of each recognized faculty member and their research focus. In addition, she is exploring options to include graduate students in the event.

Change is rooted in collaboration and understanding. Events like the Diversity Research Luncheon get us talking.
Everyone needs a place that brings them comfort and inspiration. For many, the Pacific Islander Student Alliance Conference is that place. Run and founded by students, PISACON brings people together from colleges and universities throughout Oregon and Washington to discuss issues facing the future of Pacific Islander communities.

According to Oregon State student and PISACON20 co-chair Ruta Faifaiese, “PISACON is a space where Pacific Islander/Indigenous Pacific students and staff share community and empower one another to navigate a system that wasn’t built for us. It means we finally have the opportunity to connect as people and to learn from each other’s individual experiences.”

Hosted for the first time at Oregon State University in March, this year’s conference centered around identity and climate change, a topic that poses distinct threats for Pacific Islanders. Director of Diversity & Cultural Engagement Reagan Le says the impacts of climate change — rising sea levels, potential displacement and increased ocean pollution — are not being prioritized, especially for Pacific Islanders. And the same goes for supporting and elevating their personal narratives.

“This idea often gets lost within the Asian and Pacific Island American diaspora,” he says. “We need to build more awareness about the challenges, inequities and injustices Pacific Islanders face.”

Several PISACON20 presenters tackled the concepts of climate change and identity through discussions on the impacts of colonialism on mental health, the power of storytelling in the fight against climate change, disrupting white supremacy, and the intersections between racism, classism and climate change, among others.

The most beneficial aspect of the conference — especially for students like Faifaiese — was the chance to build meaningful relationships with students from other schools.

“To be in a space with people who look like me and relate to me is something that lacks at most of our institutions, so PISACON allows us to decolonize the space just by being who we are and embracing each other,” she says.

Le adds that hosting on campus gave Oregon State a unique experience to share the work the university is doing to better serve Pacific Islander students. This includes the creation of Pacific Islander studies, the munk-skukum Indigenous Living-Learning Community, Asian & Pacific Cultural Center, Native American Longhouse Eena Haws, Pacific Islander Club and Hui-O-Hawaii Club.

These changes, along with PISACON, are a step toward making Pacific Islander students feel at home here. But we have more work to do.
Reshaping public safety with community input.

Oregon State University will establish an in-house police department beginning July 1, the result of a unanimous vote by the Board of Trustees at its April 3 meeting.

The decision was informed by four community listening sessions in March and from work by the university’s Public Safety Advisory Committee. Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer Charlene Alexander co-chaired the committee with Senior Associate Vice President for Administration Paul Odenthal.

The Office of Institutional Diversity led these sessions, both to gather input and to guide a larger conversation around the university’s values of being a welcoming, inclusive and safe community.

“Our hope was that the framework would be an educational tool to help people see all the numerous and nuanced dimensions of public safety,” says Jeff Kenney, OID director of institutional education for diversity, equity and inclusion. “This is producing insights into the values, expectations and aspirations of the community.”

About 60 to 80 people attended the four sessions. Kenney led off with context about the history of public safety at Oregon State and public safety issues on campuses nationwide. Attendees then spent an hour in guided discussions in randomly assigned small groups with a facilitator and a notetaker.

Documenting the discussions helped the committee identify factors most relevant to students, faculty and staff, as well as areas of conflict. Although an analysis is ongoing, Kenney says the process allowed for conflicting viewpoints to be acknowledged productively.

“One of the most consistent affirmations we got from participants was they didn’t expect to enjoy and feel so connected to other people in a conversation that was actually pretty intimidating,” Kenney says. “They expected it to be more heated. People were very vulnerable, they were passionate, they shared intense emotion.”

For example, in one group, the presence of uniformed police officers was highly unsettling for some but reassuring for others. Attendees also mentioned negative encounters they’ve witnessed between police and students of color or LGBTQ students.

Kenney identifies hiring and training as priorities moving forward. There is a desire for more gender, racial and ethnic diversity among new hires, with training to include working with trauma survivors, de-escalation techniques and community policing.

“There’s a desire for a relationship with public safety personnel that is caring, compassionate and humanistic,” Kenney says. “We’re also seeing a desire for increased transparency in public safety administration and greater community engagement.”

The Office of Institutional Diversity already works with the Oregon State Department of Public Safety, which is separate from a licensed, armed law enforcement agency like the new university police department. OID facilitated six hours of training for all DPS staff covering power, privilege and oppression and how those issues connect to experiences marginalized groups have with public safety personnel. The training also covered implicit bias and different ways officers can respond to bias incidents on campus.

Kenney hopes to continue regular conversations between OID and the university’s public safety professionals.

“OID is excited to not only continue that existing level of training but respond to any additional training requests that might come as a result of this process,” he says. “We are ready to provide as much of an educational experience as they desire.”