

PCC Sustainability, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice and Accessibility Commitment

We are dedicated to building a more inclusive sustainability movement at Portland Community College by living our values. We will continue to improve PCC's resilience through a focus on frontline and vulnerable communities. We will improve by leading with hope and continuing to use self-reflection and integrated learning strategies to address issues of racism, discrimination and other forms of bias. We aim to improve communications with and within the PCC community so that we can continuously improve best practices around learning, accountability and transparency. We can better support equitable student success is by learning more about other college resources (such as academic advising, workforce development, the [DREAMers Resource Center](#), the [PCC Clear Clinic](#), the [PCC Office of International Student Services](#), [PCC's ESOL programs](#), and more) and through building new community connections outside of PCC particularly with Portland's black and indigenous communities.

Learning how to address issues of racism, discrimination and other forms of bias more broadly is ongoing work. We are dedicated to listening to our community partners, especially from students, staff, and faculty who identify as BIPOC. We will continue to strengthen our approach and develop goals as we work towards dismantling racism in all of its forms and building a sustainable future.”

Background

Portland Community College is “commit[ted] to eliminating bias, particularly anti-Blackness and other forms of racism, and cultural bias (often manifest in socialized whiteness), as factors affecting student success, and to promote learning and work environments that welcome, respect, and value diversity, and are intentionally anti-racist.” ([Board Statement on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.](#))

As PCC Sustainability, we are committed to dismantling racism in all of its forms to build a sustainable future for all. PCC Sustainability is committed to advancing Diversity, Equity, Justice, Inclusion and Accessibility in who we are and what we do in ways that align with our mission to steer and implement PCC's Climate Action Plan and uphold the college's commitment to sustainability. Out of a recognition that the historical legacy and a persistence of discrimination based on difference on our society, primarily focused on race, we seek to affirm the need to “to remove all barriers to learning, participation, and success, while empowering and integrating all impacted by educational policies to give input into them.” ([PCC Board Statement on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.](#))

We work to weave the principles of environmental and climate justice throughout our work at PCC, whether in operations, student engagement, academics or planning. We seek to shed light on the connections between sustainability, education, community and economic

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development, poverty, education, climate change, health and wellness, public safety, anti-displacement work and more. We will address this by working collaboratively and in active partnership within PCC and in the greater community to ensure that we're taking equity-conscious action for a sustainable future through the use of our 5P's tool (Purpose, Power, Place, Process and People).

As the board has stated, "Portland Community College must address and overcome entrenched educational inequities, institutional racism, and white supremacy to provide all students with the support and opportunities they need to succeed. Historic and persistent achievement gaps between White and Black, Indigenous, & People of Color students are unacceptable." We acknowledge that the degradation of the planet has by and large been caused by the past harms of colonial peoples and cultures on the planet; that inequitable distribution of resources within our community college district harms student success; and that full participation by all is a necessary condition for a just, equitable and sustainable future.

Likewise, we recognize that the climate crisis is being experienced first and worst by those who have contributed the least to climate change: the global south, communities of color and the poorest among us. The climate crisis poses significant barriers to opportunity and a sustainable future by magnifying pre-existing inequities. The Portland metro-region, home to the majority of the PCC community, has already seen and will continue to experience the effects of climate change through changing temperature and precipitation levels, reduced access to green space and increased exposure to weather events and natural disasters. While the community as a whole experiences climate change through disasters such as wildfires and power outages, society's frontline and most vulnerable communities experiences are magnified due to racial and economic inequities and by preexisting environmental injustices caused by structural racism. Outcomes for groups facing these same problems will only worsen in the face of rising global temperatures and increasing carbon emissions. As PCC works to address systemic injustice through access to quality education and meeting basic needs, just climate action is a responsibility of PCC.

Values

As PCC's Sustainability we serve by working as an intentional community to bring hope, courage and innovative solutions for a just and sustainable future. We respect, value and celebrate the unique attributes, characteristics and perspectives that make each person who they are and is a fundamental component of crafting solutions for a just and sustainable future. We value all forms of knowledge, lived experience and indigenous wisdom. We invite and welcome the diverse contributions of many voices and experiences, particularly from students

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and those of historically marginalized and underserved communities to solve today's many sustainability challenges. We believe in the power of education as a transformative catalyst for sustainability and justice for current and future generations. We value restorative approaches to justice and seek to uplift and empower our diverse community, ensuring that all individuals have the opportunity to participate and benefit from sustainability education and initiatives.

We aim to share power by taking a consensus based approach to decision making. We use self-reflection, transparency and community engagement to help us grow and remain accountable to the PCC community.

1. **Hope is the best path forward for a sustainable future.** We will inspire our students, faculty by taking innovative action on meeting our sustainability and climate action goals and share our successes with our community.
2. **Planning for the future is critical for student success.** We will work to prepare our grounds, facilities and operations for a changing climate in the knowledge that student, faculty and staff success depends upon a safe and healthy environment for learning and personal growth.
3. **Education is a civil right.** We will apply integrative learning strategies to empower our students, faculty and staff to adapt to and thrive in a changing environment. PCC thrives as a learning community when it draws its strength from the many talents and experiences of those who come here to learn, to teach, to work.
4. **Everything is connected.** We will use our campuses' as living laboratories where students and the community can explore climate and sustainability solutions by supporting faculty use of community based-learning with real-world examples, while providing hands-on learning opportunities that also offer space for self-reflection and research.
5. **Success requires equity.** We will actively use social justice and equity frameworks to center those impacted most in creating climate and sustainability solutions. We value all knowledge, indigenous wisdom and lived experience.
6. **Our responsibility to our community goes beyond the college's doors.** We will root climate action in our home in the Pacific Northwest of the United States, while ensuring that we reduce our global footprint.
7. **We can go further together.** We will work collaboratively with our neighbors and other stakeholders to support leadership development in sustainability and a green workforce. We use self-reflection, transparency and community engagement to help us grow and remain accountable to the PCC community.
8. **A just transition is imperative.** We will address historical injustices with restorative, place-based sustainability efforts that uplift and empower our diverse community. We

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seek to engage and learn from our community stakeholders in our efforts to deliver positive benefits from our sustainability efforts that are healing and restorative.

Work to Date

To date, PCC Sustainability has taken the following actions to incorporate DEIJA into its work. This work has been done with the help of the student-funded Eco Social Justice Grant by faculty, by the Sustainability Office and with the support of the Sustainability Leadership Council as well as other PCC staff and faculty

- Adopted use of land acknowledgement for meetings
- Created an extensive environmental justice training for the community
- Created and delivered annual ecosocial justice trainings for the Sustainability Leadership Council (since 2020)
- Collaborated with Basic Needs, Sustainability and Leadership to host eco-social justice and eco-activism events and speakers
- Created and implemented annual environmental social justice trainings for student leaders
- Collaborated with PCC's Identity Based Equity Centers to host speakers and events
- Incorporated social justice focused activities and themes into Earth Week, the Ecochallenge and other events
- Collaborated with the PCC's former Office of Equity and Inclusion to imbue equity into the 2021 Climate Action Plan. Equity incorporated throughout this plan was done through the request for proposal, design of the mission vision and value statements, development of climate justice training for steering committee members, hiring of an equity specialist for the Climate Action Plan and development of a customized equity tool for climate action planning
- Presented on PCC's Equity Tools for Climate Action across the Sustainability in Higher Education sector at multiple conferences
- Contributed to Second Nature's Climate Justice toolkit;
- Advocating for under-resourced institutions such as HBCUs, MSI's, HSI's and community colleges within the sustainability in higher education community
- Updated the Sustainability Leadership Council charter to include the use of equity tools and support diversity, equity, inclusion, justice and accessibility
- Developed and implemented climate anxiety trainings for PCC Counselors, including trauma informed climate anxiety training

Resources

- [Racial Equity and Social Justice Resources for the Higher Education Community](#)
[Climate Justice Case Studies](#)

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- [The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education's \(AASHE\) Diversity Equity and Inclusion Statement](#)
- [Portland Community College's Board statement on equity, diversity and inclusion](#)
- [People of Color Environmental Groups 2023 Directory](#)