Dear Friends,

On this, the anniversary of the birth of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I pause to reflect upon the inevitable link between education and social justice. I am therefore deeply aware of the widening disparities in educational and economic opportunities and outcomes in the U.S.

Certainly, we are not immune in our own community. The Portland-Metro regional economy is growing, and as it expands, so too do our responsibilities to serve a population facing steeper barriers than ever before.

How do we continue to provide high-quality education that bridges the gaps of increasing poverty, racial and social discrimination, family circumstances, preparation and persistence…and much more?

And, more pointedly, how do we improve the way we work as a college to bridge the barriers our current students are facing now?

I’m calling upon our entire PCC community, and upon our regional community writ large, to join together and focus on making changes that significantly improve opportunity and equitable student success. This work plan is intended to aim our intentions as a college around truly understanding the critical needs of our community while aligning and integrating our mission, strategic plan, resource allocation process, and goals across the college to create profound change.

We are building a bridge together.

This “Bridge to 2020” is in essence the first major step to realizing a collective vision for developing PCC’s next strategic plan in unity. As a large, complex organization that touches thousands of lives a year, we are taking stock of and aligning the incredible work we do every day. This document presents our core strategies over the next three years, and is our way of operationalizing and assessing our focus on greater opportunity and equitable student success.

We all have an important role in this plan. Thank you all for your passion and commitment to PCC.

Regards,

Mark Mitsui
President

15 JANUARY 2018

“I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality, and freedom for their spirits.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Building a Bridge to 2020

Mission
Portland Community College supports student success by delivering access to quality education while advancing economic development and promoting sustainability in a collaborative culture of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Community Picture:
The Portland Metro regional economy is growing in a way that creates a high need for skilled workers, but that displaces low and middle-income families outside of the college’s service area center. Poverty, housing and food insecurity and lack of educational opportunity are on the rise.

PCC Student Picture:
PCC provides quality educational opportunity to thousands of people each year but for every 100 students who attend, only 16 complete a degree or certificate within three years. This rate is below the national community college average and is lower for traditionally underserved populations.

Our Over-Arching Goal:
PCC’s focus is centered on improving opportunity and equitable student success. Externally, our vision is a thriving economy and community; internally, our vision is a diverse student body that persists in and completes their goals.

Bridge to 2020 Vision:
- To increase overall retention, transfer, and completion rates
- To reduce the opportunity gap
- To shorten students’ time to—and the successful completion of—academic credential

Strategies for Building Opportunity and Equitable Student Success through 2020

Externally: Grow PCC’s Role as Opportunity’s College.
- Raising community-responsive educational options.
- Raising community partnerships.
- Raising community resources.

Internally: Say Yes to Equitable Student Success.
Potential focus areas:
- Supporting traditionally underserved populations.
- Teaching and learning excellence.
- Advising re-design and new student onboarding.
- Time to complete a credential and percentage of students transferring.
- Increasing data and technology capacity.
I. UNDERSTANDING THE COMMUNITY PICTURE

A look at the Portland Metro’s regional economy
(A tale of two Portlands)

Our community is at a critical point. The Portland Metro’s regional economy continues to grow alongside jobs, wages, residents, and productivity. Recent economic projections for the region indicate that this growth is likely to continue. This sustained economic and population growth undergirds key challenges for our region. The cost of housing will continue to rise, creating an affordability challenge for our community. Talent is being imported to the region to work in its highest-paying sectors, and these new residents are primarily living in the center of the region. Lower-income families are moving further away from the center and even out of the college’s service area entirely.

Displacement vulnerability in the Portland region is related to educational attainment, income levels, and race and ethnicity. Indeed, communities of color are not sharing equitably in the region’s economic growth, and are at continued risk of displacement, as their neighborhoods gentrify. Given the relationship between education and income, disparities in academic outcomes are ultimately related to disparities in median household incomes in our neighborhoods.

Invariably, these issues affect our current and prospective students, who face myriad barriers to educational attainment; some of these challenges begin at home and are carried through the K-12 system: poverty, food and housing insecurity, and lack of support or resources for educational success. New Majority Students, who comprise a large percentage of our student body, must navigate additional hurdles in their pursuit of education. They are typically over the age of 25, have families to support, and are employed in the workforce in addition to attending classes. They’re all striving for a better life.
II. UNDERSTANDING THE PCC STUDENT EXPERIENCE

A look at the “new majority student” at PCC

Because Portland Community College is part of and inextricably linked to the communities we serve, the challenges and opportunities facing our communities inevitably shape our students’ experience. The fact is that the “new majority” student at PCC is typically older, is working, has a family, is coming from a non-college-going family, most of whom are low-income. The new majority student is increasingly a person of color; English is often not the first language spoken at home. And yet, our systems—and the systems of most colleges—are not set up to focus on the unique challenges of the new majority.

At PCC we are proud to provide critical pathways to higher education for more than 75,000 people each year. But for every 100 students that we serve, only 16 complete a degree or certificate within 3 years.

- 17 students transfer before completing a credential.
- 20 students will still be attending PCC after three years.
- 47 individuals are no longer students ANYWHERE.

These data points suggest that at PCC, almost HALF of new college students will ultimately drop out—and this has fundamental consequences for our students, for their families, and for our community.
III. OUR OVERARCHING GOAL

The bridge to opportunity and equitable student success

The complexity of Portland Community College demands an equally complex set of goals. We have in place important indicators including our strategic plan themes, Key Performance Indicators for accreditation, Board of Directors goals, and institutional messages... but all lead to a crucial focal point: opportunity and equitable student success.

PCC’s focus on equitable student success means creating greater opportunity for individuals and community by preparing ALL of our students for work and life, becoming successful professionals and engaged citizens. “Equitable” success means that, as a college, we pay particular attention to making student pathways to success— to completion, transfer, and retention—more accessible and more culturally responsive. In the context of the greater Portland region, it also means emphasis on pathways for low-income residents to move to the middle class and beyond through education.

We must double down on creating pathways for students who might not otherwise persist to achieve their goals—to earn an advanced degree or credential, to get a good or better job, to provide for their families, to achieve their career goals, to create better futures for their children, to make our community stronger.

“I try to make education a priority and have had to buy books or materials in lieu of food or personal items, and though I do have Medicare through the State of Oregon, there are some expenses (like vision exams, glasses, and physical therapy) that come out of my own pocket.”

Sylvania Campus Student

See Appendix-A2 for full Strategic Diamond goals

Returns to Education Compared to Other Investments

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<th>Investment</th>
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<th>Professional degree</th>
<th>Bachelor’s degree</th>
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Source: The Hamilton Project, Brookings Institution, June 2013
IV. OUR OVERARCHING VISION OF ACHIEVEMENT

What opportunity and equitable student success looks like

In July 2017, EMSI (Economic Modeling Specialists International) conducted an economic impact study, ascertaining the influence that Portland Community College has on our region and state. The results of this study demonstrate that PCC creates value from multiple perspectives. The college benefits local businesses by increasing consumer spending in the region and supplying a steady flow for qualified, trained workers into the workforce. It enriches the lives of students by raising their lifetime earnings and helping them achieve their individual potential. It benefits state and local taxpayers through increased tax receipts across the state and a reduced demand for government-supported social services. Finally, it benefits society as a whole in Oregon by creating a more prosperous economy and generating a variety of savings through the improved lifestyles of students.

By focusing on opportunity and equitable student success, our overarching vision for achievement is to continue to make an ever-greater contribution to the vitality of our community.

Externally, our vision for achievement is that:
• We are raising the earning potential of our students when they emerge from PCC.
• We are benefitting local and state taxpayers with educational resources and a pipeline of engaged, thriving citizens.
• We are benefitting the state of Oregon through improved economic impact.
• We are benefitting local businesses with a central resource for innovation and training.

Internally, our vision for achievement is that we are increasing persistence, completion, and transfer rates for all students and that we are decreasing racial disparities in each of these areas.

Bridge to 2020 Vision:
• To increase overall retention, transfer, and completion rates
• To reduce the opportunity gap
• To shorten students’ time to—and the successful completion of—an academic credential
V. STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING A BRIDGE TO 2020

V.a. External Strategies: Grow PCC’s Role as Opportunity’s College.

For generations, Portland Community College has helped our students achieve a better life. Opportunity encompasses the many pathways that PCC provides to our students and to our communities to succeed and thrive...pathways to opportunity run right through PCC.

The current context calls for a broadening of that pathway, particularly for low and middle-income students. This means calling upon our external partners and thinking strategically about community engagement.

This includes these opportunity-focused strategies:

**Raising community-responsive educational options**
- Engage in strategic enrollment management.
- Identify key regional skills gaps.
- Continue current efforts to enhance internal alignment of various programs.
- Expand access through distance learning options, particularly as students move out of our PCC service region due to displacement.
- Create a “center for opportunity”, helping to move working families out of poverty through education.
- Research the feasibility of expanding work-based learning opportunities such as apprenticeships and paid internships.
- Explore strategies for training and retraining adults who might have some college but no degree.

**Raising community partnerships**
- Establish an “Opportunity Council” of employers, community-based organizations, local governments, K-12 partners, and donors to foster upward mobility for students in our service area.
- Establish a community of color advisory council comprised of Community-Based and other organizations.
- Improve the capacity of PCC to integrate federal benefits for students through partnerships with appropriate state agencies and community-based organizations through the state-funded “Pathway to Opportunity” project.
- Improve success for direct-out-high school and dual credit programs through improved alignment and coordination of strategies with PCC’s K-12 partner districts.
- Research the feasibility of expanding work-based learning opportunities such as apprenticeships and paid internships.

**Raising community resources**
- Engage the community in the PCC Foundation’s comprehensive campaign: “Think PCC First: The Campaign for Opportunity.”
- Continue to elevate the work of Career Pathways, Future Connect, Fostering Success, and similar programs for increased community support.
- Pursue partnerships with the cities in our service area and other government agencies as well as business organizations to enhance opportunities and support for students.
V. STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING A BRIDGE TO 2020 (continued)

V.b. Internal Strategies: Say YESS (Yes to Equitable Student Success).

Portland Community College helps thousands of students achieve their dreams each year...but we must do more as a college community to help people stay in school and graduate. To do this, PCC has joined an organization called “Achieving the Dream.” Achieving the Dream is a national network of community colleges that is focused on encouraging leadership and innovation that helps more students find success – especially low-income students and students of color.

Being a part of a national network means we are part of a reform movement – a movement that is helping colleges improve the ways they do business, both within the classroom and outside the classroom. Each college within the network is encouraged to name their local work as part of the movement. At PCC, we have decided to call this work YESS – which stands for “Yes to Equitable Student Success.”

YESS is the umbrella for PCC’s programs and initiatives that focus on equitable student success. It is not a new program or product; YESS is the frame for our aligned set of strategies for enhancing solutions that help students overcome barriers and succeed equitably.

The college is reviewing student success initiatives currently underway, and working together to establish priorities for future initiatives. Using Critical Race Theory as an overarching lens, YESS includes these possible areas of strategic focus:

- **Support for traditionally underserved populations.**
  Closing the opportunity gap for traditionally underserved populations—particularly low-income students, students of color, and transgendered students.

- **Teaching and learning excellence.**
  Developing best-practices related to teaching and learning, both inside and outside of the classroom.

- **Advising re-design and new student onboarding.**
  Determining how to enhance our advising practices and properly support students from point of application through their first term.

- **Time to complete a credential and percentage of students transferring.**
  Exploring ways to move more students through gateway courses, providing additional support students to reach academic goals more quickly, and implementing strategies to improve transfer rates.

- **Capacity increase for data and technology.**
  Increasing data and technology resources including the creation of new systems to make data more readily available to the college community.

**Vision Statement for YESS**
Recognizing the unique value, perspectives, strengths and challenges of every person who comes to PCC for education, all students will achieve their academic goals through equitable support, quality instruction, clear guidance to persist, and an unwavering commitment to completion shared by the entire college community.