

# APPENDIX J

CRITICAL RACE SPATIAL LENS REPORT

DATE: 8gi`c

**Portland Community College**  
**Facilities Planning Phase 2**  
**Critical Race Spatial Lens Report**  
**April | 2022**

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### **Origin and Purpose**

As part of Portland Community College's (PCC) commitment to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion, Phase 1 of the Facilities Plan highlighted the application of critical race theory (CRT), a theoretical framework used in education to examine racial and social inequities. Winter Term of 2017, a CRT-informed initiative was launched by PCC's Office of Planning and Capital Construction. In partnership with consultant Amara H. Pérez, PhD, CRT was integrated with spatial theory as an equity tool to examine campus space and institutional practices in planning and capital projects.

Foregrounding racial equity and centering the voices of students of color, Pérez developed and delivered a critical race spatial lens (CRSL) and participatory model for engagement. Over the course of nearly five years this approach has been a guide for a number of college planning and capital projects. From pre-design and programming to costing and construction, each project uniquely invited opportunities to explore new possibilities and practices in procurement, design and construction team trainings, college and community engagement, socio-spatial inquiry, and activating campus space in service to district equity initiatives.

An equity-driven, CRT-informed approach combined with participatory engagement that centers the voices of students and communities of color, offers new direction for PCC's Office of Planning and Capital Construction.

### **Equity-Driven**

PCC's mission is to support student success through a collaborative culture of diversity, equity and inclusion. Every five years, college leaders work across the district to develop strategic plans that present innovative and responsive ways to advance PCC's mission. In 2014, the college adopted CRT as a strategic initiative to advance racial and educational equity; it inspired this project. The 2020 plan builds on prior initiatives by drawing attention to students' sense of belonging as a strategic direction in equitable student success. The Office of Planning and Capital Construction is committed to student success and college strategic initiatives through the use and practice of equity-driven approaches to planning and capital project work.

### **Related Links:**

- 2020-2025 Strategic Initiative: <https://www.pcc.edu/strategic-plan/>
- College Equity Plan: <https://www.pcc.edu/equity/planning/equity-plan>

## **CRT-Informed**

Drawing from the theoretical tenets of Pérez's CRSL, space is not neutral. Rather, built environments in educational settings are a dimension of campus racial climate. "Colorblind" planning and design practices work against racial and educational equity goals.

A CRT-informed approach uses storytelling, dialogue, socio-spatial inquiry, and critical analysis to inform project outcomes in service to racial and educational equity. To create welcoming and inclusive educational space for diverse communities, the Office of Planning and Capital Construction seeks to foreground students of color, and other groups most impacted by educational inequity, in planning and capital projects.

### Related Links:

- PCC Equity and Empowerment Guide: <https://www.pcc.edu/equity/wp-content/uploads/sites/159/2021/09/PCC-Equity-Empowerment-Guide-.pdf>
- Colorblind-spots in Campus Design: [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e4303d32e37753d35884c75/t/5f7f85d15b5cf7706812c379/1602192853355/PHEV49N1\\_Viewpoint\\_Colorblind-Spots+in+Campus+Design+%281%29.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e4303d32e37753d35884c75/t/5f7f85d15b5cf7706812c379/1602192853355/PHEV49N1_Viewpoint_Colorblind-Spots+in+Campus+Design+%281%29.pdf)

## **Participatory Engagement and Students of Color-Centered**

Since 2017, PCC has been engaged in the reform of college policies and practices to improve the experience and outcomes for its diverse student body. Yes to Equitable Student Success (YESS) provides the college with a roadmap for dismantling barriers and building inclusive systems of education and support.

Participatory engagement offers an approach to student-centered inquiry grounded in the assumption that effective and meaningful solutions to problems can best be generated by the people who are experiencing those problems. Drawing from the methodology of participatory action research, those who would be subjects of research are instead engaged as researchers.

Guided by CRT, engagement efforts foreground the participation of students of color as co-researchers and collaborators. Lived experience and experiential knowledge are essential to understanding and transforming socio-spatial equity issues. Participatory engagement supports students of color to develop spatial aspirations that advance equity and inclusion in design.

### Related Links:

- YESS: <https://www.pcc.edu/yess/>
- YESS: <https://www.pcc.edu/yess/why-measuring/why-committed/>

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## Planning and Construction Projects in Service to College Equity Initiatives

### Facilities Plan Phase 1: Completed 2019

The college began its first comprehensive facilities plan as a requirement of accreditation in 2017. Phase 1 was an existing conditions assessment of the college's 60-plus buildings. CRT was not a component of the work until it was requested by campus leadership that it be included as a criterion for capital project selection. While CRT was being practiced by many PCC faculty and student development staff, it was new to planning and capital project staff. In partnership with Pérez, the college aimed to understand its concepts and explore ways CRT could be applied in the built environment.

*Space Matters Student Cohort* was a 2018 CRT training and inquiry project designed and facilitated by Pérez, that engaged a cohort of 25 students of color (representing PCC's 4 campuses) to work as co-researchers in an examination of students' perceptions of campus space. Using a CRSL, students spent time individually and in groups analyzing built environments and spatial arrangements in their "home" campus. To learn other students' perceptions of campus spaces, they developed a survey to conduct face-to-face with students across the district in common spaces like libraries, lounges, and resource centers, as well as hallways, classrooms, and cafeterias. Student co-researchers received a \$200 gift card for their full participation.

#### *Facilities Plan Phase 1 - Equity-driven and CRT-informed Practices Used in this Project:*

- Used a procurement process centered in racial equity and include CRT language RFPs to inform and create project teams
- Reinforced equity values with design teams by hosting CRSL trainings at the project kick-off**
- Lead design with outreach. Drew up an engagement plan and conduct public meetings ahead of the project
- Used CRT-informed inquiry in project programming and engagement**
- Allocated time and funding in the project schedule and budget
- Used equity-driven and CRT-informed approaches from pre-design through costing
- Supported student-led outreach and engagement (hiring PCC students to support bridge between community engagement and design team)**
- Foregrounded the voices and leadership of students of color through cohort model and created opportunities for interaction with design and construction teams**
- Compensated students and community participants for time spent in project engagement activities**
- Partnered with PCC student leadership to support student engagement

#### Related Links:

- Facilities Planning Phase 1:
  - <https://www.pcc.edu/strategic-plan/wp-content/uploads/sites/144/2022/01/9-Critical-Race-Theory.pdf>
  - <https://www.pcc.edu/bond/wp-content/uploads/sites/57/2022/02/FPexecsummary-01-19-22.pdf>
- PCC Media:
  - <https://www.pcc.edu/news/2018/05/crt-fms/>
  - <https://www.pcc.edu/news/2020/10/facilities-planning/>
- Space Matters Student Engagement Project Website: <https://www.spacemattersatpcc.com/>

#### Health and Technology (HT) Building: To be Completed 2023

Renovation of the HT building on the Sylvania Campus was the largest capital project included in the 2017 bond measure. Built in 1972 with just under 200,000 square feet, the HT houses science labs, art, physical education facilities, and health professions classrooms.

CRSL was considered after the design team was contracted. Where possible, Pérez facilitated trainings and praxis-oriented dialogue sessions with the design team to support the use of CRSL in programming and outreach without affecting cost and schedule. Outreach included a feedback fair with CRT-informed inquiry and engagement “table” that invited people to share their perceptions of PCC space. Two student participants from the 2018 *Space Matters Student Cohort* were hired as interns by the architect to advise the design team.

#### *Health and Technology (HT) Building - Equity-driven and CRT-informed Practices Used in this Project:*

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### Rock Creek Campus Library Renovation: Design Completed 2019

The Rock Creek campus library is located on the 2nd floor of Building 9 making finding and accessing the library difficult and awkward. The initial scope for the library renovation included moving the Student Computing Center from elsewhere on campus into the library to generate more activity and promote cross collaboration. It also offered a consistent service delivery at each campus. At the request of college leadership, a CRT-informed, student-engagement project was developed to hear from students of color regarding their perceptions and experiences in campus libraries. It began with the library project team, the Rock Creek library staff, campus planners, and architects coming together for a 2-hour workshop to frame “the design problem”—both through an understanding of the spatial constraints and opportunities to illuminate historic and existing challenges to a more welcoming and inclusive campus library. This framing informed the guiding inquiry questions for the student-engagement project.

Collaborating with the Rock Creek Multicultural Center (MC), student leaders of color were invited to participate in a 3-hour CRSL workshop called, *What Does Race Have to do with Library Space?* designed and facilitated by Pérez and two student participants of the 2018 *Space Matters Student Cohort*. The workshop combined opportunities for storytelling and dialogue to explore student experiences navigating college and their perceptions of library space. Multicultural Center student leaders collectively explored the theoretical tenets of a critical race spatial lens and used the lens to analyze the RC library in small groups. Presenting and examining their observations, students identified spatial features of libraries that contributed to unwelcoming experiences and ideas for a more inclusive design. The students’ findings were incorporated into the design resulting in a new focus on the entry, the resource desk, and individual and collaborative meeting and study areas. Student leaders received a \$25 gift card for participation.

#### *Rock Creek Campus Library Renovation - Equity-driven and CRT-informed Practices Used in this Project:*

- Used a procurement process centered in racial equity and include CRT language RFPs to inform and create project teams
- Reinforced equity values with design teams by hosting CRSL trainings at the project kick-off
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Portland Metropolitan Workforce Training (Metro) Center: To be completed 2023

PCC's Metropolitan Workforce Training Center is a large capital project, replacing an aging windowless building with a two-story facility featuring classrooms, offices, and meeting rooms for use by staff, service partners, and the surrounding neighborhood. Community affordable housing will be included through a partnership with Home Forward. This is the first capital project to incorporate CRSL from procurement through cost estimation. CRT-language was added to the RFP, stating upfront that participation in CRT training and workshops, as well as a more robust and inclusive approach to project outreach, would be required of the design team selected. Questions regarding racial equity and social justice practices were included in the design team interviews. Project kick-off was a 2-day CRSL training facilitated by Pérez with the primary design team and subconsultant group representatives and once selected, the construction team also participated in a CRSL workshop.

Outreach and engagement were conducted in partnership with a neighborhood-based community organization and included focus group meetings with students, staff, and neighbors. A CRSL workshop with the training center staff, and a large community gathering with dinner and childcare provided. Community members and students participating in a 2-hour focus group received a \$50 gift card for their time. Client focus groups received course credit, \$20 gift cards and a meeting lunch was provided. Programming included inquiry related discussions with staff and students regarding life experience and the quality and messaging the current space's dilapidated conditions relayed. Lunch meetings were held with staff to discuss building functionality and how it feels to work in their current space. The design team brought on a subconsultant specializing in design justice. Design guidelines were established for the project centered on the tenets of CRSL and were used heavily during costing sessions to maintain their importance while aligning the project budget.

*Portland Metropolitan Workforce Training Center - Equity-driven and CRT-informed Practices Used in this Project:*

- Used a procurement process centered in racial equity and include CRT language RFPs to inform and create project teams
- Reinforced equity values with design teams by hosting CRSL trainings at the project kick-off
- Lead design with outreach. Drew up an engagement plan and conduct public meetings ahead of the project
- Used CRT-informed inquiry in project programming and engagement
- Allocated time and funding in the project schedule and budget
- Used equity-driven and CRT-informed approaches from pre-design through costing
- Supported student-led outreach and engagement (hiring PCC students to support bridge between community engagement and design team)
- Foregrounded the voices and leadership of students of color through cohort model and created opportunities for interaction with design and construction teams
- Compensated students and community participants for time spent in project engagement activities
- Partnered with PCC student leadership to support student engagement

#### Related Links:

- PCC Media: <https://www.pcc.edu/news/2020/10/facilities-planning/>
- Partner Firm Media: <https://bora.co/project/portland-community-college-metropolitan-workforce-training-center>

#### Facilities Plan Phase 2: Completed 2021

Facilities Plan Phase 2 assessed enrollment projections and industry trends to envision future college growth. Analyzing quantitative and qualitative data through a CRSL, conceptual development plans were created for each campus. Online surveys, focus groups, and workshops were held with students, staff and neighbors. To foreground and sustain the voices of students of color, the Office of Planning and Capital Construction partnered with student leadership programs across the college to engage and support participation.

*Future Space Student Cohort* began in Winter Term 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic and was designed as a virtual engagement project to support a cohort of five students of color, representing all four campuses. Facilitated in three two-hour workshops, students explored the future of space at PCC and how spaces could be more welcoming and inclusive to communities of color. *Future Space* was designed and facilitated by Pérez, as a two-term project: Fall Term was dedicated to community-building, training, storytelling, and inquiry; Winter Term was designed to support the cohort to apply experiences and insights to the Online Campus Workshops in collaboration with the design team.

In Fall Term, using a CRSL, students discussed and evaluated campus space dedicated to student services and resource centers. Drawing from their own experiences combined with online research of other campus settings, students discussed pressing issues and spatial aspirations for equity, inclusion, and academic success in a 20-year plan for growth. Student leaders wanted to conduct a critical race spatial analysis of student services and resources to explore the question - how does “student service-space” and “resource center-space” reproduce racial and educational inequities?

Students serving in paid student government roles were able to select *Future Space* as their leadership project. Others received a \$200 gift card for their full participation. At the end of the term, students cited pressure and stress brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and feeling over-extended as reasons why they were unable to participate more fully in the Online Campus Workshops through the second term.

Because the project was conducted remotely, additional outreach included online surveys, remote focus groups, and virtual design workshops informed by CRSL inquiry. Findings were incorporated into the plan, providing a framework to create spaces that inspire a sense of belonging and support equitable student success.

*Facilities Plan Phase 2 - Equity-driven and CRT-informed Practices Used in this Project:*

- Used a procurement process centered in racial equity and include CRT language RFPs to inform and create project teams**
- Reinforced equity values with design teams by hosting CRSL trainings at the project kick-off**
- Lead design with outreach. Drew up an engagement plan and conduct public meetings ahead of the project
- Used CRT-informed inquiry in project programming and engagement**
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Related Links:

- Facilities Plan Phase 2: <https://www.pcc.edu/strategic-plan/wp-content/uploads/sites/144/2022/02/facilities-plan-report.pdf>

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### **Culminating Insights and New Directions for PCC Planning and Construction**

Since 2017, PCC has engaged an equity-driven, CRT-informed, and student-centered approach to capital projects. Fall of 2021, staff facilitated focus groups to invite reflection with many of the consultant teams that participated in CRSL workshops, training sessions, and PCC projects. Much of the feedback heard supported equity-driven and CRT-informed approaches and requests were made for additional educational opportunities to support ongoing practice throughout the life of a capital project.

In these focus groups, partners expressed support for continuing the use of the following equity-driven and CRT-informed practices:

- Use a CRSL in procurement, programming, design, and cost estimating and find ways to incorporate it in construction documentation
- Incorporate CRSL training with design and construction project teams in the project kick-off
- Build time for use of CRSL in the project schedule
- Use CRT as the basis for this work
- Include a CRSL champion throughout the project who can ensure equity values are supported throughout the project, especially at costing

- Foreground the voices and leadership of students of color through cohort work, interaction with design and construction teams, and ongoing exploration into new forms of inquiry
- Continue to compensate students for their involvement in project work

Identified new actions for PCC's Office of Planning and Capital Construction to advance CRSL in capital project work include:

- Ongoing design and construction team training in CRSL throughout the life of the project
- Create a "Racial and Educational Equity and Engagement" position in the Office of Planning and Capital Construction to champion and guide ongoing inclusion of equity-driven, CRT-informed, and participatory engagement approaches in capital projects
- Develop a section on CRSL in the new Project Procedure Manual. This will include recommendations for procurement, engagement, project scheduling, and more
- Ongoing program to engage and support students in using a CRSL in opportunities to conduct room audits, document equity conditions, and contribute to design solutions. Not only would the college have a better understanding of how space is used, but also how it is perceived and experienced by students of color thereby illuminating what actions can be taken to create a more welcoming campus space