MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 3, 2015
TO: South Seattle College Community
FROM: Gary Oertli, President
SUBJECT: Reflection

As you have seen, across the nation, colleges and universities are taking a serious look at issues of racism, hate and other forms of bias on their campuses. Recent incidents at the University of Missouri, Western Washington University, University of Chicago, and others have sparked national attention. This is an ongoing challenge for colleges and universities who strive to balance academic freedom and intellectual debate with the responsibility and commitment to create a welcoming and supportive environment.

We are not immune to these serious and difficult issues, and unfortunately, experienced challenges recently when discriminatory graffiti was discovered in two campus bathrooms. I, like many of you, have been saddened and angry by these situations here at South and across the nation.

For many colleges, this has also led to a renewed focus on efforts that honor diversity and promote inclusion, as well as efforts that better support all of our students. South Seattle College’s commitment to diversity goes beyond the ebb and flow of big news stories, and I wanted to share some of these efforts with you.

**Strategic Goal 6:** This goal states that as a college we work to “Foster and strengthen equity, inclusion, and cultural competency, so that everyone benefits from participation in our diverse community.” This strategic goal will ensure our efforts are both measurable and meaningful.

**Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI):** South received this federal designation as a minority-serving institution in 2008, and we were one of the first community colleges to receive it. As an AANAPISI, we received additional funding to provide culturally-relevant services to students. And, recent data has shown that these efforts have improved outcomes for all students, including Asian American and Pacific Islanders.

**South on the Same Page:** South has launched a year-long discussion to create a statement on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion through a shared campus wide process that reflects the language, values and needs of our diverse institution. This guiding principle will embrace and value our unique needs and experiences.

**Professional Development Focused on Diversity:** South has offered the Intercultural Development Inventory, and over the past two years nearly 150 staff and faculty have participated in this program. We have also offered training on supporting men of color and Safe Zone Skills workshops, which emphasize how to provide safe, affirming environment for all. As South was recently recognized by the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges for having the largest increase in full-time faculty of color and
now have the highest percentage of full-time faculty of color in the state, and as we have one of the most
diverse student populations, these efforts are critical to create an inclusive campus culture.

Efforts to Diversify Applicant Pools: The Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion is working actively
with the Instruction division, and many other departments in examining the search and hiring processes to
ensure that they are inclusive. This includes reviewing how we write job descriptions, where we
advertise, training for search committees and the interview process itself.

13th Year Promise Scholarship: In 2008, our Foundation launched the 13th Year Promise Scholarship,
which guarantees every graduate of area high schools can attend South tuition-free along with support
services; approximately 75% of these students are students of color.

While these steps illustrate our commitment, there is much more work to be done. And, we need
our entire campus community to join together. Here are some ways that you can support these efforts:

• Contact our Bias Incident Response and Support Team (BIRST) or Safety and Security if you
encounter instances of bias so that we can address them immediately. These will not be tolerated.

• Have open and honest conversations with your colleagues and students about issues of equity and
racism. Share your own perspectives and experiences; listen and acknowledge others’
viewpoints.

• Help recruit students and employees who share our commitment to equity, diversity and
inclusion.

• Participate in the activities focused on equity, diversity and inclusion. A full calendar of this
year’s events, some upcoming and some that have already occurred, is below.

2015-2016 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Calendar of Events

Fall Quarter 2015

• DRUM (Diversity Reading to Understand Multiculturalism) Book Club
  o Exploration of AMERIKANA – readings that help us gain a deeper understanding of
USian Culture and Behavior.
  o Book Selection: American Cultural Patterns by Stewart and Bennett

• Supporting Males of Color (Professional Development/Training)
  o Training 1: Supporting Men Of Color: How To Increase Engagement, Retention &
  Graduation Rates With An Innovative Holistic Coaching Program
  o Training 2: Increasing The Academic Achievement Of Minority Males: How To Create
  A Targeted Program That Will Help Them Succeed
  o Training 3: Supporting Multicultural Males: A Coaching Program That Will Improve
  Retention & Graduation Rates

• South on the Same Page
• Native Peoples Day
• Immigration: Historical Context for Social Justice in the United States
• Beyond Gender Binary: A look at gender assignment/gender bias
• Veterans Day Flag
• Racism on Campus and Society
• UN Human Rights Day
• Seattle Veterans Stand Down: Resources for Veterans
• Gender Equity Center’s Film Fridays:
  o I Am a Man– Black Masculinity in America by Bryon Hurt
  o The Codes of Gender; Identity & Performance in Popular Culture by Sut Jhally’s
Killing Us Softly; Advertising’s Image of Women (series)
How Racism Harms White Americans by John H. Bracey Jr.

The Growing Visibility of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders: The Legacy of the AANAPISI Designation
Kumu Hina Events: Lunch n Learn, film screenings, Community Screening with Drag Show from U.T.O.P.I.A.

AANAPISI Exhibit Sponsored Workshops
  - Hip Hop Cambodian Culture
  - Pacific Magicians: Hopes, Dreams and the Future
  - Contemporary Oceanic Art

Empowerment Series: Civic Engagement & Community Organizing
  - Velma Veloria, Former State Representative, First Asian American Woman Legislator
  - Visual Storytelling: Stories of Refugees and Immigrants

Increase Awareness of the Challenges and Aspirations of Refugees and Low-Income Immigrants

**Winter Quarter 2016**

- **Wednesday, February 3, 2016, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm** - Michael Benitez, Nationally recognized for his work on diversity and social justice leadership.
- **DRUM (Diversity Reading to Understand Multiculturalism) Book Club**
  - Exploration of AMERIKANA – readings that help us gain a deeper understanding of USian Culture and Behavior.
  - Book Selection: Hand to Mouth by Linda Tirado
- **South on the Same Page**
- **Wednesday, January 13, 2016 – 11:00 am-2:00 pm** - Gender Equity’s Health Fair: 10th year anniversary – focuses on community services in support of our students’ health.
- **Know Your Rights - Students get educated on their constitutional rights**
- **The Latino/a Educational Achievement Project (LEAP): The annual LEAP conference attracts over 300-400 participants from across the state to promote, motivate and inspire Latino/a students to pursue educational careers beyond high school. The conference shows students how to identify and advocate for better educational outcomes in their communities. Students get the unique opportunity to put this into practice in a special trip to Olympia where they meet their legislators.**
- **Sexism on Campus - Students, Faculty and Staff discuss the sexism on campus promoting Gender Equity.**
- **African American Women’s Suffrage Movement**
- **Day of Remembrance: Japanese American DOR - Commemorating the Japanese Incarceration during WWII.**
- **International Immigrant Student Engagement & Project**
- **International Women’s’ Day**

**Spring Quarter 2016**

- **Clothing Art Project: Repurposing military equipment and clothing.**
- **South on the Same Page**
- **Sexual Assault Awareness**
- **Safe Zone Building Multicultural Competency Skills to Better Serve All of Our Students**
  - A series of workshops providing professional development opportunities for faculty and staff intended to help individuals in providing a safe and affirming environment for all at South Seattle College. Safe Zone members are Mentors who are willing to speak with students freely about Equity and Social Justice.
- **Student of Color Conference**
- **Earth Day: Global Citizenship**
- **Yom HaShoah: Holocaust Day of Remembrance**
- **Body Image – Looks at roles and biases.**
- **Women in Science**
- **Malcom X Week**
- Human Trafficking: Focus on Gender Bias and Gender Equity
- Veterans Center Annual Spring BBQ
- Fun, Film, and Food – Supporting our diverse students – Social Justice Film and Discussion
- Queer Student Association Art Show
- A Village Called Versailles film viewing and Panel discussion (social justice themed event). Sponsored by AANAPISI. Panel includes local activists and funders in the nonprofit community organizations.

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