



A Message from the Chancellor

Dear OCC Student,

As a nation and community we are hurting. People across the country are responding to the inhumane killing of George Floyd, and the historic issue of racial injustice. Our hearts break for the family of George Floyd, and the families of countless others whose lives have ended too soon due to race-related violence. The anger and civil unrest bring to mind a quote by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

As Dr. King says, staying silent is not an option. It is our responsibility as educators and as a leader in the community to speak up about systemic racism on behalf of our Black students and employees.

Oakland Community College stands in solidarity with the Black community, the Black Lives Matter movement, and all those in our community who are peacefully protesting against the cycle of racial bias and injustice that led to the murder of George Floyd and so many others. We are committed to listening to and protecting our Black students and employees, and upholding our core values of diversity, equity and inclusion for **all** whom we are privileged to educate or employ.

OCC reflects the fabric of diversity. As a community college, our students are uniquely positioned to learn from peers of different races, ages, sexual orientation, and beyond. This diversity is what makes OCC a great place to learn, and we will not tolerate anything that undercuts these values.

It is through education on college campuses like OCC, and conversations with those who are different from ourselves, that we can truly learn to listen for better understanding and make change for equity.

To our Black students, notably the members of OCC's Black Student Union, who have expressed pain and called for an end to this systemic injustice: we hear you. We applaud our students of all races and creeds who have been standing up and calling for change. We are proud of your peaceful activism. You have sowed the seeds of hope for a brighter future.

Acknowledgment is the first step. Action is the second. "Hope is not a strategy and a dream is not a tactic." This was a quote shared with me by our Director of Secondary Partnerships, Dr. Beverly Brown. These words continue to resonate with me as we consider our next steps.

We recognize that simply speaking up against racism is not enough. We can and must do more to ensure that our Black students and employees feel safe and supported. We are committed to ensuring that we foster an environment that is inclusive and empathetic to the inherent differences that exist among the college community.

Sincerely,

Peter Provenzano Jr.

Chancellor, Oakland Community College

P.S.: We recognize that students may need additional support during this difficult time. Please visit our [contact a Counselor](#) or familiarize yourself with other [student support resources](#) available to you in a virtual format.