

Weekly Update: June 5, 2020

National and world events have impacted the campus, as they have impacted all of us. Our minority populations have been disproportionately hit by the virus. Whether it is in infection or mortality rates, job loss or more lengthy hospital stays, minorities have been hit especially hard. Add to this the tragic death of George Floyd, and we are all shaken and sickened. This is especially difficult for our black students. There is fear, anger, frustration and a fatigue factor that only people of color can fully feel. We are doing what we can to listen and support, to show empathy, and find constructive avenues for moving forward.

Here are some of the opportunities recently and soon available for healing and expression:

- Students participated in a wonderful and peaceful Vigil in Boise on Tuesday.
- Angela Taylor, an Advisory Board member and a Principle at Dignitas, is holding a free online session with students on Friday night.
- Former state representative Cherie Buckner-Webb and her son Phillip are working with students to arrange a time to bring food over to campus (while maintaining physical distance, which is very hard for Cherie, if you know her) for an open-ended dialogue, sharing, and we know that there will be some singing with Cherie there. Both Cherie and Phillip have been helpful and supportive on campus in the past and we are grateful.
- We are working with the Wassmuth Center for Human Rights and their online training around implicit bias, equity, and how to be an “upstander” thanks to the generous support of Wells Fargo.

All of these have been coordinated in collaboration with the Associated Students of The College of Idaho (ASCI) and the Council for Diversity and Inclusion, who are guiding us with wisdom, perspective, and grace.

As we continue to work toward more diversity and representation that more closely reflects our student body, our Board of Trustees recruitment, led by Judge Candy Dale '79, has brought us some outstanding new board members. We now have the most ethnically-diverse Board in our history. And for the first time, we have equal numbers of males and females on the Board. We know we have much more work to do and look forward to continued progress in hiring staff and faculty members who reflect the wonderfully diverse make-up of the students on campus.

Even during times of hardship, our students continue to be inspiring. Here is a quote from one of our seniors who recently graduated, Lindo Gama. “My parents, to me, have been the epitome of selflessness. They lived in absolute service to me since the day I graced this earth. To this day, I don’t know how financially taxing it was for them to put me through chemotherapy and radiation. My zeal for life is definitely informed by that experience. I survived cancer for a reason, and that reason to live is in service to others by sharing love because I have that in absolute abundance. Love equates to life in my world. So when I can love people and teach them how they can look at life differently, that, to me, is giving them an opportunity to be in the present in their lives fully. I’ve seen the debt my parents had to incur to put me through school, yet their biggest worry is how they can reward me for all that I have achieved. With parents like that, I have grown to embody gratitude. Gratitude requires vulnerability and my parents have shown me unequivocally beautiful vulnerability. Before they had the surety that I would behave in accordance with their desires for me, they still gave their all. And that is what gratitude

epitomizes to me: a falling into the unknown and grace at the same time.” To learn more about Lindo’s story, you can read more [here](#).

Positive things can get lost, with good reason, in times like this. But there are still amazing things going on in the world. Alum Kris Tompkins ’72 is one of those people changing the world for the better at a scale never before seen. You can watch her recent Ted Talk [here](#).

These are challenging times and it can be exhausting. At the same time, these are times in which we can make needed changes that we have put aside for too long. We must remain optimistic and energetic as there is much to do and we will do it The College of Idaho Way: in collaboration, with empathy and with determination.

Doug and Jim