



Students Conference of Color

**Rooted in Resistance
Growing Towards Liberation**

**April 30
&
May 1,
2026**

**Presented by:
Multicultural Student Services Council**



MULTICULTURAL STUDENT
SERVICES DIRECTORS' COUNCIL
COUNCIL

Special Thanks

Special thank you to the 2026 Students of Color Conference Planning Committee:

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Savena Garrett, Shoreline Community College

Tanya Zaragosa-Rosas, Whatcom Community College

Yusuke Okazaki, Whatcom Community College
(Co-Chair)

Additionally, thank you to all SOCC Volunteers!

We would like to recognize and thank the following for their generous sponsorship:

Diversity Equity Officers Commission

State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

College Spark



Welcome

Talofa Lava (Greetings) Students,

We are so thankful to have you here at the 36th annual Students of Color Conference. No matter what format you are joining from, virtual or in-person, I want you to take a moment to look around and find something that grounds you in the space you are in. Reflect and think of a word of intention as we enter this experience together. What do you hope to learn? What will you contribute to this new community? Once you've set your intentions, take a moment to thank someone who shared this opportunity with you, may it be an advisor, one of your peers or a community member. You were meant to be here and this space will be forever changed because of you.

Our theme this year is Rooted in Resistance: Growing towards Liberation, what word stands out to you? If you could paint a picture of that word, what would it feature? We know that in the climate of today's world, it can be difficult to envision a world of liberation and freedom for all. Many of us are grieving for self, the world and the work of many radical leaders/ancestors who have paved more access and equity for us. Over the next two days, I challenge you to find someone new to connect with. Share your stories, cultural values and how it ties to your educational journey. Be an active listener and contributor to discussions - if discomfort arrives along the way, don't worry - this is where growth, empathy and understanding come alive but always take care of yourself as needed.

This space represents a legacy of love, one that was created by leaders who saw barriers and took action to break them down. SOCC is your space, take over the room and show up authentically you, let's create that space of liberation together.

Our planning team has been preparing every detail since last spring and we can't wait for you to build and be in community. Once you leave SOCC and return to your campuses, remember these beautiful words by the late Toni Morrison "when you get these jobs that you have been so brilliantly trained for, just remember that your real job is that if you are free, you need to free somebody else. If you have some power, then your job is to empower somebody else." Continue to resist, continue to love, continue to rest and continue to fight for liberation. Love you all!

Fa'afetai tele lava (thank you)

Edwina Fui (she/her)

Multicultural Student Services Directors' Council President

Guiding Themes of the Conference

Identity Development

Racial, ethnic, and/or cultural identity group sessions focus on group identity and issues related to self awareness. These workshops introduce students to concepts and structures that will strengthen their racial, ethnic and/or cultural identity.

Awareness of Others

These “101” workshops are designed to increase students’ awareness, knowledge, and understanding related to race, ethnicity, and other differences with groups other than their own.

Skills Development

In these workshops, students will be inspired to learn, build and develop skills that they can use to achieve their full potential. Examples include alliance building, intercultural communication, cross-cultural communication, understanding power and privilege, etc.

Social Justice and Social Activism

These workshops will introduce and/or advance students’ understanding of the importance of becoming agents of social change. Topics for discussion will include social change, institutional inequities, issues affecting our communities, -isms, social economic justice, etc.

Personal Development

Students will learn the importance of personal development in the areas of health and wellness, and issues related to the mind, body, and soul. Examples include music, art, movement, etc

The goal of the conference is to support students of Washington state community and technical colleges to become more active proponents of their own education and life choices, and to expand the opportunities and possibilities for students to become agents of change.

Ground Rules

For Group Discussions about Diversity, Human Rights, and Equality

1. While there is no such thing as a completely “safe” public forum for discussing difficult topics, if you do not want your comments repeated outside of the group, preface your remarks with a request for confidentiality and the group will honor your request.
2. Assume that everyone participating is doing the best they can to listen and understand the topics presented.
3. Never demean, devalue, or in any way embarrass people for their experiences should they choose to share in the group. Humor is welcome, but shaming behavior is not.
4. Practice respectful inquisitiveness about others, not cultural tourism. It is better to admit that we know very little about a different person or culture and to gather information than to make assumptions.
5. Allow each person to speak without interruption.
6. Acknowledge that inequalities of privilege and power exist in our social structure according to race/ethnicity, nationality, class, gender identity, age, religion, socioeconomic status, physical or mental disability, and sexual orientation.
7. Acknowledge definitions, terms, and examples discussed as samples of institutional and structural conditioning that can misinform us about our own group identity and about others.
8. Agree not to blame ourselves or others for the misinformation we have learned, but accept responsibility for not repeating misinformation after we have learned a new way to respect and embrace difference. Also agree not to blame victims for the condition of their lives.
9. It's okay to feel anger, confusion, frustration, fear, and sadness while participating. Realize that the more often you participate in discussions and spend time learning about diversity issues, you will also feel acceptance, reconciliation, trust and empathy for others. The more we know about differences, the more comfortable we will be with our diverse people in our global community.

Practicing Self-Care and Mindfulness

SOCC is a time for students to learn, reflect and engage in what can be difficult topics for many, regardless of where they are in their journey. Topics of identity, oppression, and justice can often bring up intense feelings of sadness, frustration, and overwhelm.

Throughout the conference please practice self care and honor your boundaries. This can look like:

- Stepping away from the computer when you need a moment
- Taking care of your body(eating food, staying hydrated, stretching)
- Taking breaks when you need to, even if it's in the middle of a workshop

Growth is never easy, but you don't have to go through it alone. If you feel like you need emotional support or just someone to talk to about all the things you've learned and where to go next, contact your school advisor. This is the person at your college that likely reached out to you about SOCC in the first place. They'll be more than happy to provide you with more resources and opportunities to dive deeper into all the important things you learned at SOCC.

AGENDA

Thursday, April 30, 2026

10:00 - 11:00 AM	Opening Ceremony
11:15 AM - 12:45 PM	Session 0
12:45 - 2:00 PM	Lunch Break
2:00 - 3:30 PM	Session 1
3:45 - 5:15 PM	Session 2
5:30 - 6:00 PM	Closing Announcements

Friday, May 1, 2026

9:00 - 10:00 AM	Welcome & Community Energizer
10:00 - 11:30 AM	Keynote Speaker: Kiesha B. Free (w/ Q&A)
11:30 AM - 11:45 PM	Break
11:45 AM - 12:45 PM	Session 3
12:45 - 2:00 PM	Lunch Break
2:00 - 3:00 PM	Session 4
3:15 - 4:15 PM	Session 5
4:30 - 5:00 PM	Closing Ceremony

Keynote Speaker

Kiesha B. Free

Friday, May 1, 2026 from 10:00 - 11:30 AM



Kiesha B. Free is a speaker, host, and independent cultural worker devoted to helping people reconnect with their voice, values, and capacity to shape the world around them.

With a career spanning technology, media, and the performing arts, she brings curiosity, warmth, and insight to stages around the world. Kiesha has hosted powerful conversations with luminaries like Will Smith, Megan Rapinoe, Lenny Kravitz, and aja monet, as well as countless everyday truth-tellers.

Through her keynotes, her leadership of the regional community hub Hey, Black Seattle! and the YOU Better! podcast, she invites people to reclaim their identity, realign their ambitions, and activate their impact - making the shifts that help individuals and communities thrive.

NOTES

Glossary of DEI Terms

Below are helpful definitions that may be used throughout sessions and conversations at SOCC.

- **Affirmative Action*** - A set of policies and practices designed to eliminate unlawful discrimination among applicants, remedy the results of such prior discrimination, and prevent such discrimination in the future.
- **Ally*** - Someone who possesses power and privilege (based on ethnicity, class, gender, sexual identity, etc.) and stands in solidarity with, and is supportive of, marginalized groups and communities.
- **Anti-Blackness*** - The Council for Democratizing Education defines anti-Blackness as being a two-part formation that both voids Blackness of value, while systematically marginalizing Black people and their issues.
- **Anti-Racism*** is the active, consistent process of identifying, challenging, and confronting the historical roots, systemic structures, policies, and practices that produce racial inequities in higher education. It moves beyond mere non-racist beliefs to intentional, actionable strategies that dismantle racism and foster equity. For example, someone practicing anti-racism supports an antiracism policy through their actions or expressing anti-racism ideas. This includes the expression of ideas that racial groups are equals and do not need developing and supporting policies that reduce racial inequity.
- **BIPOC*** - A person or group who identifies as Black, Indigenous, or as a Person of Color.
- **Communities of Color*** - An umbrella term used to refer to people of color, often when describing the impacts of systemic racism.
- **Community Organizations*** - Coordination and organizing aimed at making improvements to a community, area, or groups social health, well-being, and overall functioning. This takes place in geographically, socially, culturally, spiritually, and digitally defined communities and spaces.

Glossary of DEI Terms

- **Culturally Appropriate*** - The understanding of what is suitable given a particular context. Including awareness of norms, symbols, values, etc.
- **Discrimination*** - The unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, and other categories.
- **Diversity*** - The wide variety of shared and different personal and group characteristics among human beings. The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect of individual differences.
- **Equity*** - The proportional distribution of desirable outcomes across groups, where an individual's race, gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, etc. do not determine their educational, economic, social, or political opportunities.
- **Historically Marginalized Communities*** - "Groups who have been relegated to the lower or peripheral edge of society. Many groups were denied full participation in mainstream cultural, social, political, and economic activities" (Heritage Bulletin, 2018). E. g., People of Color, women, people with disabilities.
- **Inclusion*** - Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power. Inclusion promotes broad engagement, shared participation, and advances authentic sense of belonging through safe, positive, and nurturing environments. Inclusion is key to eliminating systemic inequality.
- **Implicit Bias*** - Negative associations that people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically and without conscious awareness.
- **Institutional Racism*** - The systemic mistreatment and dehumanization of any individual based solely on a social identity group with which they identify that is supported and enforced by society and its institutions.

Glossary of DEI Terms

- **Intersectionality*** - The overlapping of various systems of oppression. Coined in 1989 by Kimberlé Crenshaw, in response to White feminism.
- **Justice*** - The maintenance or administration of what is just, especially by the impartial adjustment of conflicting claims or the assignment of merited rewards or punishments.
- **Low-Income Communities*** - An area in which 20% of people live below the poverty line or families whose incomes do not exceed 80 percent of the median family income for the area.
- **Marginalization*** - The process of oppression by which target groups are excluded from participation in society.
- **Microaggression*** - Prejudiced thoughts or discriminatory actions in indirect, subtle, or unintentional forms
- **Normalization*** - The process by which prejudiced thoughts and discriminatory actions become commonplace and unquestioned.
- **Oppression*** - A system of control based on prejudice, using power at the personal, interpersonal, institutional, and cultural levels by one social group on another.
- **Prejudice*** - The unjustified, preconceived beliefs about a social group.
- **Privilege*** - The unquestioned and unearned advantages, entitlements, and choices by members of dominant social groups.
- **Race*** - Any one of the groups that humans are often divided into based on physical traits regarded as common among people of shared ancestry.
- **Racial Equity*** - The process of achieving equality for all races.

Glossary of DEI Terms

- **Racism*** - A system of oppression based on White supremacy.
- **Restorative Justice*** - The process of achieving justice rooted in Indigenous practices, using inclusion, harm repair, amends, and community reintegration.
- **Social Justice*** - A broad term that connotes the practice of allyship and coalition work in order to promote equality, equity, respect, and the assurance of rights within and between communities and social groups.
- **White Privilege*** - The unquestioned and unearned advantages, entitlements, and choices for White people.
- **White Supremacy*** - The belief that the White race is inherently superior to other races and that White people should have control over people of other races.
- **Xenophobia*** - Prejudiced thoughts and discriminatory actions against those who are different from oneself, based on fear or hatred of strangers.