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The Future and Thriving of BIPOC Communities: A Time to Act Macroconvening

Global Diversity & Inclusion, Portland State University

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AFFINITY CONVENINGS THEMATIC REVIEW

From June to November 2022, collaborators and participants from across the PSU community engaged in five affinity-based convenings. These included:

- [Latiné Futures Convening](#)
- [Convening on the Future of Black Thriving & Joy](#)
- [Convening for a Thriving Future for Pacific Islander, Native Hawaiian, Asian, and Asian American Communities \(PIAA\)](#)
- [Convening for a Prosperous Future for Middle East, North African and South Asian Community \(MENASA\)](#)
- [Native Leaders Roundtable](#)

Each engagement was unique, but centered around discussions of the future of thriving and joy of BIPOC communities in and around Portland, and what role PSU has in bringing this future to bear. Themes, priorities and insights reflecting the priorities and perspectives unique to each convened community are available for review [here](#).

In advance of our November 4th Macro-Convening, we zoomed out to review notes, capture documents, reports, summaries, and observations from each session to assess where we align or diverge as we look to advance a future of thriving and joy within and across our broad coalition. The following themes emerged through a cross-convening content assessment.

Themes Spanning BIPOC Community Convenings

THEME PRESENCE BY CONVENING					
Theme	Latiné	Black	PIAA	MENASA	Native
Space for Community to be amplified, connect, self-determine	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Financial Support for Students	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Pathways to Educational Attainment	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Mentorships + Internships	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Campus Environment	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Partnerships with Community Organizations + Businesses	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Workforce Development + Job Placement	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Restorative Justice + Community Harm Reduction	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Data Practices + Empowerment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Curriculum + Education Design	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

Prevalence: This theme was noted in 5 of 5 convenings

Space for Community to be amplified, connect, self-determine

Each in their own way, all convened groups expressed a clear need for PSU to foster space for individual communities to be enriched and amplified through connection. Community space is sought to help center important community specific issues and to amplify the voices, perspectives, needs and values.

Prevalence: These themes were noted in 4 of 5 convenings

Financial Support for Students

Demographic-focused scholarships, student-to-community work programs, and subsistence aid programs were among the many goals for making education more affordable to new and returning students, with the goal to “meet them where they are at.”

Pathways to Educational Attainment

Many ideas and goals were surfaced to smooth the path into higher education and ultimately to attainment and job placement. Programs to help BIPOC students navigate educational systems, reducing bureaucratic barriers in admissions, connecting with students as grade schoolers, and developing community specific recruiting were highlighted.

Mentorships + Internships

Convened groups agree that developing mentorships and internships should be priorities. BIPOC communities want networks of mentors in the community and within PSU, as well as internships that connect students to organizations and businesses during and after their time at PSU.

Campus Environment

For PSU to ensure an inclusive and safe campus environment for BIPOC students, we should combat and interrupt bias and oppressive behaviors, create visibility and opportunity for affirming and developing identity for BIPOC students, and create space for families and community members to support each other and their students.

Partnerships with Community Organizations + Businesses

Developing closer partnerships with community organizations and businesses is seen as an integral part of creating opportunities for students and meaningfully embedding PSU within the larger community. PSU should explore reciprocal financial relationships, recruitment pipelines, and pathways to place BIPOC students on civic and business leadership tracks in the community, with the ultimate goal of community empowerment and agency.

Capacity Building: Workforce and leadership Development + Job Placement

Job placement and advancement are major indicators of success and should be a key metric for PSU along the path to a future of thriving and joy for our BIPOC communities. Both formal and informal pathways through industry-supported education and cross sector placement pipelines were considered.

Restorative Justice + Community Harm Reduction

Justice and restoration for the social, emotional, physiological, and economic wellness of BIPOC communities should anchor PSUs approach to building the future. PSU should invest in and support culturally specific and demographically responsive processes and programs to respond to and repair historical and current damage to BIPOC communities.

Data Practices + Empowerment

There was alignment among convening groups that data is powerful. When data is inaccessible, out of our sphere of influence, or is not designed to account for breadth in the experiences of BIPOC peoples, that power can be damaging. Ideas like disaggregating demographic data, collecting data to advance funding and programmatic efforts, and educating students to occupy professions of influence were raised.

Curriculum + Education Design

Developing a curriculum that is culturally inclusive, relevant, and responsive shapes the experience of both the students and the field they will eventually occupy. Designing educational experiences to center the experiences of BIPOC students starts by advancing representation among educators and curriculum designers at PSU.