

Clark College Foundation

Plan to Achieve Diversity and Inclusion

Background | Diversity, equity and inclusion priorities

Clark College Foundation is an independent, self-governed nonprofit that assists Clark College through philanthropy. Clark College revitalized its original 2006 diversity plan so that faculty, staff and the campus community can support student learning more equitably and inclusively. Like many higher education institutions in the Northwest, Clark clearly defined a vision and purpose vis-à-vis [social equity](#).

Models of philanthropy in higher education date back to the Victorian Era in England and even before. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, institutions in the United States, led by industrial magnates such as Carnegie, Rockefeller, Vanderbilt and other prominent white men, began incorporating those models.

Much has changed since the 20th century. Today, leaders in higher education realize that full-scale cultural shifts to philanthropic models must occur to serve our diverse constituencies.

At Clark College Foundation (CCF), this means diversifying our staff and volunteer boards (board of directors and alumni board), as well as creating and maintaining a culture belonging for our staff and boards, and the individuals and entities with which we have relationships. The external relationships then benefit the college by providing CCF with opportunities to solicit financial resources to support academic priorities.

From a fundraising standpoint, before 2016 there was no specific objective to identify or reach non-dominant communities as part of Clark College Foundation's fundraising strategy. While the college had priorities aimed at solving issues of inequity, there were no specific discussions about how to include the communities that would be most affected by these efforts in the fundraising process. In other words, largely the foundation was still looking at long-established models of fundraising from traditional philanthropic sources to help meet fundraising goals. Much to the credit of the foundation leadership, our board members and supportive alumni and college leadership, the institution knew changes were necessary while recognizing that many of these changes would take time and require concerted effort and resources.

Positive and measurable approach

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This mindfulness is evident in the foundation board's directive that the organization needs to increase significantly the number and types of relationships it has with philanthropically inclined individuals and entities in support of Clark College. Clark College Foundation's first fundraising campaign, which wrapped up successfully in 2013, welcomed about 1,300 donors and raised more than \$26 million in gifts and commitments. However, in order to reach a more ambitious \$35 million campaign goal *and* support important campus priorities affecting issues of equity and inclusion, the donor base needs to expand by about three times its current size and include new donors who specifically care about and benefit from campus priorities that support the college's social equity plan.

The task is clear: significant and measurable changes need to take place at the volunteer and staff level, as well as a philosophical re-positioning of who needs to be involved in a fundraising campaign. This is a journey staff and volunteer leaders at the foundation know they want and need to embark upon. They are prepared to do so to affect meaningful change. This attitude is in the campaign slogan: Promising Pathways. Success is about creating pathways of opportunities for all of our students and faculty and staff at Clark College and Clark College Foundation.

Clark College Foundation's Diversity and Inclusivity Program

While there are several ways an organization can combat traditional structures of power, privilege and inequity. At Clark College Foundation, we believe the plan must resonate with the foundation's mission, vision and values developed in the early 2000s.

Mission

Clark College Foundation inspires the joy of philanthropy in support of student success and program excellence at Clark College.

Vision

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Philanthropic support developed and stewarded by Clark College Foundation will make exceptional educational opportunities accessible to all who seek them at Clark College.

Values

Philanthropy

Recognition of philanthropy as the cornerstone in building a successful higher education environment

Integrity

Adherence to professional ethics and assuming responsibility for one's actions while maintaining high standards and consistent performance

Innovation

Support of new ideas, entrepreneurship and continuous improvement at Clark College to transform lives and strengthen our community

Stewardship

Demonstration of sound management of philanthropic resources for the good of the college, its students and the community

Service

Creation of an altruistic environment in which service to others is the guiding principle

Diversity

Demonstration of deep respect for differences by actively seeking, celebrating and creating opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds

Teamwork

Respect for and embracing of the strengths, perspectives, and talents of every individual by promoting an environment of cooperation, trust, and open communication

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In addition to emphasizing the mission, vision and values, CCF established measurable goals that are specific, achievable, timely and will adjust over time.

The foundation's Diversity and Inclusivity Program must be its own and sensitive to the realities and changes taking place in the community and the philanthropic profession – particularly the higher education philanthropic industry. While there will be opportunities to collaborate with Clark College's initiatives and support services, the foundation's program should stand on its own and be responsible for the independent nonprofit organization.

Clark College Foundation Board of Directors and Alumni Board

1. *The makeup of the Clark College Foundation Board of Directors should reflect the makeup of the community it represents, that is, Clark County.*
2. *The makeup of Clark College Foundation's staff should represent the community it works with, that is, Clark County.*
3. *Clark College Foundation's Alumni Board, at a minimum, should reflect the makeup of the current student body at Clark. Information collected and analyzed by Clark's Office of Planning and Effectiveness shows that 34% of students at Clark are students of color and 58% are female. Currently, there are no reliable statistics concerning Clark's LGBTQ community.*
4. *There will be concerted and continual efforts to increase the involvement and participation of individuals and entities (including donors and alumni) who represent the interests of communities that have traditionally been excluded or only marginally included in philanthropic and advancement efforts. This includes, but is not limited to, events, alumni mentoring and outreach programs, communications strategies, cultivation and solicitation of donors.*

Clark College Foundation Board of Directors Details

The makeup of the board should reflect the community. The revamped process includes the way potential members are discovered or found to be qualified, and who is

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involved in that process. Mechanisms are in place for creating a pool of candidates to evaluate and recommend.

Names are forwarded. Potential board members come to the foundation from front-line development and alumni officers who work closely with these individuals; from current and past board members; from college trustees and academic leaders; from community and civic leaders, including those representing non-dominant communities. There are no timelines or deadlines; it is a continuous process. Names are added to a list immediately (without filters) for consideration by the board relations committee. This inclusive process has increased dramatically the pool of people representing non-dominant communities.

Research is the second step. CCF's analysts review the names to determine an individual's community involvement, philanthropic propensity, capacity to give and interest in higher education (and more specifically, Clark College). There is an expectation that all foundation board members must give annual contributions to the foundation and a campaign gift. The ability to meet these expectations is important. This expectation has not been a barrier to recruiting board members from non-dominant communities based on our historical analysis.

Names are forwarded to the board relations committee. The committee, which meets quarterly, carries out the initial vetting process. The diversification of the board is always a primary consideration when it comes to moving candidates forward. There is a concerted effort to pay special attention to candidates representing non-dominant communities and women.

Candidates advance. Those who meet the criteria previous outlined – and are approved by the broad relations committee – are then advanced to the full board for consideration. More than one candidate can be approved at any given time. The total number of board positions available (not counting ex-officio members) is 25, according to 2019 foundation bylaws. Board members can serve up to three consecutive, three-year terms.

The onboarding process starts. Once on the board, members go through an orientation training that includes information about Clark College's social equity and strategic plans, as well as learning about the foundation's strategies for achieving equity and inclusivity in its operations.

Clark College Foundation Alumni Board Details

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The alumni board, the most visible and important auxiliary group under the auspices of Clark College Foundation's Board of Directors follows a similar procedure to recruit new board members. Like the foundation board, the alumni board has a board relations committee that leads the efforts to help meet the diversity and inclusivity goals of board member selection.

The distinction about to the desired makeup of the alumni board, compared to the foundation board, is an important one. We aim to have our alumni board be reflective of the makeup of Clark's student body, as opposed to the overall community. The alumni board's primary purpose is to create and support activities and programs that positively affect *all* of our alumni – not just those who traditionally give to the institution.

These programs include but are not limited to, mentoring, career services support, and special events and communications. Clark College Foundation's Alumni Board strives to build a relationship with as many of our estimated 48,000 alumni as possible. CCF's relationship with alumni is a life-long one. Our goal is to be there as best we can for our alumni, no matter who they are or where they are in their life's journey. In return, we hope they will be there for us when we need their support – regardless of the type of support.

Alumni Activities

Every year, CCF's alumni staff develop and execute, with the support of the alumni board, a work plan and budget. The elements of the work plan include programs or projects that advance CCF's initiatives to become more diverse and inclusive. Indeed, at the alumni board's annual retreat, a significant portion of the programming is dedicated to issues of social equity. It could be a review of the college's or foundation's social equity plans or a discussion on a topical issue or specific training.

CCF's strategic engagement committee constantly looks at ways to engage alumni constituency groups through our events, communications and alumni surveys.

The scholarship committee works diligently to make sure the pool of candidates eligible for alumni scholarships represents the makeup of our student body.

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In 2016, the alumni board revamped the vetting and nominating process for its prestigious Outstanding Alumni Awards to ensure a more diverse and inclusive format. Following many of the same processes utilized in previously mentioned programs, the alumni staff and board engage as many people as possible in the nomination process, including college and community leaders, donors, students, development officers, trustees and board members.

Staff and alumni board leadership vet the candidates to ensure they meet established criteria. The alumni board considers the final selection. One alumnus or alumna per college unit can be selected in any year (if there aren't any eligible candidates for a particular unit, then an award doesn't have to be made). The board also considers a second award category – a rising star – alumnus or alumna under the age of 36. The goal of the board to select awardees that represent the makeup of our student body, which generally means that at least a third of the awards represent non-dominant communities.

Model of philanthropy

As mentioned previously, it's not only the makeup of boards and staff that need to change, but it is the philosophy or model of philanthropy that must adapt for us to be more inclusive. Clark College Foundation is incorporating new ways to identify and engage people who traditionally haven't been included in the philanthropy process. The Promising Pathways Campaign underway from 2015 to 2021 is perfect for launching some of these new efforts.

First, the fundraising campaign recognizes that different communities engage in philanthropy in specific ways. Considerable research has indicated that the various communities have different charitable priorities and they do not all give in the same fashion (gift size, type of gift). As we engage with individuals and entities from different communities, we make it a priority to discuss the cultural ramifications, and if necessary bring in resources to help with the discussions and strategies. Our team members are required to attend annual continuing education related to their profession and respective areas, and these training sessions regularly include issues of diversity, equity and inclusion.

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Fundraising

Knowing the differences does not directly address issues of involvement. Clark College Foundation wants to be successful in our efforts to reach our friends in non-dominant groups so they have the opportunity to participate, feel good about their participation, feel confident that their participation is appreciated and benefit the people and issues they care about.

Clark College Foundation established campaign goals related to the engagement of individuals and entities from non-dominant groups and their allies (individuals and entities that support programs and projects that directly benefit from the college's social equity plan). We include allies because we want this participation to be more than just a token of the total campaign; it must be a meaningful piece of the final goal. By including allies, we make sure that we build momentum as our community's makeup continues to change.

A minimum of 9% of the amount raised (\$3 million of a \$35 million goal) for the campaign will come from individuals and entities representing non-dominant groups and their allies. While the 9% isn't reflective of the makeup of the community (that is, if 15% of the population is people of color, why doesn't the foundation raise 15% from these groups in the campaign?) CCF believes this is a significant step forward in our efforts to be more inclusive. There is an urgency to these matters, but we also recognize – especially in fundraising – that trust and relationships take time to build.

Results of the Plan

CCF is seeing significant progress. Some of the major achievements as of 2019 are:

- Two people of color (one African American man and one Asian-Indian man) and a new female (white) board member joined in 2019.
- The alumni board welcomed a woman who identifies as Latina in 2019. This will bring the total percentage of people from non-dominant communities represented on the alumni board to 20%. A woman of color resigned in 2019 due to work and family obligations, which would have brought the total representation from non-dominant groups to over 30% – closer to the makeup of Clark's student body.

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- The foundation staff made significant progress in the last three years concerning gender: In 2019, seven of the 22 staff members were men (compared to two in 2016). Two of our staff identify as LGBTQAI+. One man of color is joining CCF in January 2020 as our director of Alumni Relations. Over the last three years, three of our six professional service vendors were awarded to people of color (all African Americans).
- In the last two years, since revamping the Outstanding Alumni Awards, nearly a third of our recipients were people of color (three African Americans) and the pool for the 2020 awards is encouraging in terms of the candidates representing non-dominant groups.
- Plans are underway to reconfigure the Outstanding Alumni Awards permanent display in Gaiser Student Center so that it is reflective of the foundation's and alumni program's goals of supporting equity and inclusion.
- The alumni program will launch its first-ever alumni survey in 2020 focusing on issues of diversity and inclusion and how our efforts can better involve all of our graduates in activities and programs of interest to them and their communities.
- Our magazine, Clark Partners, and other foundation communications media, including the Penguins Chats podcast, regularly highlight and feature individuals from non-dominant groups and emphasize the importance of equity and diversity. Examples include articles featuring the college's social equity plan, spotlights on donors from non-dominant groups, and a magazine issue dedicated to women in philanthropy. Two of our most popular podcasts to date are a conversation on racism featuring Dr. Debi Jenkins of Clark College, and a panel of early childhood education experts, two of whom are women of color and Clark alumna.
- Clark Foundation staff regularly participate in power privilege and inequity training as a requirement of their personal and professional development work plans and goals.
- Foundation and alumni events support and recognize our students, faculty and staff from non-dominant groups. Savoring Excellence, Clark's signature community event has a history of featuring students of color. At the 2017 and 2018 events, some of our diverse faculty were also showcased. In 2018, the foundation established its first LGBTQAI scholarship and significantly stepped up its support for LGBTQAI-related events and presentations, including a visit by Philadelphia's poet laureate. In 2019, the alumni program supported two graduation events focusing on diversity: a Kente stole

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- presentation for multi-cultural graduates and an LGBTQAI celebration during PRIDE month.
- Clark College Foundation raised nearly \$10 million in current and endowed scholarship funding from 2016 to 2019 – many of the funds going to students who come from non-dominant groups. This means that in each of the last three years, the foundation has given more than \$1 million in scholarships, special awards and financial support to students.
 - In 2018-19, the foundation raised nearly \$600,000 for guided pathways, with more expected in 2020-21, thereby supporting the college's key educational equity initiative, as well as funds for equity training for college faculty and staff.

Final Thoughts

These achievements have required commitment, discussion, strategizing and concerted implementation. Shifting traditional cultural and social norms is difficult. In addition to being proud of these accomplishments, CCF is equally proud that despite the difficulty, these changes are in the spirit of co-operation, respect, positivity and a recognition that the world must change, including our world at Clark College Foundation.

We look forward to sharing specifics of our program, strategies and tactics, as well as the on-going progress to inspire our college and our community. We believe Clark College and its foundation will thrive in the years ahead and create promising pathways for all of our students, faculty and staff.