



A Message from President Kim Lopez

Weekly Update: 9-1-23: Becoming an Antiracist College

Dear Cañada Colleagues,

Over the past month, I've been struggling with how to share with you an incident that occurred over the summer, that I believe was racially motivated, and caused harm to one of our employees.

This incident was on my mind as I was preparing for the annual Leadership Retreat in early August and reviewing our [Educational Master Plan](#), [Strategic Enrollment Plan](#) and the [Internal Equity Report](#). I am amazed at how much we have accomplished over the past few years (College Mural, Director of Equity, Cultural Center, Faculty Teaching and Learning Center & Lounge, The Cañada Market (Food Pantry) – just to name a few) Yet, as I reviewed the [Cultural Audit](#) conducted by Áse in the Spring, 2020, the following data stood out:

- 56.6% of all Cañada College survey respondents confirm occurrences of bias during their tenure at Cañada
- 73% of Classified Staff surveyed indicated discriminatory experiences during their employment at Cañada
- 76% of Latinx and 66.6% of multiracial or biracial individuals indicated occurrences with bias
- 80% of LGBTQ+ respondents confirmed experiencing bias while at Cañada College

I share this important Cultural Audit data with you as a reminder that we have much work to do in establishing antiracist and inclusive practices at Cañada College. The incident that occurred over summer is just one example of harm that happens on our campus. I have received permission from Krystal Martinez (Division Assistant) to share the following:

*“This past summer I discovered a book that was anonymously sent to me. I was shocked and stunned to open the interdepartmental envelope to pull out a hard copy of **Blackout: How Black America Can Make Its Second Escape from the Democrat Plantation** by Candace Owens, a conservative political commentator with very strong*

anti-Black viewpoints. The envelope was dated just five days after I gave an impassioned presentation at the last PBC meeting of the semester regarding equity and antiracism. I shared some personal experiences and perspectives highlighting my intersections as a Black woman. That was my first time participating and speaking at a participatory governance meeting. I knew there was a potential to receive some pushback, I was not prepared to have that pushback come in such a manner. The anonymity of the sender let me know this was not a moment to consider another viewpoint; this was a rebuke of my comments, denial of my experiences, and an attempt to silence my voice. This made me question my safety on campus and left me distracted in my duties as I couldn't quite wrap my mind around such an obvious threat to my work with the EAPC. Thankfully, I am not one to be easily dissuaded from continuing in the efforts to bring equity and antiracism to this campus. After the initial shock, I reached out to the other tri-chairs and a few Black colleagues to see if I was the only one to receive the book. After confirming that I was, I promptly reached out to our administration to inform them of what happened and find a resolution. This event further galvanized my commitment to ensuring incidents like what happened to me do not happen to any other members of our campus community."

Krystal has courageously shared her experience with all of us as a *Call to Action*. The President's Cabinet and I are committed to redress harmful bias and move deeper into the work of becoming an antiracist College. In collaboration with the [Equity and Antiracist Planning Council](#), whose mission is to disrupt and dismantle systemic racism and White supremacy, I invite each of you to join us in a facilitated conversation, "Brave Spaces: Unpacking Anti-Blackness" on Thursday, September 14 from 12-1 p.m. in the Cultural Center, Building 17 Room 107.

This will be the first of many community building discussions that we will offer throughout the year that are focused on antiracist practices.

Join us!

Sincerely,
Kim