

Honoring Vanessa

—*Tania Mendez*

Vanessa Cisneros is a bilingual, first generation, Latina student parent who has gone above and beyond her own expectations and overcame her own doubt. She is an extremely humble person and a very hard-working young woman who received her GED in 2017 from LBCC and immediately transitioned to a degree-seeking student that same year. Vanessa has managed to balance work, school and extracurricular activities while also being a parent, and has blossomed into an incredible human being.



Mark Ylen, Mid-Valley Media

This term she completed her associates degree in Criminal Justice and plans to transfer to Western Oregon University and pursue her bachelor's degree. We are extremely proud of Vanessa as we acknowledge her hard work and commitment to furthering her education. Vanessa is a mother of two: it is because of them that

she never quit, even when things would get extremely difficult. During her time at LBCC, Vanessa worked for the Admissions office and the Department of Institutional Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. She is also a member of the Estudiantes del Sol Club. During her "spare time," she has volunteered both on campus and off. Vanessa is an extraordinary student leader who we will miss, but we know she will accomplish great things, and we wish her all the best on her next journey!

iSi se pudo, Vane! Felicidades a ti y tu familia.

—*Your IEDI familia*



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Message from the Director

—Javier Cervantes

The Similarities of Pugilism and College DEI Work

I had a very productive conversation in February with Vivi, my contemporary who works at Chemeketa. We were processing some of the learning I did after attending her workshop at the Northwest Regional Equity Conference. We were discussing vulnerability, and what it is like to be only two of seven lead Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) officers within Oregon's 17 community colleges. One of my takeaways after chatting about feelings of being vulnerable and needing courage was something we have needed to grow accustomed to, given our unique positions. It may not be fair, but it is a reality and a part of the job. DEI positions are designed to bring up and lead topics that will invariably upset someone at a given college at some point. Yet the work itself is necessary.

In that dialogue, it occurred to me that those of us doing equity and racial justice work of have to know the difference between "putting our chin out" vs. "putting our neck out." I won't speak for anyone else, but I know the risks involved being in my profession: having to tiptoe around emotional topics; the need to preface almost every statement very carefully; speaking up in meetings when you are one of a very few professionals of color in a room; and taking a stance and having to voice that position. As I said, risky, vulnerable, yet necessary work; but I have grown accustomed to it.

Speaking uncomfortable truths along the lines of racial equity requires courage, patience and grace. One never knows the reaction others

will have when broaching the subject of equity when it intersects with race or ethnicity, among the other challenging "isms." It is even more pronounced when there is a power imbalance at play too.



I compare that dynamic to being like a boxer intentionally sticking their chin out, exposing themselves for potential damage in the hopes of achieving their own objective. Occasionally being tagged on the chin may hurt, momentarily. If the pugilist is conditioned well enough to take it, the blow may buckle them: but in many instances, it is survivable (not always, though). I say this because in the process of putting your chin out, you have to extend your neck, and if you do that too much and too far, well, you run the risk of over-exposing way too much of yourself. You become excessively vulnerable to not seeing the next round of the bout.

I admire the courage my colleague Vivi and my other community college DEI leaders have. They expose themselves to a lot, much like a boxer does. It is not easy to always have to prod, maneuver, coax, and cheer on others to lead on difficult subjects. However, it is necessary if we want the people at our institutions to grow and evolve with the times. Much like a professional prizefighter, those of us doing DEI work are conditioned to absorb a lot, but just because we are trained to do so, doesn't mean dodging and weaving punches doesn't take its toll.



Lederhosen and Jingle Dresses

—Heather Morijah

I grew up in a German-speaking household, with my maternal grandparents--both European immigrants--and extended German-Slavic, Lutheran family with whom I regularly spent time. My mum didn't learn to speak English until she went to kindergarten. So much German was spoken in our home, in fact, that by the time I got to high school, I was so frustrated at not understanding what was, clearly, being said about me that I opted to take German all four years, plus a term of conversational German my first year at Virginia Tech, just for good measure.

Our culture—language, food, drink, holidays—enveloped us like a warm, comforting blanket.



My mum and brother, 1975

Though I remember a **lot** of polka dancing, cheek-pinching and entreaties to eat more, it wasn't smothering, as portrayed in *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*. Rather it was more like a support network of people I had no concept of being without. It just **was**. And though there was no overt talk of ethnic pride, nor was there shame or discouragement in being ethnic.

(The first time I walked into Novak's Hungarian restaurant a few years ago, the aroma actually brought me to tears. One whiff of a stogie has the same effect.)

I didn't learn until I was in my thirties--from a coworker who had grown up on the Cheyenne River reservation in South Dakota--that the warm, fuzzy, cultural experience I had in my childhood is **not** universal. (See IEDI's November 2020 newsletter, p. 4.) Chas told me about her family's experience being sent to St. Joseph's Indian School in Chamberlain, South Dakota, where they—aunts, uncles, cousins and father—were forced to assimilate into White culture and forbidden to speak their native language.

Without delving into the horrifying depths of the history of Indian schools in the U.S. (you should take the time to research this on your own), I ask you to imagine, just for a moment, being ripped from your family as a small child and sent far away from everything you know to live among strangers who brainwash you into believing your food, language, religion, rites, rituals—everything about your culture and your entire way of life—was completely, utterly, **inferior** and **wrong**.



Wikimedia Commons

Unimaginable, right? Horrifying, yes? Morally and ethically depraved, even? Absolutely.

In addition, the U.S. government also:

- took millions of acres of valuable, productive land from indigenous peoples without compensation,
- relegated these folks to reservations, sometimes thousands of miles from their homeland,
- entered into treaties and renegeed on them.

Then the government appropriated indigenous children and sent them away **in a concerted effort to wipe out their very culture**. Sit with that for a while.


Since we can't unlearn things, we become responsible for the knowledge we gain. We can recognize our past, be proud of who we are, and appreciate our customs and culture, but I believe those of us who are of White European descent should, if we're able, also commit to using our White privilege in an effort to right these past transgressions. That looks different to each person depending on who you are and what you're willing and able to do.

Looking Back on Winter Term

****Hover your cursor over any of the underlined text for a clickable link.****

Leadership LBCC: Navigating Difference is a 30-hour training delivered over four days during Fall and Winter terms. COVID-19 restrictions have precluded this year's series on campus, but our facilitators are excited to offer a free one-hour introduction to this training. Participation is limited to the first 28 applicants: to apply, fill out this Google Form.

*Intro to Leadership LBCC:
Equity & Cultural Fluency*



Javier Clevantes Tinamarie Ivey Jess Jacobs Carrie Kart

*Friday, January 29 @ 12 PM
Participation limited to 28.
Register here by Wednesday, January 27.*

Request for Special Needs or Accommodations Direct questions about or requests for special needs or accommodations to the LBCC Disability Coordinator, RCH-105, 6500 Pacific Blvd, SW, Albany, Oregon 97321. Phone 541-917-4789 or via Oregon Telecommunications Relay TTD at 1-800-735-2900 or 1-800-735-1232. Make sign language interpreting or real-time transcription requests 2-4 weeks in advance. Make all other requests at least 72 hours prior to the event. LBCC will make every effort to honor requests. LBCC is an equal opportunity educator and employer. **LBCC Comprehensive Statement of Nondiscrimination** LBCC prohibits unlawful discrimination based on race, color, religion, ethnicity, use of native language, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, marital status, disability, veteran status, age, or any other status protected under applicable federal, state, or local laws. For further information see Board Policy P1015 in our Board Policies and Administrative Rules Title II, IX, & Section 504. Contact Scott Rolon, CC-108, 541-917-4429. To report: linnbenton-advocate.symbolity.com/public_report

If you missed this one-hour intro, [consider applying to the complete four-part training next fall.](#)

12th Annual

Unity 2021

EQUITY • DIVERSITY • INCLUSION
CELEBRATING UNITY AT LBCC

Celebrating individuals and organizations who work to establish unity and inclusion, and promote diversity and social justice at LBCC and in our communities

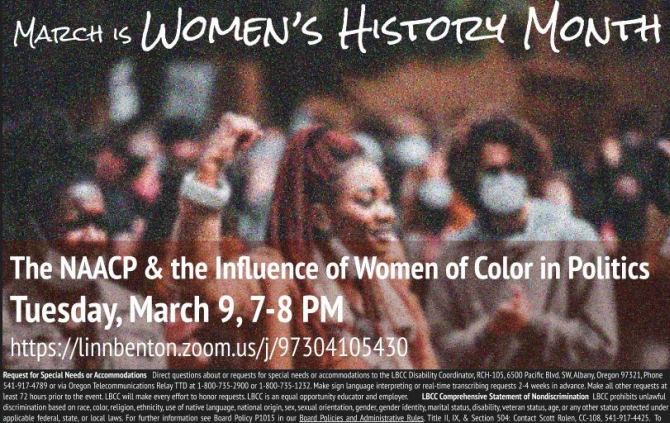
**Friday, February 26
9 AM**

<https://linnbenton.zoom.us/j/95456073878>

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A recording of the 12th Annual Unity Celebration can be viewed [here.](#)



MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



The NAACP & the Influence of Women of Color in Politics
Tuesday, March 9, 7-8 PM
<https://linnbenton.zoom.us/j/97304105430>

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Presented by
Angel Harris,
Immediate Past
President, NAACP
Corvallis-Albany



Institutional Equity,
Diversity & Inclusion

Learn more about the Corvallis-Albany NAACP at [this website.](#)

COVID-19 One Year Later: Impacts On Learning From a Latina Student Perspective
Pivoting from in-class learning to an online experience during a global pandemic



NATHALI COYAZO YANCI HERNANDEZ VANESSA CISNEROS

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH PROGRAM * THURSDAY, MARCH 4 @ 2 PM
<https://linnbenton.zoom.us/j/97810562236>

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View the recording of our student leaders' program [here.](#)

Visit IEDI's [online programming web page](#) to see activities we've offered to date!

Javier Cervantes, Director

Tania Mendez,
Latino Outreach &
Retention Specialist

Heather Morijah,
Program Assistant

Student Staff:
Nathali Coyazo
Yanci Hernandez

**Institutional Equity,
Diversity & Inclusion**



Don't look behind you, Heather. (Cape Perpetua, March 14)



FAFSA? ORSAA? DACA? U.S. Resident? U.S. Citizen? What the?!

Concerned about your eligibility status? Want to provide your students with the proper support? Applying for financial aid doesn't have to be a confusing ordeal! Oregon's Higher Education Coordinating Commission has a great web page where you'll find answers to most—if not all—of your questions.

Visit <https://oregonstudentaid.gov/fafsa-orsaa.aspx> today!