

A PUBLICATION OF ELGIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Impact

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Huddling up on **EQUITY,** **DIVERSITY,** and **INCLUSION**



Elgin
Community
College



MISSION

The mission of Elgin Community College is to improve people's lives through learning.

SHARED VALUES

- Excellence
- Freedom of Inquiry
- Equity
- Diversity
- Ethical Practices
- Accountability
- Collaboration

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REFLECTIONS ON EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (EDI)

Many of you know my story. I was born and raised in Ghana and came to the United States as an international student in 1975. This experience broadened my perspective and gave me a better understanding and appreciation of cultures outside of my own. It is an experience that shaped me and continues to inspire me to view people, programs, and projects through the lens of equity, diversity, and inclusion.



David Sam, PhD, JD, LLM
President

At Elgin Community College, equity is ensuring all students receive what they need to be successful; diversity is all expressions of humanity; and inclusion is valuing what makes each of us unique.

We strive to create an inclusive community that provides students, employees, and community members with full access to all resources needed to achieve their individual goals, and we value and honor diversity in all forms.

Sometimes, the term "diversity" is associated with skin color while it involves so much more. And oftentimes this very word alone becomes a term that divides college campuses, workplaces, and communities. At ECC, we believe that true equity cannot be achieved without diversity and it's only when those factors are in effect that inclusion becomes possible.

In this edition of *Impact*, we celebrate what equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) looks like at ECC. These stories highlight the work that our faculty, staff, and administrators do together as a team to ensure that every student has the support and resources needed to succeed.

And let's be clear — we recognize that this work is not easy, yet we are committed to rolling up our sleeves and doing what is needed to create a campus environment that is equitable, diverse, and inclusive for all. ✎

Looking at the work of the college through an EDI lens recognizes that it's not a one-size-fits-all world. We have different abilities, talents, experiences, and challenges. We come in myriad sizes, shapes, and colors. Some of us have called this place home for years while others have just arrived. But despite our differences, we all have hopes and dreams, fears, and frustrations. We all yearn for comfort, peace, good health, sufficient income, a sense of accomplishment and belonging, and the friendship, love, and company of others.



Jennifer Rakow, BA
Chair, Board of Trustees

EDI creates an environment that accepts and respects all the things we are... and that we are not.

It's a place where people are compassionate, dedicated, intentional, engaged, curious, involved, courageous. People take the time to inquire, care, notice, consider, understand, listen, encourage, mentor, step out of their comfort zone, go the extra mile, and take responsibility as individuals who are also part of the larger institution.

Elgin Community College's mission, strategic plan, and daily operations are formed on the bedrock of EDI to ensure that all students are succeeding regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, language, religion, education, physical appearance, ability, age, health status, veteran status, Pell Grant status, undocumented status, socio-economic status, student-parent status, or marital status. ECC focuses on identifying equity gaps and ways to improve educational outcomes, especially for students of color, first-generation college students, and low-income students who have been historically marginalized. As you'll read in the stories featured in this issue of *Impact*, by supporting a culture of EDI, ECC is breaking down obstacles to student success. The result? A bright future for individuals and families living in a vibrant, strong community with improved quality of life, income, and opportunity for all! ✎

FEATURED STORIES

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- 5** Complete to Compete scholar
- 6** Cover story: One Team. One Dream.
- 10** ECC Foundation Gala highlights

ON THE COVER:

ECC takes a team approach to equity, diversity, and inclusion. Jerrmiah Wright (admissions), Gaea Atta Moy (student life), Jenna Manzano (student government president), Aolany Campuzano (OLAS president), and James Allen Jr. (student trustee). **Pages 6-9**



Anthony Ramos

Ramos focuses on access, student success

Anthony Ramos recently joined Elgin Community College in the newly created role of executive director of equity, diversity, & inclusion (EDI). Noting the significant foundation to support a culture of EDI already in existence at ECC, Ramos looks forward to helping sharpen the college's collective efforts concerning equity, diversity, and inclusion.

"The sense of belonging established when inclusive learning communities exist allows us to create the social and academic connections necessary to support student success," said Ramos. "Part of creating this culture is our directness in saying 'we value you, all that you are, and you are welcome here.'"

Establishing an organized framework that supports EDI necessitates considering many factors. Individuals' unique backgrounds and social connections shape their perceptions of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, nationality, and other aspects of identity. Recognizing and honoring this diversity among our students and the various identities and experiences they bring to our campus informs ECC's work to create inclusive and equitable learning environments.

Ramos shared that in a previous role as a sociology instructor, he would often engage students in thinking about ways in which families, peers, schools, media, and other social institutions formed perceptions of themselves and others, sharing his

personal experiences as examples. "As an Asian American, there have been expectations on my abilities as they relate to math and science. However, growing up in a mostly single-parent, lower-income household, I needed to work to support my family, which impacted my ability to successfully navigate high school and college."

In addressing equity, Ramos stresses a willingness to be vulnerable and look deeply at our policies, practices, and procedures to ensure each student has appropriate support. ECC's equity work will require the continued evaluation of student demographic and assessment data to help understand how students are progressing through their studies and when they are experiencing barriers to success. This evaluation includes analyzing data by race, gender, age, income, and other identities to fully understand how diverse populations are navigating the institution and ECC's processes while pursuing their goals.

"It is a privilege to do the work that I do in higher education, and specifically in community colleges, where we have a deep responsibility to operate from an equity-based framework of both access and student success," said Ramos. "Through this work and our commitment to equity, we change lives — not only for those in our classrooms today but also for their families and future generations." ❄️



Maria Perez

ECC student rolls out mobile food pantry

This year, the fight to prevent food insecurity is taking a new direction with Elgin Community College student and Phi Theta Kappa member Maria Perez. The pantry began in 2014 when ECC's Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Honor Society recognized that 28 percent of ECC students were economically disadvantaged and many of their peers were facing food insecurity. PTK members made it their mission to seek a solution and created the Spartan Pantry to provide food and basic necessities to any student in need. Since its inception, the pantry expanded its space, added refrigeration, partnered with Advocate Sherman Hospital's Community Garden to provide fresh produce, and provided gift cards to students when forced to temporarily shut down during the pandemic. Since then, the Spartan Pantry has had more than 11,000 visits.

Now, Perez is working to grow the pantry's reach. In addition to making sure students are aware how the pantry supports their needs, she is now bringing it to them. For her PTK College Project, Perez chose to focus on the theme of food

insecurity. "I was excited about this theme because I am just really passionate about helping others," said Perez.

Perez began by loading up a cart with canned goods, snacks, breakfast food, and water. After walking the entire school three times around, up and down, she noted that nearly half of the students she approached were not aware of the Spartan Pantry, but expressed need. "Utilizing the food cart not only helps serve students, but it also lets them know the pantry is always available," said Perez.

The food cart led Perez to her next idea to increase access to food and pantry resources and address the insecurity and stigma around asking for help. Inspired by the Little Free Libraries movement, Perez created "Little Spartan Pantries," which can be seen around campus with self-serve food items inside, along with room to leave donations.

"With Little Spartan Pantries, we are helping fight the stigma and making sure students know about the resources available to them no matter what side of the school they are on or the level of their needs," said Perez. 🌟

TOP FIVE

Spartan Pantry items most requested by students.

1. Toiletries
2. Snacks
3. Drinks/water
4. Soups
5. Yogurt and cheese

Source: Spartan Pantry



Amanda Richoz

Scholarship helps student finish degree

Amanda Richoz wanted to pursue a career in child care. "I've always wanted to work with children," said Richoz. She has worked full time at the Bethlehem Lutheran Child Development Center in Elgin for the past 26 years with a Child Development Associate® (CDA) Credential™, which requires a renewal every five years. "As a single parent, I had to work full time to support my family and I could only take a class here or there. This prevented me from finishing the degree I needed to secure my career in child care and not worry about renewing my certificate," said Richoz. In May, Richoz accomplished her goal — graduating with an Associate of Applied Science degree in education-early childhood with help from ECC's Complete to Compete Program.

Richoz isn't alone in balancing life and education. The Elgin Community College Foundation and Institutional Effectiveness and Research divisions recognized this challenge for students and established the Complete to Compete Program in 2019 to help students cross the finish line.

Data showed that the primary reason students did not complete their studies was due to obligations related to their work, family, and finances. "This was when we knew this program

was right for the ECC Foundation," said David Davin, executive director of institutional advancement and the ECC Foundation.

"When a student makes it this far and drops out due to finances, we recognize what a tragedy this is and we want to make sure we do whatever we can to help."

"Being a Complete to Compete scholar gave me the drive and inspiration to finish my classes."

—Amanda Richoz

"Being a Complete to Compete scholar gave me the drive and inspiration to finish my classes. There are so many programs and opportunities for the students to achieve their goals and accomplish their dreams," said Richoz. 🌱

The program targets near-completer students who are 15 or fewer credit hours away from completing a degree. Utilizing advanced analytics, ECC identifies students most likely to stop enrolling for classes and intervenes before they drop out. Of those in the program, 90 percent graduated at the end of the 2020-2021 school year compared to a control group who did not participate and had a graduation rate of 47 percent.

One Team.



Equity, diversity, and inclusion is a team effort

To change the game, it takes a team.

Elgin Community College is a welcoming campus where more than 1,250 employees and 8,400 students embody a diverse, inclusive community connected through a common goal to improve people's lives through learning and career development.

In recent years, efforts to bolster a culture of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) have become more formalized and more broadly recognized across the nation, progressing the already decades-long EDI work at ECC. From the classroom to the community, ECC is committed to celebrating and supporting the diversity of its students, employees, and community members through equitable and inclusive opportunities.

ECC's Student Success Infrastructure (SSI), established by President Dr. David Sam in 2012, works to improve student success among diverse populations by institutionalizing equitable support and resources, promoting awareness and understanding of critical success factors, and dismantling structural barriers within the institution.

SSI initiates and leads pilot programs at the college to improve student success. TRIUMPH (Transforming and Impacting Undergraduate Men Pursuing Higher Education) was one effort born from priorities identified through SSI and has since become a leading program at the college due to its proven impact on student success. Started in 2019 and led by Erik Enders, student life coordinator for student equity, whose position evolved

One Dream.



through SSI, TRIUMPH focuses on increasing the number of men of color graduating from college. "The biggest impact of the program is the community it created," said Enders. TRIUMPH equips its scholars with the tools to succeed in their personal, academic, and professional lives by fostering skills such as conflict resolution, goal setting, financial literacy, and public speaking. The program pairs participants with professional men of color mentors, and organizes events to expose them to opportunities such as various careers and places of work they may not have considered. The connection to other men of color is critical and serves as inspiration. "We try to show our scholars successful people who look like them and come from the same place they do," said Enders.

SSI initiatives also contributed to restructuring the traditional counselor position and dividing it into separate entities: employees who focus explicitly on academic and career advising

From left to right: Hope Torres (student), Tyler Roeger, PhD, Liddy Hope, PhD, Yolonda Barnes, EdD, Jerrmiah Wright, Pietrina Probst, Clark Hallpike, MBA, Susan Timm, EdD, Manny Salgado, PhD, Vinny Cascio, Jenna Manzano (student)

and those dedicated to wellness and mental health. The ECC Wellness Center provides access for all students to receive support in addressing potential barriers in their lives preventing them from achieving educational success. "We have a unique opportunity to truly learn about the diverse social and economic barriers affecting ECC students by working collaboratively with them to empower them to finish their degree and navigate the world," said Vinny Cascio, an ECC wellness professional.

Cascio also helped initiate and was a trainer for the Safe Zone

DIVERSITY continued on **PAGE 8**

DIVERSITY continued from PAGE 7

Project, a two-hour training session developed to expose ECC employees to LGBTQIA+ culture and the barriers those students face. A total of 244 ECC employees completed the training, placing the Safe Zone Trained logo on their office doors to increase and spread awareness of their support and advocacy to the LGBTQIA+ community.

Currently led by co-chairs Yolonda Barnes, EdD, associate dean of sustainability, business, and career technologies, and Loretta Mielcarek, graphic design adjunct faculty, SSI continues its work for students and targeted populations. This work includes taskforces focused on increasing EDI awareness and implementation at the college through culturally responsive teaching, student goal completion, textbook cost reduction, veteran support services, and undocumented student assistance.

When it comes to providing greater access to students with various abilities, Pietrina Probst, director of ADA, student access and disability services, offers a wide range of services to help ECC students cope with a disability, both seen and unseen. Probst's department helps ensure equal access to education for those in need. "When we become aware of a student need, it is our job to find out how we can best meet that need and fulfill our mission and commitment to our students," said Probst.

Diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) as an adult, ECC student Aun Raza found the tools he needed to succeed through Probst's department. "The services I had access to made all the difference for me. Pietrina met with me nearly every week for the past year to help me stay focused and on track with my studies," said Raza.

ECC student Hope Torres, a former nurse graduating this fall with an Associate of Applied Science degree in human services-substance abuse counseling, first learned of student access and disability services by seeking transportation assistance. Torres'



Yolonda Barnes, EdD

visual impairment began later in life and affected her nursing career. She commends Probst's understanding of students coping with a disability. "Instead of saying, 'it's okay,' she said, 'what do I need to do to help you,'" said Torres. "Disability is very individualized. I may not need some of the services, but at least I have them as a backup," Torres added.

The department assisted Torres with accessing books in audio form on and off campus. In addition to the ADA department, ECC formed an accessibility committee last year, comprised of faculty and staff developing a five-year accessibility plan to further ECC's mission to ensure equal access to education for every student.

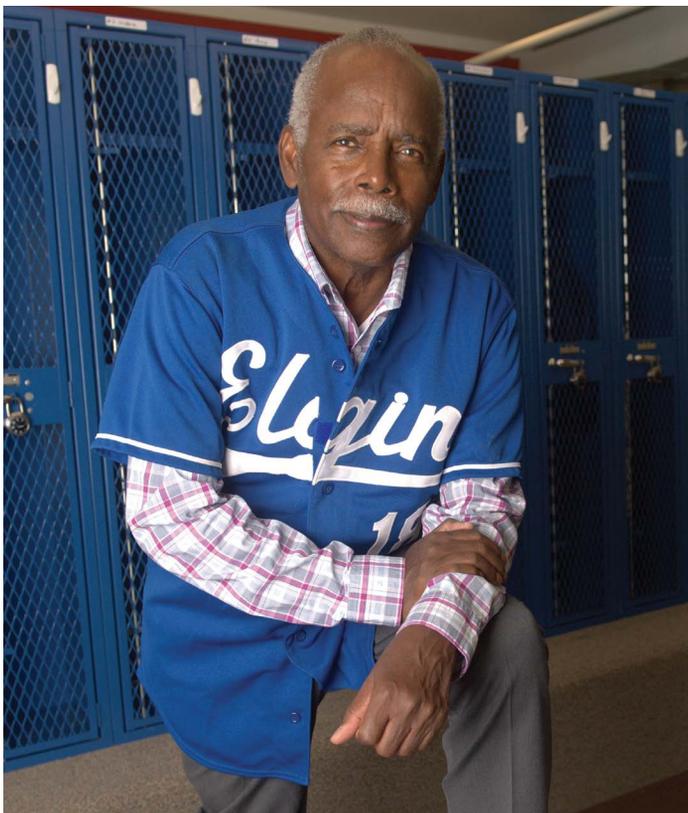
Student-Led

ECC also hosts many student-formed and led clubs that promote and celebrate various cultures and interests. For James Allen Jr., current student trustee and president of SWANS (Students Who Are Not Silent), feeling comfortable, finding fellowship, and securing support was pivotal as he decided to return to school. SWANS is the LGBTQIA+ advocacy group on campus. Participants discuss issues and promote the education and awareness of matters affecting the LGBTQIA+ community. "The main way SWANS helps support me on campus is by just existing. Knowing that I have a safe place where other like-minded people gather to discuss the same issues I have makes me realize how inclusive ECC is to all of its students," said Allen.

In addition to SWANS, student clubs such as the Organization of Latin American Students (OLAS), United Students of All Cultures (USAC), Black Student Achievers (BSA), the Asian-Filipino Club, and the ADAPT club for students with disabilities offer a space for cultural understanding and support for students.



Manuel Salgado, PhD



Clark Hallpike, MBA

"These clubs understand equity, diversity, and inclusion because these are the main pillars of a good and functional club," said Jenna Manzano, student body president. "For example, Student Government won't progress without having diverse opinions and voices. The only way that we can achieve this is by including all types of people in our club. As the student body president, my main goal is to create a safe space for students and see how I can help them through their personal journeys at ECC. Every student has different experiences and characteristics, and we must understand and have compassion for each other if we are to succeed together."

In the Classroom and Beyond

Four years ago, a group of ECC faculty and staff attended a Culturally Responsive Teaching conference in Baltimore, inspiring them to bring what they learned back to ECC and develop a committee focused on Teaching/Learning for Inclusivity, Diversity, and Equity (TIDE).

"From the start, we sought to create a place of mutual support and connection. A space where faculty can come with questions, ideas, and even failures," said Elizabeth "Liddy" Hope, PhD, assistant professor of human services and the committee's co-chair. Hope's fellow TIDE generators are co-chair Tyler Roeger, PhD, director of the center for the enhancement of teaching and learning (CETL), Susan Timm, EdD, professor of business, and Manuel Salgado, PhD, professor of psychology.

To bring this work into the classroom, TIDE provides multiple opportunities for engagement, including formal workshops, informal TIDE chats, and TIDE pods, which are groups within TIDE that support one another. With each opportunity and

advancement, Hope emphasizes how TIDE encourages the welcoming mentality of faculty to come and say, "I know some things, but there are many more things I need to know."

Before TIDE cascaded its way into ECC, Professor of Business Clark Hallpike, MBA, had been advocating and working to bring cultural awareness and change concerning equity, diversity, and inclusion in the classroom and the community for the past 25 years. Along with Timm, Hallpike co-chairs the Multicultural and Global Initiatives Committee (MAGIC), an organization leading the way by holding meaningful discussions and events at the college to prepare individuals to succeed in a diverse society by providing and advancing multicultural learning experiences in an inclusive environment.

Hallpike can name one word to describe MAGIC's overall theme: change. Through MAGIC events, such as the recent Black Lives Matter (BLM) series and the 2018 Targets of Hate series, the organization aims to engage faculty members because of their ability to reach and impact their students. Through MAGIC, faculty members are encouraged to attend events and bring their students, which helps discussions continue in their classrooms. "Part of our goal is to change people's attitudes regarding race and get our students acclimated to the world in which they live," said Hallpike.

MAGIC events welcome speakers from all college subjects, such as math and theater, providing a point of reference for each faculty member to relate to, learn from, and relay to their students. When the pandemic forced MAGIC events to switch to a virtual setting, it positively impacted the group's reach, opening the discussions to more people than previous in-person events. For the BLM series, more than 1,000 employees, students, and community members attended. "Now, more than ever, we are set to make some major differences. We cannot let that momentum die," said Timm. "When the world is in chaos, you do something positive to move it forward." ✨



Susan Timm, EdD



Adrian Bautista, '17



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Gina Reid Tinio



Darryl M. Tyndorf Jr., '99

Gala celebrates students' success, donor support

Forty percent of Elgin Community College students have unmet needs, including tuition, books, technology, food, and transportation — meaning the extra assistance received from scholarships is vital. That is why support from donors to the Elgin Community College Foundation is critical to helping students achieve their dreams.

The Elgin Community College Foundation's 2021 Gala, Dare to Dream, welcomed more than 230 guests and raised more than \$100,000 to celebrate all that ECC and its students accomplished through the generosity of donors this year. The event, held in-person and virtually, also recognized distinguished community

members who helped along the way. Attendees learned about the foundation's five pillars of support for ECC: scholarships, program funds, workforce development, the Complete to Compete Program, and the Student Success Fund (SSF).

There are 176 scholarships available this year. Of those, several demonstrate the value of embracing and celebrating diversity, including first-generation college students, undocumented students, and students of color in specific programs of study. For example, the Linda Deering Dean Scholarship is a full-tuition scholarship for nursing students of color established by Deering Dean, an ECC alumna, ECC Foundation director, and retired CEO

of Advocate Sherman Hospital.

Through September 2021, the ECC Foundation awarded more than 300 scholarships totaling over \$255,000, on top of another \$200,000 more in programmatic support for teaching and learning. As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the foundation also provided more than \$100,000 to students affected by the pandemic through the SSF. It has been so successful that students who received funds and coaching support had a 12 percent higher graduation rate compared to the overall ECC student population.

"Every dollar that the ECC Foundation can invest in students and programs comes from the community," said David Davin, executive director of institutional advancement and the ECC Foundation. "From generous individual donors to committed corporate partners, we are thrilled to recognize and honor those who made an especially significant impact on student success during one of the most challenging years in educational history."

ECC Foundation Gala and Awardees

The 2021 honorees include Motorola Solutions and the Motorola Solutions Foundation (ECC Friend of Education Award); The Hoffer

Foundation (Exceptional Friend of the ECC Foundation Award): Darryl Tyndorf, PhD, '99 (ECC Distinguished Alumni of the Year Award); and Adrian Bautista, '17 (ECC Esteemed Recent Alumni Award).

Individual recipients of the ECC President's Lasting Impact Award included Karen Fox, Cherie Murphy, Carolyn F. O'Neal, EdD, Ray Rogina, John Steffen, and Pastor and Mrs. Willie Tate.

Additionally, the health care workers of Community College District 509 received a special Lasting Impact Award, recognizing their exemplary response to the COVID-19 pandemic in risking their own lives to serve the health and welfare of our area's residents. Leaders of the following health care institutions represented the awardees: Amita Health St. Joseph Hospital, Advocate Sherman Hospital, Amita Health St. Alexius Medical Center, Elgin Mental Health Center, and Greater Family Health – formerly known as Greater Elgin Family Care Center.

The gala raised more than \$110,000 for various programs, including the Resources for Excellence Fund, which supports areas of greatest need, and the Student Success Fund, which supports emergency assistance. ✨

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Meet all award recipients and representatives and view photos and videos from the evening at elgin.edu/gala.



1-ECC student Jacquelyn Baker makes sushi as part of student demonstrations at the gala.

2-ECC student Jessica Patrick reads an original poem.

3-Flautists, ECC dual-credit students, Emma Lesko and Leah Mack perform at the gala.

4-ECC automotive students Christyan Gonzalez and Nadya Quezada demonstrate how to check a car battery.





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