

# OFFICE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

## Newsletter

February  
2025



In this newsletter you will find:

SDO Black History Month Statement, Latest Announcements & Updates, Real Talk, Upcoming Events, & DEI Tool of the Month.



# Black History Month 2025

2025 Black History Month/44 Days

Saint Mary's College of California

Theme- "African Americans and Labor"

On behalf of the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) and the Black Liberation Council (BLC) I invite everyone to join in the many activities on and off-campus to celebrate Black History Month and our 44 Days of events, in honor of the first Black President of the United States, the 44th – President Barack Obama. Attached is a listing of some events, but also keep track of ones as they are added to the ODEI calendar on our website and mentioned in our upcoming newsletter. And follow our SMCDEI Instagram as we highlight our Black colleagues across campus.

In 1915 Dr. Carter G. Woodson worked with others to establish the Association for the Study of African American History (ASALH) after participating in a national celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation sponsored by the state of Illinois. Dr. Woodson was an alumnus of the University of Chicago. He founded Negro History Week in 1926 to be held the second week of February in honor of the birthdays of President Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. 50 years later, in 1976 ASALH changed the week to Black History Month. Dr. Woodson and the members of ASALH understood it was incumbent upon them to recognize and celebrate the numerous contributions of Black people. Black History Month is a counter presentation and resistance to the ongoing negative stereotypes, disregard of Black excellence, hard work, creativity and intellect and the anti-Blackness that permeated American society then, and still continues today.

This year ASALH chose the theme of "African Americans and Labor" because it marks the 100th Anniversary of the creation of Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Maids by labor organizer and civil rights activist A. Philip Randolph. This was the first Black union to receive a charter in the American Federation of Labor (AFL). On June 5, 1941, A. Philip Randolph, International President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, wrote the following to Fiorella La Guardia, Mayor of New York City:

"Because the Negro People have not received their just share of jobs in national defense, and our young men have not been integrated into the armed forces of the Nation including the Army, Navy, Air Corps and Marine, on a basis of equality, some of the Negro leaders have formulated plans and set up the necessary machinery in the various sections of the country for the purpose of mobilizing from ten to fifty thousand Negroes to march on Washington in the interest of securing jobs and justice n national defense and fair participation and equal integration into the Nation's military and naval forces."

His words served as a precursor to the organizing of the famous 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom where Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his famous "I Have A Dream Speech." King stated, But 100 years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself in exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition. In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check.

Read the Speech.

<https://www.npr.org/2010/01/18/122701268/i-have-a-dream-speech-in-its-entirety>

In Solidarity,

Dr. Terri Jett, Associate Vice President and Senior Diversity Officer

# Updates and Announcements



## Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

### ODEI Mission Statement

Saint Mary's College is committed to building a diverse and inclusive workplace and learning environment where systems of oppression and exclusion are actively opposed and dismantled. We believe diversity is one of our greatest strengths; we broadly define diversity to include race, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, sex, sexual orientation, disability, nationality, immigration status, physical appearance, religion, age, military status, and socioeconomic status. However, we recognize that diversity without equity is neither sustainable nor morally just. The College commits to creating a safe, respectful, and equitable environment for all community members and does not condone discriminatory or disrespectful behavior, policies, or practices. Saint Mary's, as a college community, works to actively interrupt and transform systems of oppression, including but not limited to white supremacy, xenophobia, ableism, patriarchy, homophobia, transphobia, religious intolerance, and economic inequality, recognizing that these systems manifest at multiple levels - systemic, institutional, ideological, interpersonal, and internalized. We work together to mitigate the impacts of these systems and to build an emotionally supportive community where students, faculty, and staff feel seen and valued and can flourish as their full, authentic selves. We strive to act upon our Lasallian value of 'Respect for all People' in our everyday actions, through continuous individual self-inquiry and improvement, and through regular reviews of our policies, procedures, and systems.

### Addressing Campus Climate Issues Through GUIDE

A central goal of GUIDE is to raise staff and faculty awareness of the campus climate.

Numerous studies have concluded that how students experience their campus environment influences both learning and developmental outcomes, and that discriminatory environments have a negative effect on student learning. Students thrive in healthy environments, free of the negativity of discrimination, where inclusion and respect for diversity is the daily norm.

Creating a healthy campus climate is as important for faculty and staff as it is for students. Faculty and staff who consider their campus climate healthy and inclusive are more likely to feel personally and professionally supported. In addition, faculty and staff who have encountered prejudice directly attribute its negative effects to decreased health and well-being. Gaels Uniting for Inclusion and Diversity through Education (GUIDE) "represents our conviction that shared intention combined with collective action will guide our college on the journey toward a respectful, inclusive, and safe environment for all members of our campus community." We are holding three cohorts of GUIDE Tier I **this March**. They will be held during Flextimes on **Mondays and Wednesdays (1:30-3 pm)**. An **online option on Thursday evenings** will be offered as well. Faculty and staff will be notified of specific dates and a form for confirmation of attendance will be provided. I want to personally thank the amazing faculty and staff who are serving as facilitators this spring: **Shannon Davis, Mary Raygosa, Stephanie D' Costa, Jennifer Heung, Kimiya Shokri, and Nash Anderson.**

# Updates and Announcements



## Mission Statement

The **Committee on Diversity, Belonging, and Liberation (CDBL)** serves as a vital brain trust to the Senior Diversity Officer and the College President, providing strategic expertise and bold, actionable guidance in policy-making to advance our institution's commitment to anti-racism, equity, and liberation. We aim to build a culturally diverse, supportive workplace and learning environment in order to actively oppose and dismantle systems of oppression and exclusion; where every individual feels safe, respected, and valued. Supporting and leading college-wide efforts to uphold equity as a moral imperative, we strive to create conditions in which students, faculty, and staff can flourish authentically and reach their highest potential.

### **Our primary objectives include:**

**Driving the Recruitment, Retention, and Success of Underrepresented Students, Staff, and Faculty:** CDBL leverages its collective expertise to implement policies that are strategic and anti-racist, that attract and sustain diverse talent at all levels.

**Building an Actively Anti-Racist and Inclusive Community:** The CDBL seeks to dismantle exclusionary and oppressive structures. CDBL collaborates with campus organizations, initiates studies and develops policy recommendations, and supports programs.

**Establishing Systems of Accountability and Assessment for Equity and Anti-Racism:** Through rigorous evaluation, we hold ourselves and the college accountable by delivering measurable outcomes that align with our institution's mission and the goals of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI).

Acting as a critical think tank, CDBL collaborates closely with the Associate Vice President/Senior Diversity Officer and the President to embed the mission of the **Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI)** into all facets of the college. CDBL drives transformative change that fosters a vision of equity and justice in every office, department, classroom, and community space. As a designated **Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and Native American and Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (NAPISE)**, Saint Mary's College calls us to honor and uplift the diverse cultural backgrounds, gender identities, various abilities and disabilities, and intersectionalities of our community. By embodying the mission of ODEI within our respective offices, departments, and through college-wide initiatives, we collectively work toward a liberated and inclusive future for our institution.

# Updates and Announcements



**Mural Honoring the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe along the Guadalupe River Walk (August 2021)  
Muwekma Ohlone Tribal Land Acknowledgment for the St. Mary's College and the Town of Moraga  
Saclan/Jalquin/Huchiun/ ancestral Muwekma Bay Miwok and Ohlone Territory**

## SMC Land Acknowledgement

This document is a part of the ongoing work and commitment of the Native American Indigenous Student Association (NAISA), the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) and the Lasallian Brothers of Saint Mary's College to respectfully acknowledge and work in solidarity with the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe.

As the community of Saint Mary's College of California, we acknowledge we are gathered on the ethnohistoric tribal territory of the intermarried Saclan/Jalquin (hal-keen)/Huchiun (hoo-choon)/ ancestral Muwekma Bay Miwok and Ohlone Territory.

The present-day Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, with an enrolled Bureau of Indian Affairs documented membership of over 600, is comprised of all of the known surviving Indian lineages aboriginal to the San Francisco Bay region. They trace their Tribe's ancestry through the missionization policies deployed by the Catholic Church in connection to Missions Dolores, San Jose, and Santa Clara, during the expansion of the Hispano-European Empire into Alta California beginning in 1769. Their Muwekma families are the successors and living members of the sovereign, previously Federally Recognized Verona Band of Alameda County, now formally recognized as the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area who would like you to know that they are alive and thriving members of the broader Bay Area communities today.

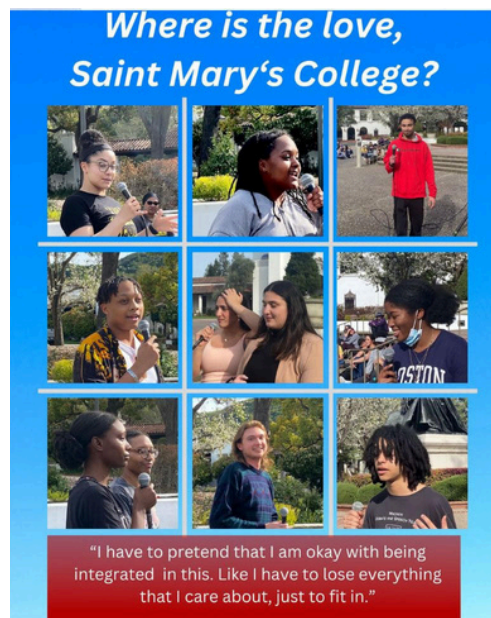
The Muwekma Ohlone Indian families have never left their aboriginal ancestral homelands of the Bay Area and maintain their identity, traditions, culture and language through the tenacity, strength and legacy of their ancestors and elders. Today, they attempt to repair the sustained ecological, environmental, and cultural devastation to their Tribe wrought by over 254 years of colonial processes of disenfranchisement through the politics of erasure. Their priorities are moved forward through three established entities: the Muwekma Ohlone Tribal Council, Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, Inc. and the Muwekma Ohlone Preservation Foundation.

They respectfully request that the good citizens of St. Mary's College and the Town of Moraga, and surrounding towns strive to be faithful stewards on behalf of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe by maintaining the bay, freshwater creeks, native plants, animal habitats, and the air we all breathe. We recognize that the De La Salle Brothers of Saint Mary's College and the Lasallian Family, have worked to serve honorably as good stewards of this land since its purchase in 1926.

# Real Talk

This is a section for people to freely express their thoughts in a manner that encourages informal community conversations. Be ready when you receive an invite to engage in some “real talk!”

February is a busy month at Saint Mary’s College with the start of Spring Semester, the numerous events honoring Black History Month and the kick-off of our campus read focusing on the theme “Love,” as written about by bell hooks, “all about love,” and adrienne maree brown, “loving corrections.” The theme was inspired by a group of students who were speaking out last March regarding their struggles and difficult experiences on our campus. I was not a part of this community at that time, but I did hear about it and in a video, I saw first year student Jessiah Jones ask a very profound question “Where is the Love?” Why not answer that question through a reading of texts together where we have an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of love, in theory and practice. Given our Lasallian foundational principles focusing on social justice and inclusive community we can discuss how loving ourselves and one another is or can be demonstrated in this educational context. Thank you to everyone who signed up to explore their hearts and minds in this traditional liberal arts approach and thank you to our activists’ students for being so inspiring.



(Photo/flyer credit: Skye Ward)

In peace and solidarity,

Dr. Terri Jett

Associate Vice-President and Senior Diversity Officer