

Leave the world
a little more equitable
than you found it.



EQUITY
CAN'T WAIT.



SEATTLE COLLEGES
FOUNDATION

In our fast-changing, competitive city, where virtually every family-wage job takes a degree or post-secondary credential, it's at the Seattle Colleges — North, South and Seattle Central — that the majority of our city's Black, Brown and lower-income residents make their start on a solid future.

If you're someone who believes that promise and potential bear no relationship to race or class, you share our commitment to students having the best possible experience at our schools.

That means caring, individual attention from advisors, tutors and mentors. It means support from scholarships and grants, so students don't work so much that their school progress slows or

stalls. It means faculty and staff who are talented and embody the rich diversity of our community, providing students with relatable examples of academic and professional achievement. It means strong academic programs attuned to community and employer needs. And it means classrooms and facilities that are modern, well-equipped and beautiful, demonstrating respect for our students and their aspirations.



Doing right by our students requires resources. Yet of every philanthropic dollar contributed to higher education, **only a penny** goes to schools like the Seattle Colleges.

Fortunately, as more people learn about our impact and innovation, that's changing.

Maybe you're part of that sea change — thank you! Or maybe you'd like to be — and may even consider a **legacy gift**. Supporting equity in education is a powerful way to lift the next generation, passing on some of the blessings you've enjoyed. A legacy gift can take many forms, from a simple bequest, to a donation of stocks, securities, real estate, retirement account balances, life insurance, or a trust.

If you'd like to learn more about legacy giving, please let us know. We can tell you about the different approaches people take, and work with your attorney and financial advisor to assure you accomplish the goals you have for your gift.

You can use the enclosed form and envelope to get in touch, or **please contact Traci Russell**, Seattle Colleges Foundation's Director of Planned Giving 206/934-5661 or traci.russell@seattlecolleges.edu.



EQUITY CAN'T WAIT.



SEATTLE COLLEGES
FOUNDATION

If you'd like to learn more about legacy giving or if you've already committed to a gift, but haven't told us, please let us know. It helps us plan and — if you agree — lets us publicly celebrate your generosity, inspiring others.

THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 2021

The Seattle Times

OPINION

Invest in Seattle Colleges for a path to higher education equity

BY CHIMENE CRAWFORD,
SHELIA EDWARDS LANG and
KOSHI EDWARDS-CHARLISAP
Special to The Times

There's a price to delay: Investing in public health, for example. Maintaining our bridges. There's also a price when we postpone racial and social justice. This last year, a missed need to disprove everything: sickness and death from COVID-19. Job loss. Hunger. Housing insecurity. Where does it end? In his short poem "Plaster," written in 1951, the celebrated Black poet Langston Hughes asked, "When happens is a dream deferred? ... Does it explode?"

The question is as relevant now as 70 years ago — perhaps more so, given the events this year. The last year, we repeatedly filled our streets with righteous protest. We all pine for peace. But this time, it may elude us unless we first — and as last — deliver more justice. This is the catalyst behind Equity Can't Wait, a new campaign on behalf of the 41,000 students at the Seattle Colleges, South Seattle Central and North.

When Seattle residents who are Black, Indigenous and other people of color enroll in college — if they enroll in college — the impact is on our schools. The same holds for those from backgrounds of economic disadvantage. We welcome all of these students with 130 different programs, several types of degrees (including 14 baccalaureates), apprenticeship programs, professional credentialing opportunities and more.

Each spring, thousands complete their programs and graduate, which is gratifying. But we're haunted by those who start and don't make it through, even more by those who never start at all. Our city abounds with good jobs, but as close 70% require a postsecondary credential.

The widely held phrase "inclusive prosperity" means that all of our city's citizens take part in the region's economic success. We share in the hope that we can

achieve this. But reaching it will take a new level of community investment in those intended for inclusion.

Here's what's thrilling: It's begun. An example is Seattle Promise, a program that provides two years of tuition and critical support services to new grads of Seattle's public high schools. This fall year is 1,000 — or a quarter of the eligible students — signed up. We celebrate that 62% are young people of color, a demographic where colleges usually see the largest gap in drop-out from high school to enrollment.

Seattle Promise is made possible by a key champion by the mayor and the City Council, and approved by Seattle voters. It's a huge boost to these young people's prospects. Ten participants are often from families that — like us many — are struggling financially. They may need added support.

Today we feel growing optimism that we can make it, both because Seattle's people are big hearted, and because our community increasingly sees and appreciates those we serve.

Over the last year our alumni have been hard to miss. The nursing and respiratory therapy graduates who have fought COVID-19 head-on. The early childhood education graduates who have kept the children of essential workers engaged and learning. The technical and skilled trades graduates who have kept the lifeblood of today's economy — power and the internet — flowing.

Seattle's Black and brown young people need our city, and our city needs them — in every role, all the way to the C-suite. But to make that happen, we have to invest, building on years like Seattle Promise.

For us, this is a startling statistic: of every philanthropic dollar contributed to higher education nationally, just one cent goes to community colleges. Yet here in our city, the Seattle Colleges alone can well cover 60% of those doing undergraduate study.

Given the measure, we know what works, not just for the part of our student body that's fresh out of high school, but the far larger part that's older (the median student age at the Seattle Colleges is 28). What's needed is more one-on-one mentoring, tutoring and support that keeps students engaged, confident and mentally healthy. More programs that place students directly into growing career fields and on their way for success. More support to recruit and retain racial and culturally diverse faculty and staff. More upgrades to our decades-old facilities for a future of blended in-person and online coursework.

The needed investment isn't trivial. But the price of waiting isn't higher, not just to those left out, but everyone. In this moment of peril and possibility for our community, our country, our planet, we can't leave anyone's talents undiscovered and undeveloped.



Chimene Crawford is a senior producer at South Seattle College.



Shelia Edwards Lang is a founding member of Seattle Central College.



Koshi Edwards-Charlisap is a founding member of South Seattle College.