



**Ventura County Community College District**  
**Chancellor's Office**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Patti Blair  
[communications@vcccd.edu](mailto:communications@vcccd.edu)

**VCCCD Board of Trustees is Committed to Student Success  
for Black and African American Students**

*District is committed to inclusiveness and equity for all*

(CAMARILLO, Calif.) July 7, 2020 –The Ventura County Community College District Board of Trustees is committed to diversity and inclusion as key priorities in the organization's values. At its June 23 meeting, the Board adopted a [Resolution Affirming a Commitment to Student Success for Black and African American Students](#). Action items to remove systemic barriers for Black and African American students were addressed at the Board's Planning Session on June 27.

The Board is dedicated to fostering a culture of inclusion for Black and African American students in which they feel safe, respected and valued. Students will continue to be invited to share their unique perspective, talents and backgrounds.

“Through this resolution, we state our commitment to support our Black and African American students,” said Chair Bernardo M. Perez during the board meeting. “We know that we need more than words, our students deserve more than words, which is why we commit to action.”

“Passion, that's what it takes in this movement, to be able to carry things through and to maintain courage and strength despite being the only one standing up,” added Trustee Gabriela Torres. “That's what it takes to do this important work.”

In drafting the resolution, the Board incorporated information from the African American Student Success Virtual Townhall, which convened over 1,000 California community college practitioners, policymakers and national scholars. Townhall attendees discussed financial aid reform, housing, food, technology and transportation insecurities, impacts of COVID-19 on African American students, and policy recommendations to support this population.

“We believe that higher education should be available to everyone, in a culturally competent environment, and we call upon each other--students, faculty, classified professionals and administrators--to be catalysts for change,” said Chancellor Greg Gillespie.

At the board meeting, students from VCCCD colleges voiced their support for the resolution and encouraged the District to take action.

“I want to focus on not just bringing strategies and courses to the table, but actually doing it,” said Lorena Ortiz, president of Oxnard College’s Associated Student Government. “We bring ideas. I want to be mobilized. I want us to do the work.”

“This is beyond important,” added Moorpark College student Gerald Richardson III, who is the founder and president of Youthfully Evolved Society, where members volunteer and focus on ways to aid and assist vulnerable populations. “This is absolutely needed for African American students, especially in a critical time like this.”

As Student Trustee, Ashley Gonzales represents the approximately 32,000 students in the District. She stated: “We have to educate and be a part of change. It takes all of us to be able to do this.”

The Board will collaborate with Moorpark, Oxnard and Ventura colleges, and local, state and federal governments, businesses and community-based organizations. Together, stakeholders will provide race-conscious decision-making in support of Black and African American community college students as they complete their academic programs, transition to four-year universities and enter the workforce.

#### **About Ventura County Community College District**

*The Ventura County Community College District is a member of the 115-campus California Community College system, and serves approximately 32,000 students annually. The District’s three colleges--Moorpark, Oxnard, and Ventura--offer programs in general education for degrees and certificates, transfer to four-year colleges and universities, career technical education, and provide opportunities to engage in co-curricular campus activities. For more information, please visit [vcccd.edu](http://vcccd.edu).*

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