



WHITMAN
COLLEGE



MOVING TOWARD

Inclusive Excellence

2023 Inclusive Excellence Yearbook



Whitman College Mission Statement

Situated within the rich and complex landscape and history of the Walla Walla Valley, Whitman College provides a rigorous liberal arts education of the highest quality to passionate and engaged students from diverse backgrounds. Whitman students develop their intellectual and creative capacities in a supportive scholarly community that prioritizes student learning within and beyond our classrooms. We help each student translate their deep local, regional and global experiences into ethical and meaningful lives of purpose.

Whitman College Diversity Statement

Diversity, equity and inclusion are core values at Whitman College. The college strives to have and support a student body, staff and faculty that represent the diversity of our world: gender identity, sexuality, race, ethnicity, national origin, socioeconomic class, disability, religion, spirituality and age cohort.

We seek to foster an inclusive learning environment in which members draw from different intellectual traditions to engage with and challenge one another through studied, thoughtful and respectful dialogue and debate.

We aspire to become a place where all community members experience difference every day, where diversity is supported and woven throughout our cultural fabric: our values, our behavior, our culture. Our mission focuses on educating engaged students from diverse backgrounds and experiences in a college community where everyone can participate fully in the life of the college and experience a genuine sense of belonging.

Education is a common good that ultimately serves the entire society; therefore, access is a moral imperative. Diverse learning contexts are known to provide transformative educational experiences. An inclusive environment at Whitman that nurtures the development of the ability to work effectively across difference will prepare our students for life after Whitman. We believe that through an innovative, rigorous liberal arts curriculum, we can educate all students and prepare them to serve in various fields and sectors and to contribute to a rapidly changing, multicultural and globalized world. Our graduates will be ready to work with others for the common good.



Inclusive Excellence Statement

WHEN WE THINK ABOUT DIVERSITY, equity and inclusion, we must understand that it is not simply a matter of increased representation or bringing people with different identities together. We have to be intentional about how we come together so we do not reproduce oppressive patterns or reinforce systems that have contributed to the devaluation of certain groups or identities. It only takes one person to desegregate a space, but it takes everyone to integrate that space. In other words, the mere presence of a person with a marginalized identity does not result in meaningful change. Inclusive excellence is about how everyone benefits when our institutional culture and practices are focused on how we can attract and retain talent from across a range of identities, when we are committed to addressing inequity on and off campus, and when everyone's contribution matters.

We recognize that our path toward inclusive excellence requires:

Diversity Without Dominance At Whitman, we want an environment where there is diversity across a range of social, cultural and political identities, without the dominance of a particular cultural frame and where someone who is in the numerical minority in this context would not and should not feel like their perspectives, needs or concerns are less important or valid.

Equity Without Benevolence We want an environment where there is equity without benevolence—one that acknowledges that the playing field is not even and efforts to address the imbalance are not charity or generosity but an appropriate and reasonable response to existing and ongoing systemic oppressions.

Inclusion Without Othering We want an environment where there is inclusion without othering—one where no one is degraded, diminished, ridiculed or marginalized based on difference and where interpersonal harm is infrequent and addressed when it occurs.

Belonging Without Assimilation We want an environment where everyone feels like they belong and can show up as their authentic self—one where everyone feels welcomed and no one is expected to assimilate, code-switch or present themselves differently for acceptance or recognition of their value.

Our commitment to these principles is sustained through an emphasis on cultural humility, cultural wealth and cultural pluralism in our daily interactions.

Cultural Humility (defined by Drs. Melanie Tervalon and Jann Murray-Garcia)—a practice of lifelong learning, cultivation of empathy and attentiveness to positionality (i.e., the power and privileges associated with particular social group identities).

Cultural Wealth (defined by Dr. Tara Yosso)—a focus on the depth and richness of the cultural capital present in marginalized communities that is far too often unknown, degraded or diminished in majority spaces.

Cultural Pluralism (defined by Drs. Madelon Stent, William Hazard and Harry Rivlin)—an ethic of reciprocal respect among and across cultural groups with significantly different practices, patterns of belief, languages, ideologies, phenotypes and knowledge ways, who also have distinct orientations to and histories with the land, all operating in the same locality or context.



Dr. Sarah Bolton, President

“**Inclusive excellence is central to our mission and the ways students learn, grow, thrive and prepare for lives of purpose and impact.**”

Our Journey To Realize Our Commitments

IF YOU ARE VISITING WHITMAN or new to our community, welcome! No matter how long you have been here, we hope you find that Whitman is a place that celebrates all of your identities, knowledge, culture and perspectives.

Whitman College is committed to inclusive excellence because it is central to our mission and to the ways that students learn, grow, thrive and prepare for lives of purpose and impact. Leadership on today's most pressing issues requires engaging diverse perspectives at every level. So we continue to deepen Whitman's excellence and impact by drawing people with a diversity of experiences and identities to our campus, building a community that is deeply welcoming for all, and lifting up the voices of students, staff and faculty who reflect our world. As our campus becomes more diverse, we see new kinds of flourishing of intellectual and community life that make Whitman stronger. We are focused on ensuring inclusive and equitable working and learning environments so that Whitman is a place where all members of the community feel deeply welcome and can thrive and grow.

The college is on a journey to fully realize these commitments, looking honestly at the places we need to change to become a truly inclusive and anti-racist campus. Doing so requires learning, leadership, collaboration and shared vision. This yearbook presents some of the extraordinary work that is happening across our community and the progress we are making. My deepest thanks go to everyone in the Division of Inclusive Excellence and across the college who are doing this crucial work with such dedication and care every day.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Bolton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Sarah Bolton, Ph.D.
Whitman College President



Dr. John Johnson, Vice President for Inclusive Excellence

Winning With Culture

EVERY YEAR DURING OUR ANNUAL RETREAT, the staff who work in the Division of Inclusive Excellence (IE) take time to engage in a moment of reflection and projection. We look back at our achievements from the previous year and look forward to our future goals and aspirations for the division as a whole and for each unit operating under the IE umbrella. Since I assumed the role of Vice President for Inclusive Excellence (previously known as Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion) back in July 2021, our small but mighty team has made great strides in the development of institutional infrastructure to support diversity, equity, inclusion, anti-racism and accessibility (DEIA) at Whitman. We have established new units (LGBTQIA+ Student Services), designed new spaces (All Faiths Room), and expanded access to professional development and DEIA learning opportunities for the campus through membership with the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity and the expansion of Community Learning Days.

We did not do that work alone. Each achievement was accomplished through collaboration and we continue to build on that work with our colleagues across campus. We are preparing to roll out additional initiatives and programs to advance inclusive excellence and a detailed summary of our work can be found in the report we produce each summer. This yearbook, however, is not focused on the accomplishments of one functional area on campus, but rather highlights the numerous ways that inclusive excellence is enacted across the college.

We define inclusive excellence in a manner consistent with the framing offered by the American Association of Colleges and Universities and believe that our core DEIA values should be embedded in everything we do at Whitman, from the curriculum, to the allocation of resources, to our student and employee recruitment strategies. As Williams et al. (2005)¹ and other scholars have shared, inclusive excellence reflects the understanding that diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) lead to organizational excellence and, rather than seen as an add-on to the work, must be recognized as integral to the work we all do.

What's more, we cannot be excellent as an institution if we are not diverse, and we cannot be diverse if we are not excellent at inclusion. At Whitman, we are working to be a place that wins with culture and where each and every one of us feels a sense of belonging and is committed to building our capacity around inclusive excellence. We are proud to feature this collection of projects, programs and people to serve as a small sample of what inclusive excellence looks like on our campus. We are moving in the right direction, and we are moving together. More us, more we.

Go Blues!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Johnson'.

John Johnson, Ph.D.
Vice President for Inclusive Excellence

1. Williams, Damon A., Joseph B. Berger, and Shederick A. McClendon. *Toward a Model of Inclusive Excellence and Change in Postsecondary Institutions*. Washington, D.C. Association for American Colleges & Universities, 2005.

“Diversity, equity and inclusion must be recognized as integral to the work we all do at Whitman College.”



Third Space Speaker Series Constructs New Sociocultural Terrain on Campus

THE THIRD SPACE SPEAKER SERIES

was established in the spring of 2022 by Vice President for Inclusive Excellence John Johnson. Leveraging seed funding provided through a grant from the Johnston-Fix Foundation, Johnson sought to create a series that reflected the principles of inclusive excellence he espoused. The concept of a third space emerges from the work of scholars who saw it as a space of transgressive possibilities and where those who are often confined to the margins can be centered (Bhabha 1994;¹ Gutiérrez et al. 1995).² Dr. Kris Gutiérrez explains that in locations where dominant cultural values and marginalized counterscripts intersect, there exists the potential for “joint construction of a new sociocultural terrain” that

serves to shift our understanding of “what counts as knowledge and knowledge representation.”

Our student demographics are shifting. We are welcoming more students on our campuses who are the first in their families to attend a four-year college or university, and we find a growing number of students in the classroom who do not share the same racialized identity or cultural background as our largely white faculty.

Diversity, equity and inclusion are core values at Whitman, and as President Bolton has noted, the breadth of perspectives available on our campus “is one of our greatest strengths, and engaging meaningfully with differing views is crucial to the learning that happens here.” The liberal arts college classroom, however, is laden

“**A third space can bring cultural humility, cultural wealth and cultural pluralism together and provide opportunities for transformative educational experiences.**”

with power disparities, and it is difficult for a divergent point of view to receive appropriate consideration when delivered from what is regarded as a minoritized location. Try as they might to create a flattened environment for courageous and mutual exchange, faculty cannot disappear the social and structural differences that exist between them and the students they serve. A third space can bring cultural humility, cultural wealth and cultural pluralism together and provide opportunities for transformative educational experiences inside and outside of the classroom that can challenge our assumptions, inspire new questions and contribute to our personal and intellectual growth.

Proffered by Drs. Melanie Tervalon and Jann Murray-Garcia, the concept of cultural humility encourages a commitment to lifelong learning, cultivation of empathy and attentiveness to positionality (i.e.,

the power and privileges associated with particular social group identities). Cultural wealth, theorized by Dr. Tara Yosso, focuses on the depth and richness of the cultural capital present in marginalized communities that is far too often unknown, degraded or diminished in majority spaces. Cultural pluralism is defined by Drs. Madelon Stent, William Hazard and Harry Rivlin as “a state of equal co-existence in a mutually supportive relationship.” Dr. Stent and colleagues recognized the need for an ethic of reciprocal respect among and across cultural groups with significantly different practices, patterns of belief, languages, ideologies, phenotypes and knowledge ways, who also had distinct orientations to and histories with the land, all operating in the same locality or context. A third space provides us with new possibilities for learning through inclusive excellence.

The Third Space Speaker Series launched with a virtual conversation with education scholars Dr. Leigh Patel and Dr. Sheeva Sabati focused on the subtle ways the settler colonial history and legacy of many academic institutions bleeds into the campus through symbolism and artifacts that can color the experience of historically excluded students. Patel and Sabati were followed by a string of exceptional scholars and thought-provoking guests including a robust discussion of sports and social justice with Dr. Scott Brooks and Dr. Nicholas Villanueva; a panel on disability justice featuring Dr. Lissa Ramirez-Stapleton, Alex Locust and Dr. Lisette E. Torres-Gerald; Freedom Scholar award recipient Dr. Jared Ball in conversation with hip-hop artist and professor Dr. A.D. Carson; along with presentations by award-winning photographer Matika Wilbur and best-selling author Ijeoma Oluo.

1. Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London; New York. Routledge, 1994.

2. Gutiérrez, Kris, Betsy Rymes, and Joanne Larson. “Script, Counterscript and Underlife in the Classroom: James Brown versus Brown v. Board of Education.” *Harvard Educational Review* 65 (3): 445–471.



OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP ROW (from left): Matika Wilbur, Dr. A.D. Carson, Dr. Sheeva Sabati, Dr. Nicholas Villanueva

OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM ROW (from left): Alex Locust, Dr. Lissa Ramirez-Stapleton, Dr. Lisette E. Torres-Gerald, Dr. Scott Brooks

THIS PAGE (from left): Ijeoma Oluo, Dr. Jared Ball, Dr. Leigh Patel

New Staff Position Focuses on Native American Outreach

IN 2017, WHITMAN COLLEGE and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) signed a document that formalized their long-standing relationship. The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was renewed in 2022 and focuses on efforts to enhance Native American higher education opportunities.

In 2023, in support of the MOA, President Sarah Bolton announced the formation of a new role at Whitman: Special Assistant to the President for Native American Outreach. Jeanine Gordon, an enrolled member of the CTUIR, is the first person to hold this important position.

In her role, Gordon chairs the Whitman College Advisory Council for Collaboration with CTUIR (WCACCC). WCACCC was established to enable Whitman College to function as an effective long-term partner to the CTUIR and helps ensure the college upholds its responsibilities articulated in the Memorandum of Agreement. The MOA's scope covers many areas, including identifying areas of mutual research and enhancing support to Native American students in areas such as outreach, recruitment, internships and more.

In order to ensure that the priorities outlined in the MOA are met, Gordon has planned events for Native American alumni and Native American Heritage Month, and coordinated the first Páshxapa Powwow which brought tribal members from across the region to Whitman College campus for a traditional celebration.

Gordon works closely with students, staff, and faculty, and she partners with multiple departments across campus, including the Offices of Admission and Financial Aid, to support recruitment and scholarship efforts for the Šináata Scholarship.



Jeanine Gordon, Special Assistant to the President for Native American Outreach



Martin Luther King Jr. Day March

Each year, the Walla Walla community celebrates the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The Intercultural Center coordinates a collaborative event with Walla Walla University that typically involves a gathering on Whitman's campus followed by a march down Main Street.

This tradition was briefly interrupted by the pandemic, but in January 2023, Tebraie Banda-Johns, Director of the Intercultural Center, led a number of staff, faculty, students and community members to downtown Walla Walla, where the group convened for a program of curated music, speeches and short talks to honor and celebrate the values and contributions of Dr. King.

Faculty Attend Conferences To Expand Diversity in Recruitment

In an effort to expand recruiting networks and ultimately increase faculty diversity in the sciences, faculty from Biology and Computer Science attended conferences to promote jobs at Whitman and learn about the work of emerging scholars. Representatives from the Biology Department attended the SACNAS National Diversity in STEM Conference and the AISES National Conference: Advancing Indigenous People in STEM, while representatives from Computer Science attended the Tapia Conference celebrating diversity in computing and the Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing.

PHOTO BY ATZIRI FERNANDEZ OROZCO '27

DEI Learning Across Campus & Beyond

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE

on Race and Ethnicity in American Higher Education (NCORE) is the annual convening for higher education professionals engaged in work related to access, equity, inclusion and justice.

“NCORE was the best conference I have attended ... I left feeling a greater sense of connection and empowerment in this work.”

—ANDREW JOHNSON, INTERIM DIRECTOR OF RESIDENCE LIFE AND HOUSING

For roughly 35 years, NCORE has been the recognized space for diversity professionals, scholars and thought leaders to come together to advance inclusive excellence through a robust exchange of ideas and practices at an immersive five-day conference. As a DEIA learning and capacity-building opportunity, NCORE is unmatched.

In 2022, the annual NCORE conference was held in Portland, Oregon. Given the proximity to Walla Walla and the value of the learning experience, the college coordinated a delegation

of 23 Whitman faculty, staff, administrators and students to attend the conference. This delegation was unprecedented in terms of scale and scope and was made possible through the financial support of the President's Office and donations to the Whitman Fund designated for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The NCORE group included at least one representative from each cabinet area, along with two students and two cabinet members. Delegates were chosen based on who would personally and professionally benefit from the experience and were well positioned to champion inclusive excellence in their varied campus sectors.

The 2022 NCORE experience was transformative, and many of the delegates were eager to expose other members of the Whitman community to some of the content they encountered at the conference. Shortly after returning to campus, one group of attendees organized a book circle and another group started planning a summary presentation to the faculty related to their experience.

The NCORE initiative continued in 2023 when 18 Whitman community members traveled to the conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, and a small group is being coordinated for the 2024 conference as well.

Problems With Privilege

In spring of 2023, Visiting Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Gender Studies Meiver De la Cruz taught the course Problems with Privilege. The Gender Studies course interrogates what it means to “check your privilege” and whether checking one’s privilege is enough. A stated goal of the course is to “understand how various dimensions of our identities, such as gender, race, class, age and ability, shape experiences of the social world, of structural and political power and violence, of institutions and representations in varying global contexts.”

What emerged from that course were a number of community-engaged projects focused on food insecurity, disability justice, affordable housing and other projects seeking to make a difference in the community.



Leading With Equity

Campus leaders must possess and cultivate the skills needed to build and lead diverse teams.

As all of us work to develop our DEIA competencies, our staff supervisors must also build capacity for navigating their identity through structural power, delivering feedback equitably across difference, identifying diverse employee motivations, and managing change and resistance associated with the growing unit-level commitment to DEIA.

In collaboration with the Division of Inclusive Excellence, the Office of Human Resources offers an annual training on inclusive supervision that features expert presenters and provides managers with valuable tools to advance inclusive excellence in their areas and to better supervise staff who do not share their identity.



Students Lead Annual Power & Privilege Symposium

FOR MORE THAN A DECADE, students at Whitman College have organized an annual Power and Privilege Symposium. Classes are canceled on that day to encourage participation in this event, which seeks to make space for conversations about structural oppression and how they manifest themselves on the Whitman College campus and beyond. Whitman students, faculty and staff lead panels and speak on a variety of topics, including racism, sexism, ableism, capitalism and more. The symposium strives to educate the community about the power structures prevailing around the world, challenging paradigms and asking difficult questions about the relationships and structures of power and privilege.

The roots of the Power and Privilege Symposium can be traced back to the fall of 2006. Following an incident where two Whitman College students showed up to a party in blackface, classes were canceled for a campuswide discussion on race—a Symposium on

Race Relations and Community. While the symposium was not repeated in 2007, a Symposium on Diversity and Community: Unfolding Identities was held in 2008.

In 2013, a group of students who felt minoritized on campus created the first annual Power and Privilege Symposium, hosting a series of workshops with no budget, little marketing and without formal institutional support. The next year, faculty voted to cancel classes for the day to promote attendance, a tradition that has continued each year since. Today, the symposium has broad campus support.

While each year's symposium has a different theme and team of student organizers, most years have included a notable non-Whitman keynote speaker, as well as multiple student- and faculty-led presentations happening simultaneously in several venues on campus. Some years have included additional tie-in events, such as a film screening or a live concert.

FIRST-GENERATION/WORKING CLASS

Summer Fly-In Program Starts Students on Path to Success

THIS YEAR, the college saw record participation in the Summer Fly-In program. Now in its ninth year, the program is designed to provide early connection opportunities for incoming students who are the first in their families to attend college or incoming students who are Pell-eligible.

During the summer of 2023, close to 80 eligible students participated in the program. While on campus, these students met with staff in key offices, sampled academic offerings, explored downtown, made social connections and, most importantly, got themselves ready for their return to campus in August.

Summer Fly-In also provides a valuable leadership development and employment opportunity for a number of continuing students who are selected to serve as peer leaders in the program. This past year, 10 of the Summer Fly-In Leaders were leaders the previous year, and many participated in the program as entering students themselves.





We know that how the life of the salmon goes is how our life goes. When the salmon go, we go. And when we go, oh, you guys are not long after”

NAKIA WILLIAMSON, Director of Cultural Resources for the Nez Perce tribal government





LAND, WATER, JUSTICE

Students Explore Land & Racial Justice in the Pacific Northwest

IN MAY AND JUNE 2023, 15 students participated in the summer field course Land, Water, Justice taught by Eunice Blavascunas, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Environmental Studies. The course asked students to think about how to productively engage with difficult racial pasts and presents to help us imagine more socially just and ecologically sensitive futures in the Inland Northwest.

Students considered what land justice means in the context of settler colonialism by listening to the voices of Yakama, Umatilla, Walla Walla, Cayuse and Nez Perce tribal members, as well as the voices and stories of those who arrived as laborers on the homelands of Sahaptian speakers, such as Latinx farmworkers, rural descendants of Black logging communities and land trusts working to share land and resources. They also read about the connections between Manifest Destiny and decolonization and gained skills in digital storytelling, oral history and interviews.

As part of the class, students collaborated to create a StoryMaps website that takes visitors through highlights of issues they explored and the people they met and spoke with. The two students who assembled the website, whit.mn/arcgis, Ishaan Swami '26 and Theo Delmonaco '24, submitted it to the 2023 ArcGIS StoryMaps Competition, a global competition to create place-based stories about equitably conserving the earth's lands and waters, with submissions from more than 50 countries. They placed as finalists.

The Yakima Valley

Before non-Indigenous settlement, the Yakama Nation's homelands included more than 12 million acres, stretched across the Yakima Valley and the majority of Central Washington. Today, The Yakama Nation Indian Reservation consists of only 1 million acres, and the Yakima Valley is the agricultural center for Washington state, generating approximately 21%

of Washington state's agricultural sales. Agriculture in the Yakima Valley relies heavily on the labor of Latinx migrant workers.

In the Yakima Valley, Whitman students met migrant working families and people who work the land using principles of permaculture and composting. They also learned about the history of Inaba Farms, which weaves together stories of Japanese immigrants, the Yakama Nation and Latinx laborers. And they met Dulce Gutiérrez, the first Latina and first openly queer city council member in Yakima, elected in 2015.

Wallowa County

For thousands of years, the land now called Wallowa County in Oregon was home to the Nimiipuu (Nez Perce) whose lives were sustained by salmon populations. In the 1600s, the Nimiipuu encountered European horses and quickly integrated them into their culture, becoming accomplished riders. In 1855, the Nimiipuu reserved 7.5 million acres of their homelands through a treaty with the United States government. When gold was discovered on the reservation, the federal government created a new treaty that reduced their reservation to a fraction of its original size. Some of the Nimiipuu refused to relocate, leading to the Nez Perce War of 1877.

In Wallowa County, Whitman students met Gwendolyn Trice, who is working today to preserve the history of Maxville, founded as a segregated logging town. From the creation of Oregon as a state in 1848 until 1926, Oregon law prohibited African Americans from owning property in the state. Trice is the daughter of an African American logger who worked in Maxville.

The Land, Water, Justice course was funded by the Andrew Mellon Foundation through the Pacific Northwest Just Futures Institute for Racial and Climate Justice, a consortium of partners from the University of Oregon, University of Idaho and Whitman College.



The Academic Resource Center (ARC)

Addressing Disability & Accessibility

ESTABLISHED IN the fall of 2021, the primary charge of the College Accessibility Committee (CAC) is to review and address the accessibility needs and issues that arise at the college.

Guided by the college's statement to create and uphold a "community where everyone can participate fully in the life of the college and experience a genuine sense of belonging" the CAC engages in collaborative and informed practices to ensure equitable access to facilities and experiences at Whitman.

With this commitment, the CAC assists in ensuring compliance with all local, state and federal laws regarding individuals with disabilities, including but not limited to Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008.

Beyond compliance, the CAC strives to create an accessible and inclusive Whitman. Committee membership includes representation from an array of relevant functional areas on campus, including but

not limited to Human Resources, Equity and Compliance, Facilities, Student Affairs and the Academic Resource Center. In addition to the collection of responsible parties involved with the CAC, the Division of Inclusive Excellence compensates a student representative from the Disability and Difference Community (known as DISCO) student organization to

serve on the committee and provide valuable insights to guide the work of the committee.

The CAC is working on the college's ADA Transition Plan, has established a mechanism for reporting physical obstructions and is coordinating opportunities for ableism education on campus.

Cultivation Grants Support Campus Projects That Advance DEIA

The Division of Inclusive Excellence launched the DEIA Cultivation Grant program in April 2022. DEIA Cultivation Grants are intended to support projects, programs, events and initiatives that Whitman students, staff or faculty are coordinating or pursuing that advance diversity, equity, inclusion or anti-racism at the college.

Leveraging a portion of the funds from donor contributions to support DEI at Whitman, in the last 18 months, cultivation grants have supported guest speakers on disability in the outdoors, a pilot employee resource group, anti-racism education for staff and faculty, student creative projects promoting cultural pluralism, and an Indigenous artifact repatriation effort.

Whitman Hires DEIA-Focused Staff Members

IN THE SPRING OF 2022, the offices of Human Resources and Admission set out to recruit new staff in their areas who would have a specific focus on diversity, equity and inclusion.

The Admission team was explicit in their desire to better position the institution to attract and retain students from a range of backgrounds and identities. Admission was seeking someone with DEIA competencies with a passion for working with students who were historically underrepresented at Whitman.

Human Resources was looking for someone who could help embed DEI into the talent acquisition process and coordinate the unit's initiatives to advance diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism competencies among all employees of the college. Human Resources was in search of someone who could help Whitman build a diverse and inclusive workforce by working with hiring managers, training equity advocates to serve on search committees, contributing to the Title IX and grievance

processes, and functioning as the DEIA subject matter expert for the office.

Admission and Human Resources both consulted with the Vice President for Inclusive Excellence (VPIE) prior to conducting their searches and included the VPIE in the finalist interview process. Makaya Kekoa Resner joined the Admission team as the Assistant Director-DEIA Focus in August 2022 and Atarah Pinder joined the Whitman community as Senior Human Resources Generalist in October 2022. Since these two DEIA-focused staff members arrived on campus, we have witnessed an increased emphasis on candidate pool development by hiring managers, and Whitman's Class of 2027 was the most diverse in the school's history. While it is certainly true that every Whitman employee has a responsibility to advance inclusive excellence, at present only a handful have it formally written into their job duties and responsibilities. Pinder and Resner are making a difference at Whitman!



Atarah Pinder



Makaya Kekoa Resner



Inclusive Excellence Awards Recognize Campus Contributions

Whitman College believes it is important to recognize faculty, staff and students for their contributions to inclusive excellence. In each of the last two years, the Division of Inclusive Excellence has made a point to present awards to individuals and student groups that have made meaningful contributions to diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism efforts on campus. These awards for leadership and service to advance inclusive excellence include public recognition as well as a cash gift. They function to acknowledge invisible labor, promote the value of inclusive excellence and elevate the importance of DEIA to the mission and success of the college.



LGBTQIA+ Student Services Opens Queer Resource Center

AT THE BEGINNING of the 2023–2024 academic year, senior administrators provided LGBTQIA+ Student Services with dedicated space in the Reid Campus Center to better support the more than 30% of Whitman students who identify as queer. The Queer Resource Center serves as a hub for fostering community, providing resources and hosting a variety of events and activities. It is a place where LGBTQIA+ students, faculty and staff can gather, socialize and engage in meaningful conversations.

Research shows that LGBTQIA+ inclusive education environments are associated with numerous positive health and well-being outcomes for sexual and gender minority students. An LGBTQIA+ center serves as a physical and visible representation of the community on campus. By incorporating colors and design elements that are associated with LGBTQIA+ pride and identity, the center becomes a recognizable symbol of inclusivity and support. It sends a powerful message to LGBTQIA+ students that their identities are acknowledged and celebrated within the campus community.

The Queer Resource Center is a space where LGBTQIA+ community members can express their authentic selves without fear of judgment or rejection. The space will continue to evolve and adapt to support the diverse needs and aspirations of the queer community at Whitman.

All Faiths Room Provides Safe Space To Gather

Whitman College has several religious and spiritual spaces available to students for personal and organizational use, including the All Faiths Room, which was established on campus in the fall of 2022. It is an important new space for students to gather in faith and is part of a campuswide initiative of inclusive excellence that aims to build community and provide a space for students of all spiritual identities. The space provides a place of worship, prayer, meditation and reflection for members of the various religious and spiritual groups on campus as well as individual students hoping to use the space on their own spiritual journey.

In 2023, the All Faiths Room was the venue for a monthly Catholic Mass; PAUSE, a contemplative practice gathering; Grieving@Whitman, a grief support group; Big Tent Gathering, a weekly gathering focusing on a different spiritual or religious practice each week; and a community ofrenda during Día de los Muertos.

The All Faiths Room features an art installation by weaver Kimberly Nemeth, titled "everything impossible once," constructed from 42,240 yards of colored yarn or thread.



Whitman Partners With The Posse Foundation To Enroll Students From Chicago

WHITMAN COLLEGE has entered a new partnership with The Posse Foundation to enroll a cohort of 10 students from Chicago each academic year.

"I have seen firsthand the incredible impact that Posse Scholars can have on campus as well as the transformative experiences that colleges like Whitman can offer these students," says Whitman College President Sarah Bolton. "I am thrilled about the new partnership with The Posse Foundation and look forward to welcoming our first 10 excellent students from Posse Chicago in the fall of 2024."



"I have seen firsthand the incredible impact that Posse Scholars can have on campus as well as the transformative experiences that colleges like Whitman can offer these students."

— SARAH BOLTON, President

Posse started in 1989, inspired by a student who said, "I never would have dropped out of college if I'd had my posse with me."

Posse Scholars attend college as members of multicultural teams of 10 students and receive full-tuition scholarships provided by institutions who are partnered with a specific city.

Posse Scholars are selected based on their merit and leadership capabilities and enter institutions in cohorts of 10 or more students from the same city or metropolitan area. Once

admitted to the college, Posse Scholars participate in organized activities with the other members of their cohort prior to their arrival on campus. Posse Scholars receive a full tuition scholarship, are assigned to the same Whitman faculty mentor, and have access to additional benefits through the Posse Foundation.

As part of the partnership, Posse also provides yearly mentorship training for staff leaders and for a Whitman faculty member who will meet frequently with the Posse Scholars on campus, both as a group and individually.

BIPOC-Affirming Third Space Center on Campus

Students from all over the United States and across the globe choose to attend Whitman College. More than 30% of our students are people of color, and for some students, the transition to Walla Walla and Whitman's predominantly white campus can be a challenge. In the residence hall community, the Multicultural House (previously known as MECCA) has functioned as an important space for raising diversity awareness and celebrating different cultures since 1977. The Glover Alston Intercultural Center (GAIC) is also an important space for cultural education and provides programming and support to students across a range of marginalized identities (international, first-generation, disabled, etc.).

We affirm that those valuable and important spaces for connection and engagement contribute to the cohesive nature of the Whitman community and provide support to a broad range of student populations. We also recognize that racial biases and prejudices that people hold can find their way into our community and lead to interpersonal harm. Our racial climate survey results indicated that a number of students of color do not feel an immediate sense of belonging on campus and that additional resources were necessary to move us toward inclusive excellence.

As we work to create a welcoming community for all, we also need to provide spaces where minoritized students can feel

safe, valued and culturally affirmed. The Third Space Center (expected to open after spring break in 2024) will focus on the cultural wealth, community needs and concerns of minoritized students of color at Whitman. To be clear, the space will not be exclusively for BIPOC-identified individuals, but will explicitly and intentionally center the rich, vibrant and brilliant histories and cultures of Black, Indigenous and communities of color existing and thriving across the country and around the globe. It is our sincere hope that the Third Space Center will function as a BIPOC-affirming and BIPOC-centering sanctuary and resource space that will enhance the experiences of students of color at Whitman for years to come.



From left: Mary Eaves Mitchell, Sexual Assault Victim Advocate (YWCA);
Cassandre Beccai, Director of Equity and Compliance/Title IX Coordinator; and Kersten
Bergstrom, Assistant Director of Community Health and Sexual Violence Prevention Specialist

Sexual Violence Prevention & Title IX

WHITMAN COLLEGE strives to provide a safe environment in which students can pursue their education free from the detrimental effects of sexual misconduct.

The college dedicates resources to educate students, faculty and staff about these issues and to provide a means of recourse for those students who believe they have experienced such behavior. At Whitman, we have a Sexual Violence Prevention Specialist who coordinates programs to educate the campus community about consent, healthy relationships and other topics with the goal of preventing harm.

The college contracts with a local nonprofit organization to secure an on-site Sexual Assault Victim's Advocate (SAVA) who provides confidential support for Whitman community members who have experienced sexual violence, regardless of their gender or sexual orientation.

Our Director for Equity and Compliance serves as the Title IX Coordinator for the college and receives reports of sexual misconduct. The Title IX Coordinator can request supportive measures for reporting parties and also manages the investigation and adjudication process.

“Having environments on campus where people can explore topics of consent and share their experiences without worrying about reporting, makes it easier for more folks to step forward and get the advocacy, guidance, support or education they need.”

— CASSANDRE BECCAI,
DIRECTOR OF EQUITY AND COMPLIANCE
& TITLE IX COORDINATOR



Alliance Expedites DEIA Efforts Across 70+ Institutions

Whitman College is part of the Liberal Arts Colleges Racial Equity Leadership Alliance (LACRELA). This alliance was established in 2020 to help propel the diversity, equity and inclusion efforts operating across these uniquely situated institutions.

Through coordination with the University of Southern California's Race and Equity Center, LACRELA has grown to include more than 70 institutions from across the United States, and the alliance actively works to assist higher education professionals in developing inclusive practices, policies and initiatives to advance racial equity.

As part of our membership in LACRELA, Whitman has participated in the National Assessment for Collegiate Campus Climates and gathered valuable data related to the racial climate for students, staff and faculty. The results from those climate assessments inspired the development of new initiatives to support and retain impacted Whitman community members.

Community Learning Days Expand Faculty & Staff Awareness

PRIOR TO THE START of each semester, the college organizes a number of Community Learning Days (CLD) to provide Whitman faculty and staff with access to essential information and valuable learning opportunities related to higher education.

This in-house professional development initiative helps prepare staff and faculty for the arrival or return of our students by providing

information about promising practices in the field and the changing needs of Whitman students, while also building our collective capacity to advance inclusive excellence.

Previous CLD sessions have focused on strategies to create a more inclusive classroom, cultural taxation and systems of oppression, as well as content to help staff navigate professional boundaries and hierarchies from different social identities.

Campus Accountability Group Keeps Work of Community Learning Days Moving Forward

The January 2023 Community Learning Days featured a two-day workshop on deepening capacity to co-create anti-racist organizations, facilitated by Kathy Obear, Ed.D., founder of the Center for Transformation and Change.

The intensive professional learning event, which particularly addressed the role of white faculty and staff in shifting racist dynamics, featured reflective self-work and skill development critical to creating racial equity and inclusion on campus.

As an outgrowth of the workshop, a

Whitman Accountability Group has convened monthly "Learn More" sessions related to the history of racism in the United States and contemporary manifestations of white privilege and racial injustice. Topics for the online meetings have included the violence inflicted on African Americans during Reconstruction, the history of Indian boarding schools, the difference between access and inclusivity in education, code-switching, Black disability politics, the economic costs of racism and more.



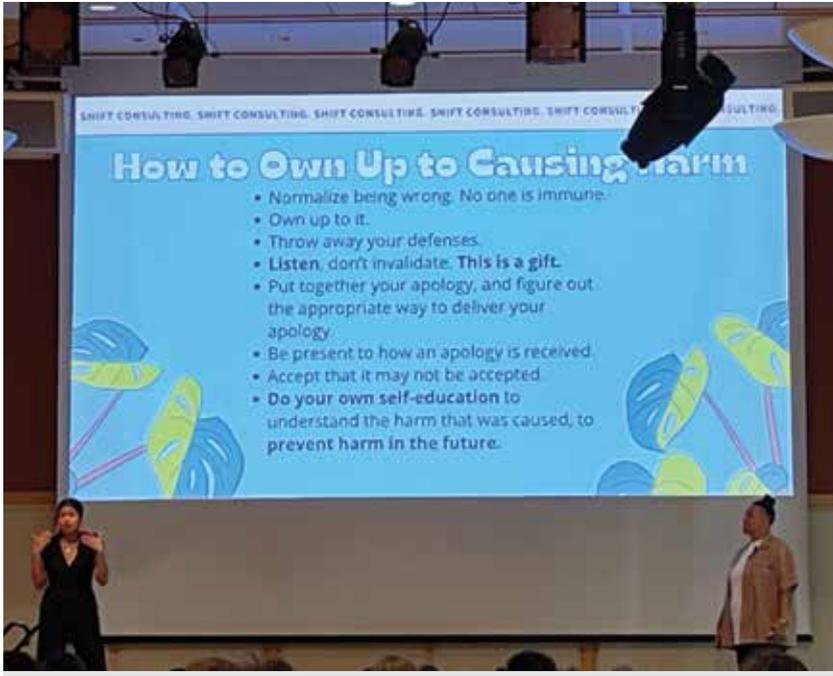
Kathy Obear, Ed.D., founder of the Center for Transformation and Change



Freedom Songs Tradition Continues

Freedom Songs is a student-organized annual event that began in 2016. The event seeks to reflect upon the many forms of freedom, especially concerning race, for different groups, contexts, and individuals. The main event for Freedom Songs is a concert that aims to expand the diversity of music heard on campus, focusing on performances that are important to the performer's culture. Freedom Songs also produced a Freedom Zine to collect written perspectives on the year's theme and a reflection party to chat about the concert and zine. The theme for Freedom Songs in 2023 was "Voices of Visionaries: The Revolution Begins."





SHIFT Provides Incoming Students With Perspective on Race, Power & Privilege

WHETHER YOU ARE a new faculty member, student or staff at Whitman, everyone receives an orientation to better understand the college's core values and community principles. For the last two years, entering students have completed an online course on Race, Power and Privilege.

This unique offering, from the team at SHIFT, a diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism consultancy, uses engaging and interactive modules to provide students with a basic understanding of the interlocking systems of oppression and equips students with tools for how to engage with each other in safe and equitable ways.

When students arrive on campus for New Student Orientation, they engage with the team in Residence Life who offer a series of workshops and trainings to promote diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging on campus.

A Gender and Sexuality Workshop is a featured component of New Student Orientation, and the Residence Life staff continue to provide opportunities for students to increase their DEIA competencies through a series of workshops on Responding to Microaggressions; Universal Design and Neuroinclusion; and Supporting First-Generation and Working-Class Student Experiences.

Faculty and staff at Whitman also have access to an abundance of resources to expand their DEIA competencies through the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity as well as regular DEIA microlessons coordinated by the Inclusive Excellence Council on topics ranging from Racial Battle Fatigue to Nonviolent Communication.

Whitman Offers Gender-Inclusive Housing Options

Gender-inclusive housing allows for same-gender, different-gender, transgender or other-gender identities to live together as roommates, regardless of sex assigned at birth. It also refers to residential spaces that provide multigender housing facilities, such as mixed-gender residential sections, and gender-inclusive restrooms and showers.

Whitman has a number of gender-inclusive residence halls where hall sections are not restricted to a single gender, although students are generally still matched with same-gender roommates.

Gender-inclusive housing is available for first-year students in the entirety of Lyman House and in some of the residential sections of Jewett Hall.

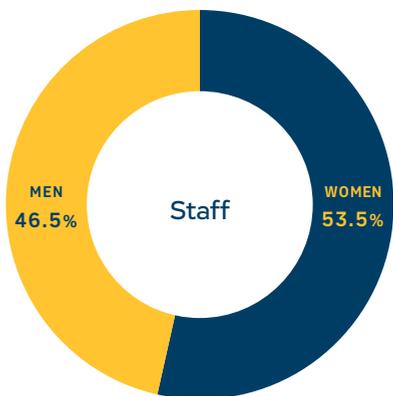
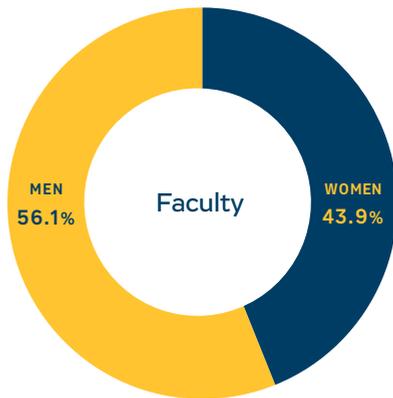
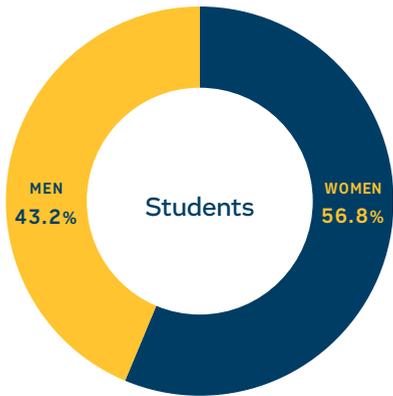
Returning students can choose whomever they would like as a roommate regardless of gender, and there are a number of residential buildings that are gender-inclusive, including Stanton Hall, College House, Douglas Hall and the Interest House Community. Prentiss Hall is restricted to self-identified women.



Stanton Hall (pictured), one of several gender-inclusive housing options across campus

Demographic Snapshot

GENDER



WHITMAN STUDENTS COME FROM

45+

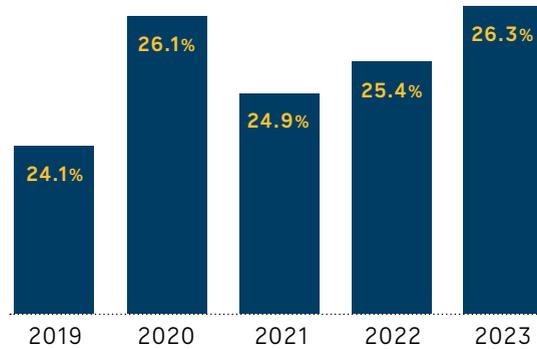
STATES

70+

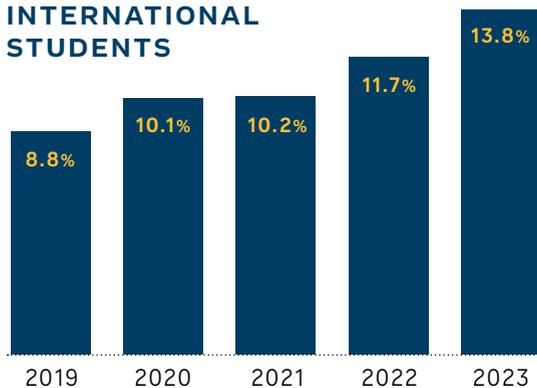
COUNTRIES &
SOVEREIGN
NATIONS



U.S. STUDENTS OF COLOR/MULTIRACIAL



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS





“

I want you to know that this scholarship is not just a financial assistance, but it is also a source of inspiration and motivation for me. It has given me the confidence and belief that I can achieve anything that I set my mind to, and for that, I am truly grateful.”

—Edwin Romero '24

Upward TOGETHER

THE WHITMAN FUND supports our talented students and the college's greatest needs. One of six available gift designations, gifts to the DEI Fund support initiatives that positively impact inclusion, belonging and dialogue. The DEI Fund enables the college to provide staff and faculty with critical professional development opportunities that build our collective capacity to advance inclusive excellence.

Through the DEI Fund we are able to provide students with transformative experiences by sponsoring their attendance to conferences and hosting guest speakers that affirm their culture and identities. The generous gifts provided to the DEI Fund help cultivate a range of activities by Whitman students, staff and faculty that foster a more welcoming and inclusive campus climate.

**Make a
Gift to
the DEI
Fund Today**



give.whitman.edu



WHITMAN COLLEGE

Land Acknowledgment

Whitman College is located on the traditional Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla homelands. We pay our respect to tribal elders both past and present and extend our respect to all Indigenous people today. We honor their stewardship of the land and ecosystem and commit to continuing that important work.

Whitman College Statement of Nondiscrimination

Whitman College has a strong commitment to the principle of nondiscrimination in all its forms. In its admission, educational and employment practices, programs and activities, Whitman College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex (including pregnancy and parenting status), gender, gender identity or expression, genetic information, sexual orientation, religion, age, marital status, national origin, disability, veteran status or any other basis prohibited by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and applicable federal, state or local laws.

Inquiries regarding sex- or gender based discrimination and disability discrimination may be directed to the Title IX Administrator (509 524-2049; titleix@whitman.edu). Inquiries regarding disability discrimination may be directed to the 504 Coordinator (509 522-4314, beccaic@whitman.edu). Inquiries regarding sex, gender or disability discrimination may also be directed to the Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (951 Second Ave., Room 3310, Seattle, WA 98174; 206-607 1600).

All other inquiries can be directed to the Director of Human Resources (509 527 5172; hrdirector@whitman.edu).