

## Increase Student Participation in Planning to Create More Equitable Spaces

### **SPACE MATTERS:** a critical race participatory action design process

**Presented by:**

**Aidee Medel Diaz**, Student Co-Researcher

**Cory A. Gillette**, Student Co-Researcher

**Luis “Luxo” Lopez**, Student Co-Researcher

**Derrick McDonald**, Student Co-Researcher

**Ngoc Yen Nhi Nguyen**, Student Co-Researcher

**Amara H. Pérez**, Project Coordinator

**Cesar Santiago**, Student Co-Researcher

2018 Space Matters Student Leadership and Inquiry Project  
A project of the Portland Community College Planning and Capital Construction Office

# Socio-Spatial Activity

- Diverse-Space
- Elite-Space
- Male-Space
- White-Space

## Critical Race Spatial Lens

# Working Definition of Space

An analytic that examines  
built environments, material objects, and  
spatial arrangements

# Critical Race Theory

- Racism and white supremacy are permanently embedded in society
- Dominant narratives mask white privilege and self-interest
- People of color are best equipped to speak on systemic racial inequities
- People of color have multiple intersectional identities
- Centers experiential knowledge and storytelling as counter-narratives

(Delgado & Stefancic, 2017)

# Spatial Theory







- Space is not neutral (Soja, 2010)
- Space functions as a mechanism of socialization and messages are often invisible, concealed, or unacknowledged (Costello, 2001)
- People 'read' space shaped by their multiple identities, positionality, and lived experience
- Built environments, material objects, and spatial arrangements are cultural artifacts (Tuhiwai Smith, 2013)

# Portland Community College

Portland, Oregon

## Themes

This five-year plan is framed around six interconnected themes and values. Distilled from each is a set of strategic intentions that will guide our future actions and inspire bold thinking:

		
THINK SMART: PROVIDE OUTSTANDING, AFFORDABLE EDUCATION	THINK BOLD: DRIVE STUDENT SUCCESS	THINK FEARLESS: IGNITE A CULTURE OF INNOVATION
		
THINK POWERFUL: TRANSFORM THE COMMUNITY THROUGH OPPORTUNITY	THINK PROUD: CREATE A NATIONALLY RENOWNED CULTURE FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION	THINK ACCOUNTABLE: ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE EXCELLENCE IN ALL OPERATIONS

## Think Proud: Create a Nationally Renowned Culture for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

PCC takes intentional action that creates a climate of learning where people from all backgrounds and abilities enjoy equal access to the opportunity to teach, learn, work, and serve the community and the world. PCC promotes the success, dignity, and worth of each individual by providing a safe environment where the examination of divergent ideas, experiences and systems of inequality adds depth to the learning experience.

Overview

Strategic Intentions

A Living Example

What We're Doing

- 5-1 PCC gathers and uses empirical evidence to analyze and improve access, advancement, climate, education, training, recruitment, contracting, hiring and retention of historically under-served populations of students, faculty and staff.
- 5-2 PCC applies racially conscious systems of analysis, including Critical Race Theory, to examine and dismantle systems of inequality at the college.
- 5-3 PCC's approach to internationalizing its curriculum expands opportunities to create globally aware and culturally intelligent students, staff and faculty.
- 5-4 PCC strives to provide opportunity to all students and the appropriate level of support services to ensure the highest level of success.



# Space Matters Student Leadership & Inquiry Project

## Training:

- CRT/Spatial theory
- Critical inquiry

## Inquiry:

- Storytelling/Dialogue
- Spatial field notes
- Surveys

## Action:

- Analysis of findings
- Recommendations for institutional planning and design





## Socio-Spatial Activity: Reading Space

↑  
WOMEN



→  
MEN

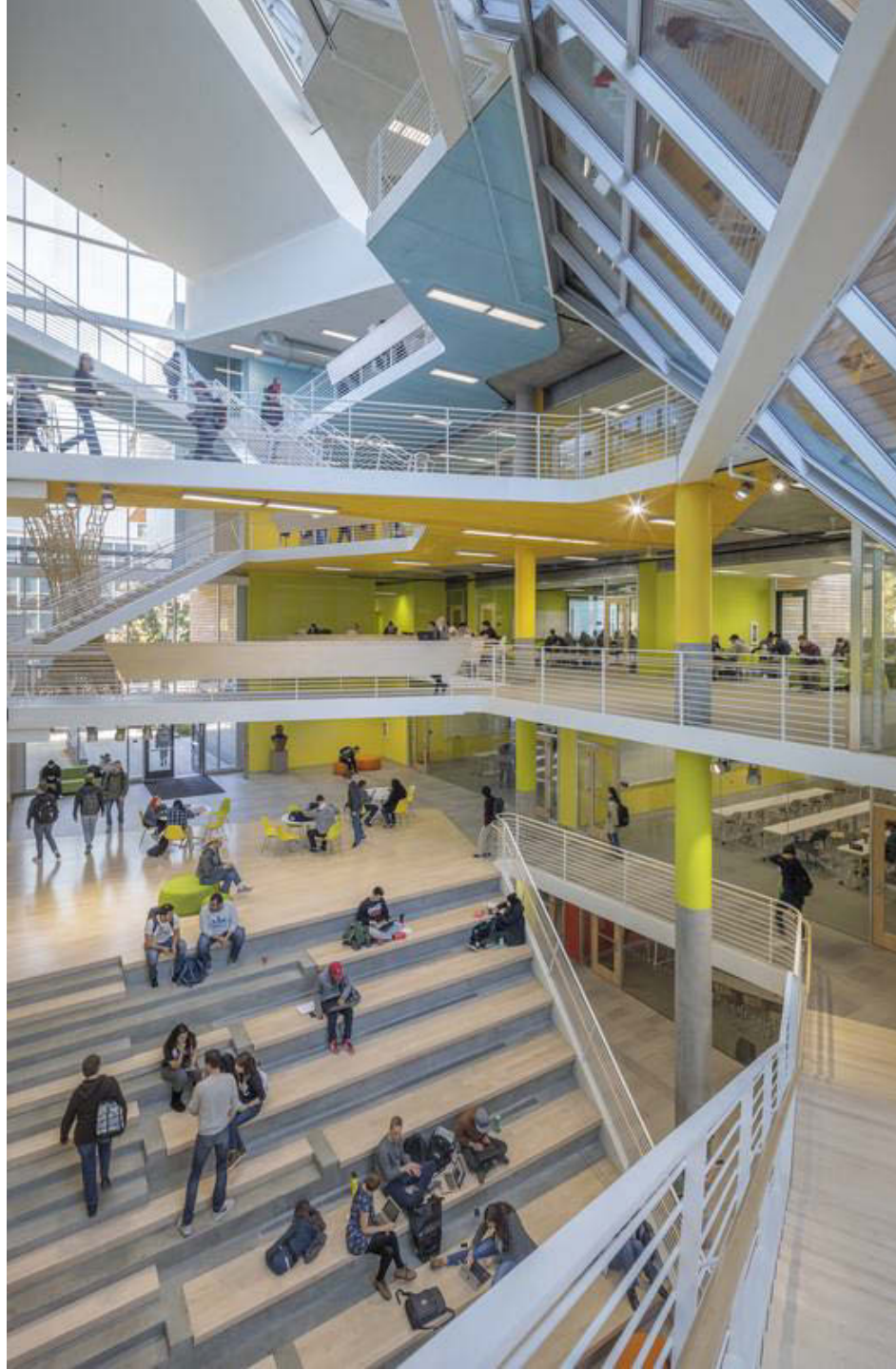




PORTLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD







veterans

resource

veterans  
resource  
center

center



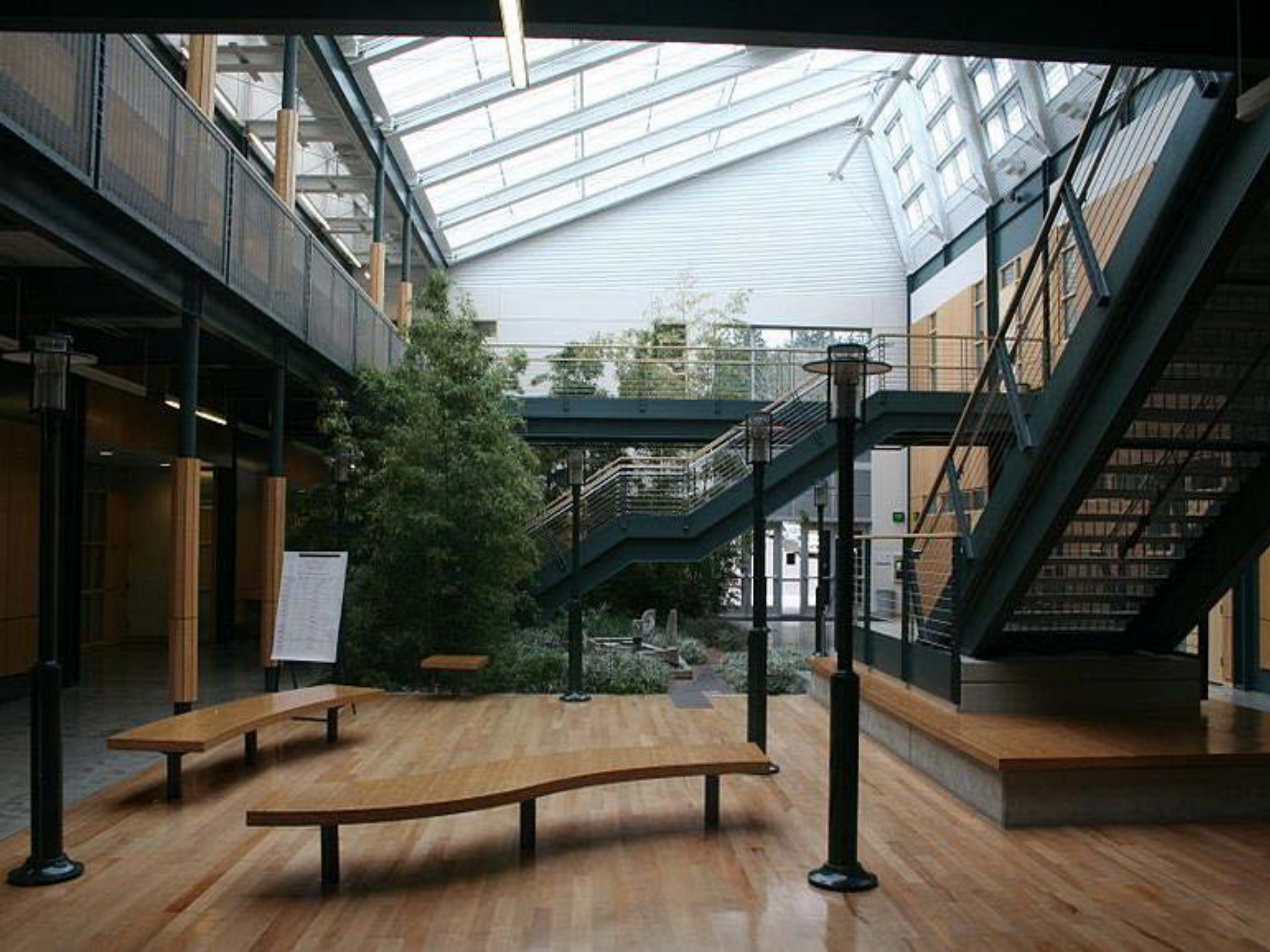
Formation

aspcc  
CASCADIA  
PANTHER  
RESOURCE  
HUB











## Some Inquiry Insights...

- People of color are under-represented not only in the curriculum, in artwork, among faculty and administration, but also in PCC spaces
- Campus places with resources for “marginalized” people are often out of the way and inconvenient; internalizing narratives can cause negative feelings about asking for help and discourages some students of color from seeking out and accessing resources

## Some Inquiry Insights...

- 36% of the students we surveyed said they did not feel that spaces in the PCC environment represented them
- 44% of students surveyed associated campus resource centers as “intersectional-space”
- 72% of students associated the resource centers as an “under-resourced-space”
- The top three reasons students avoided spaces were: 1) a lack of representation, 2) crowdedness, and 3) lack of access to and the distance from other spaces



# Institutional Change at PCC

- Student leaders of Space Matters hired by partnering architecture firm to serve as CRT advisors on renovation of PCC academic building
- PCC's Request for Proposals now includes CRT
- CRT being applied to library renovations and campus art selection process
- Students leaders of Space Matters serving on Art Selection Committee

## *Critical Race Participatory Action Design Process*

- Works in service to equity as a strategy to disrupt dominant narratives that normalize racial and other social inequities and to communicate messages of inclusion
- Foregrounds the experiential knowledge of students of color
- Based on mutuality, it's relational, invites shared power
- Creates opportunities for collaboration, storytelling, dialogue, inquiry, analysis, and socio-spatial transformation



# Space Matters:

Race, Equity, & the PCC Landscape

Community Forum  
March 26, 2018  
PCC CANA

