

**From:** Presidents Office <presidents-office@cca.edu>

**Date:** Thu Dec 18 2014 14:21:39 GMT-0800 (Pacific Standard Time)

**Subject:** [Staff-I] Community Forum in Response to Events in Ferguson and NYC

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Dear CCA Community,

Last Thursday afternoon I attended a CCA community forum in response to the recent events in Ferguson, Missouri, and New York City. The forum was suggested by several student groups, organized by Provost Melanie Corn (who is also chair of the President's Diversity Steering Group), and co-facilitated by staff member Alicia Bell and faculty member Melinda de Jesus. Despite the stormy weather and the demands of the last week of classes, about 100 students, faculty, and staff came together to share their feelings and experiences. The speakers were eloquent, thoughtful, and passionate.

The tragic deaths of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and Eric Garner in Staten Island, New York, have highlighted the injustice that persists in our society, particularly underscoring racial inequities in law enforcement and the U.S. judicial and prison systems. The demonstrations held across the country and in our own community testify to the anger, frustration, and anguish that citizens are feeling. Forums such as the one held at CCA also give our community members a chance to voice their concerns and be heard.

We tell our students that when they come to CCA they can "make art that matters." As an institution, CCA has a responsibility to not only make good on that promise, but also to bring its creative teaching and learning to bear on the world's most pressing problems, including issues of social justice. We encourage our students and faculty to contribute to the national dialogue on these difficult topics and to help identify ways in which our college and our communities can effect positive change.

The [President's Diversity Steering Group](#) (PDSG) was formed six years ago with a goal to help implement the goals stated under "Cultivate Diversity" in the college's Strategic Plan 2010–15. Those goals are:

- Increase racial, socioeconomic, and global diversity among students, staff, faculty, and trustees
- Develop our pedagogy and curriculum to reflect social and cultural diversity
- Build a campus community that supports and values diversity

While PDSG has done much to advance these goals, there is so much more we need to do. I am now charging this group to develop recommendations for improving the college's policies and practices regarding diversity, inclusion, and equity on campus. I am also asking PDSG to work with student and faculty leaders from across the college to coordinate events in the upcoming months that will enhance public dialogue about racial equality, diversity, and other topics critical to the future of our school and our country.

To get started on this work, we will hold another forum when classes resume in January. For now, I would like to hear any of your ideas that the PDSG might consider as it takes up this charge. Please email your suggestions to [diversity@cca.edu](mailto:diversity@cca.edu).

Sincerely,

Stephen Beal

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Stephen Beal  
President  
California College of the Arts  
5212 Broadway  
Oakland, CA 94618  
and  
1111-Eighth Street  
San Francisco, CA 94107  
Email: [sbeal@cca.edu](mailto:sbeal@cca.edu)  
Telephone: 510-594-3630  
Fax: 510-594-3797