

# FuelingChange



The State of Innovation  
in the Pacific Northwest

## INNOVATING FOR EQUITY

Explore how Schwabe clients innovate to attain  
diversity, equity & inclusion in the workplace



# Celebrating Innovation

## in Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

As we spoke with clients across the industries we serve, we were inspired to hear stories of infusing equity into higher education, evolving company culture authentically, caring from the heart, and the power of small actions to attain equity and inclusion in the workplace.

For this third edition of Fueling Change, I'm proud to invite you to explore the spirit and ingenuity of our clients, who've found ways to innovate their internal operations, consumer policies and services, and everything in between to create an inclusive workplace culture.

Amidst an era marked by constant change and growing divisiveness, our clients continue to inspire us with their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Graciela



Graciela Gomez Cowger  
Chief Executive Officer

Schwabe helps clients succeed through ideas, advice, and exceptional legal counsel.

### OUR KEY INDUSTRY SECTORS:

- Consumer Products, Manufacturing & Retail
- Healthcare & Life Sciences
- Indian Country & Alaska Native Corporations
- Natural Resources
- Real Estate & Construction
- Ports & Maritime
- Technology

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Cover image: Cinco de Mayo Fiesta hosted by the Portland Guadalajara Sister City Association. Photo by David Alvarado, Travel Portland



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# INFUSING EQUITY INTO HIGHER EDUCATION



Community colleges play a vital role in workforce and regional development, creating opportunities for students of all backgrounds to achieve their personal and professional goals.

In Southwest Washington, one organization has re-envisioned its role in supporting students by placing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) at the core of its work.

Clark College Foundation (CCF) is an independent, community-funded, self-governed, 501(c)(3) nonprofit that partners with Clark College to provide scholarships, capital support, and special awards to thousands of students.



Calen Ouelette, CEO and Vice President, Advancement and External Relations

The foundation grants about \$3.5 million in financial support to Clark College and its students each year. The CCF supports equitable access to education and empowers community growth in Vancouver, Washington.

CEO and Vice President of Advancement and External Relations Calen Ouelette joined us for a candid conversation about CCF's intentional transition into a DEI-centered organization and how inclusion and access to education are at the core of everything they do.

Interview with Calen Ouelette, CEO & Vice President,  
Advancement & External Relations, Clark College Foundation



**It's been an eventful few years for businesses since the start of the pandemic, and most companies have made significant changes. How has CCF's culture evolved?**

CCF and the College's culture have changed drastically in recent years. When the pandemic shut everything down, Clark College had to take a closer look at how we deliver education. Online platforms typically homogenize the learning experience across schools and while for some students it can increase access and flexibility, it can also create unintended barriers to education.

While traditional institutions want people back on campus, many students and professors aren't ready to be entirely in the classroom. This has changed how students and staff connect; both now expect a remote learning option. As a result, Clark College re-examined how we ensure equity in connecting virtually on and off campus.



Penguin illustrations created by students in the Graphic Design program as part of a sticker project depict the various identities and communities Clark students hold and support.



Little Penguins play with bubbles during a car wash to raise funds for Child and Family Studies (a child care center that serves students with young dependent children).

We've helped support and develop the College's wraparound support services that holistically support students. These supports include helping students build social networks, informing them about the College's clubs, and learning about other resources like the student success coaching program, which focuses on navigating life events that often lead to students pausing or falling off the path to completion, all of which supports students of varied backgrounds to succeed in their education. These supports make a big difference in connecting students and faculty and allows everyone to feel more integrated into campus life.



Oswald the Penguin has been Clark College's mascot since the college was founded—in fact, he was donated by the college's very first student—and he has been embraced by the college community ever since.



## How does CCF's DEI approach align with its organizational values and objectives?

At Clark College, we have four core tenets that guide our culture: equitable student experience, employee engagement and empowerment, institutional effectiveness, and community partnerships. Recently, we've focused on community partnerships that can provide pathways for students to connect with mentors, participate in internships, and secure living-wage jobs. To set students up for success, CCF has built partnerships with local businesses so we can better understand what these industries need in their workforce.

Our Southwest Washington community partners are also vital to our DEI efforts. The Fourth Plain Corridor neighborhood sits just north of us, and through our partnership with Fourth Plain Forward, a local nonprofit engaged in positive social change, we've had a wonderful two-way dialogue with our neighbors. We share how Clark College can help the community, and they educate us about the amazing communities next to campus. Relationships like these are essential to our operation and growth in support of the College.



Springfest fun!



Welcoming tutoring students of all languages

## Walk us through CCF's DEI practices, past and present.

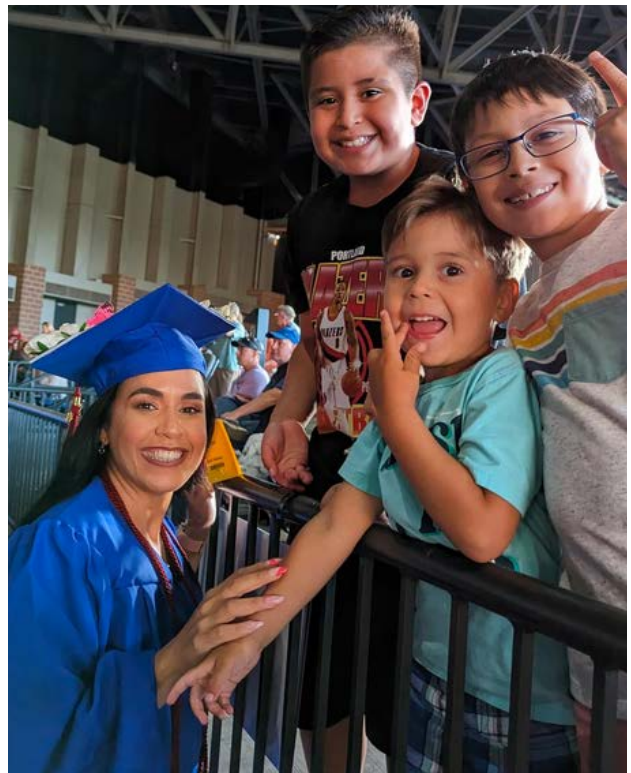
CCF works in unison with Clark College, which allows us to partner with the College on DEI work through their equity-centered strategic plan. Two programs we've helped develop at the College stand out: the Clark Cares program and Power, Privilege, and Inequity (PPI) coursework.

Clark Cares brings culture and community into everything we do. It's focused on simple, intentional activities like wearing name badges, saying hello to students, and accompanying students to their destination when they ask for directions to a space. The idea is that we create a sense of caring among students.



We also have all faculty, staff, and students take PPI coursework so they can learn about diverse communities and our changing world. One aspect of the coursework that resonated with me was a section on equitable decision-making. It examined how the College's decisions affect everyone in our community. It helps ensure that we can learn from others' lived experiences and incorporate them into our decision-making.

I identify in the LGBTQ+ community; sometimes, I think I'm very knowledgeable in that space. However the PPI courses reminded me that others in my community have very different experiences from mine, and that enabled me to better connect with the community daily.



Commencement memories, 2023



Within the college ecosystem, CCF is the fundraising organization, so our DEI efforts extend to that arena as well.

Fundraising has always been a very white-centric profession, which leads us to be extra mindful of these efforts and remember that it's not just about making money but also about how we maximize our resources to make the most significant impact.

This insight has led us to evolve from donor-centric to community-centric fundraising. For example, a donor giving \$100,000 might want their name on a new building, but there might be a greater, more immediate need to support students with college essentials like laptops to reduce the digital divide. This new approach is fundamentally changing the practice of fundraising at Clark College, and we're seeing it seep into community colleges throughout the region.

In addition, when creating scholarships, we must ensure that they enable an equitable college experience. For example, a single mother working two jobs and providing childcare isn't going to apply for 30 different scholarships, so we streamlined the application process to only four simple steps so that all students get the resources they need to be successful. We also ensure that all demographic information is redacted from the review process and that all reviewers complete two annual PPI trainings.

Our scholarships have a 2.5 GPA minimum because your GPA doesn't reflect who you are as a student. It could reflect that you're stretched thin or have so many other activities going on, and our approach aims to eliminate barriers and create space for those who might not otherwise start higher education. We still have a lot of work to do, but revisiting our processes with an eye for equitable access is a priority.



Clark College students and community members participate in annual Seventh Generation POWWOW on campus



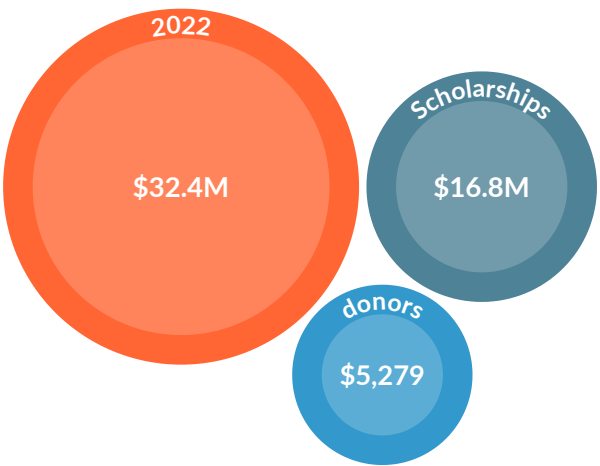
**Tell us how someone—an employee, staff member, or student—has directly benefited from your DEI programs.**

One example of DEI in action comes from one of our employees. This employee had previously attended Clark College and attributed their success to the scholarships they received from our foundation. They were brought up in poverty and were the first person in their family to go to college.

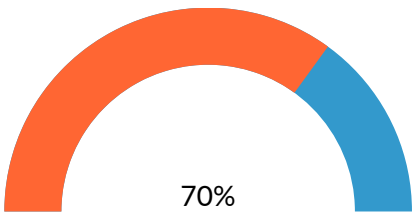
This person was also a nontraditional student who went back to school later in life when they had a family of their own and other responsibilities. CCF’s scholarships gave them access to education and helped empower them to achieve something they never thought they could. That’s fundamentally what CCF is about — reaching people and lifting them to what is possible.



Clark College students and community members participate in annual Seventh Generation POWWOW on campus



In 2022, Clark College and Clark College Foundation officially concluded its largest-ever fundraising campaign—raising \$32.4 million—to ensure students get equitable access to quality higher education and services. A total of 5,279 donors supported our Promising Pathways Campaign with an awe inspiring \$16.8 million raised for scholarships.



Nearly 70% of Clark College students are first-generation, and these services allow everyone to flourish in their career and life goals at the College.



## What's one piece of advice you have for leaders who want to enhance their DEI programs?

If I had one piece of advice for leaders who want to enhance their DEI work, it would be to listen. The number-one skill set of a leader is to understand what employees and partners need, what's missing, and how to better connect with them.

DEI work is fundamentally about equity in how we move through a process and ensure we understand and commit to the needs of all those involved. The goal is an equitable outcome for everyone. Listening puts leaders in a position where we can learn every day and not be expected to have all the answers—because we don't.

Good results will follow when you create a culture where everyone questions the status quo, and you listen to your community and remain humble in your conversations.



Unity Pole dedication to “symbolize the uniting of Nations in common bond of understanding” in 1999; the pole was commissioned by the then-Native American Student club, and the plaza became a federally protected sacred space.



# Tested Tough & Evolving with Authenticity



**L**egendary active lifestyle brand Columbia Sportswear has long represented the fearlessness and resilience of the Pacific Northwest's outdoor adventure community.

Guided by the pioneering spirit of Gert Boyle, "One Tough Mother," Columbia has grown into a global company with \$3.5 billion in net sales while staying grounded in a culture of authenticity.

Lisa Kulok, Columbia's executive vice president and chief supply chain officer, joined us to discuss the company's approach to DEI and how focusing on its strong values makes DEI an achievable daily practice.



Interview with Lisa Kulok, Executive Vice President, Chief Supply Chain Officer, Columbia Sportswear Company



## Walk us through your company's DEI practices, past and present.

Our diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy started with our leadership team. We felt that our leaders needed to be aligned to successfully carry Columbia's values forward through a DEI lens. We started with defining what it means to stay true to the company and how DEI enables us to deliver on our values.

Then we developed pillars for our DEI practice directly from our culture and values, emphasizing the importance of authenticity and continuous learning.



Lisa Kulok, Executive Vice President, Chief Supply Chain Officer

## *We landed on three main priorities: Listening and learning, creating and supporting opportunity, and being a force for good.*

We were certainly inspired by Gert Boyle, our former chair of the board of directors and one of the only female executives of her time.

She was known for her strength of character and perseverance, and her presence guided us to create practices that live up to her legacy.

Through initial conversations during the development phase, we established that we do not expect or focus on perfection. DEI work inherently leads to uncomfortable moments that are important for listening, learning, and growing.



Columbia Sportswear's Core Values

After formulating our DEI strategy, we created Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). Led by volunteer employee leaders who draw on their culture, heritage, and identity to provide guidance to the company, these communities have a big voice in how we operate and gain the opportunity for company-wide visibility through their work. ERG leaders include women, veterans, and members of the Latinx, Black, Asian and Pacific Islander, and LGBTQ+ communities.

This initiative has really amplified how we connect with our customers, show up in our retail stores and distribution centers, and provide a sense of belonging.



#### ONE MILE-LONG RUNWAY ONE BUSTLING CITY ONE HUNDRED WOMEN

On October 2, 2019, one hundred women from all over NYC confidently walked a full mile in Columbia's show-stopping fall collection. Together, they transformed the Mile-Long Runway into much more than just an event — it became a celebration of unstoppable women.

### How has implementing DEI practices benefited Columbia or helped it achieve its goals?

DEI practices are core contributors to our business goals. Our team members aren't just employees—they're our consumers—so we look to them first for insight, inspiration, and feedback.



We empower our ERG members by helping them understand that they directly improve our organizational success by supporting Columbia's front line: our people. This clarity of purpose drives increased job satisfaction and the efficacy of our DEI programs while improving our products for our customers.

Columbia invests in programs that improve the lives of **women, who represent approximately 75% of the people working in their finished goods manufacturing partner facilities**. They have partnered with Business for Social Responsibility to empower women and men in their supply chain through the workplace training program HERproject, using a train-the-trainer approach, and encouraging participants to learn, employ their skills, and share their expertise in programs focused on women's health, financial literacy, and gender equality.



Through their recommendations, we've also seen significant improvements in diversifying our hiring practices and team members, including increasing the number of women in leadership positions. Women make up a large portion of our customer base, and we must reflect that within the company. Looking forward, we're excited to bring our retail team members into our ERGs in more profound ways to further enhance our culture.

Our Pride ERG is one of our most active and longest-running groups. Its support, passion, and innovation has inspired us as an organization in many ways and has led Columbia to create new T-shirts, sweaters, and hats across multiple brands.

They're very cool products that speak to our cultural identity. This team is a great example of how being a force for good can flex beyond typical structures when an organization's culture is ready and willing to listen to new ideas.



## How do you elevate DEI on a day-to-day basis and weave it into your company culture?

We have a saying: "Live DEI daily." This serves as a reminder to us all to remain open to feedback and share our perspectives and ideas. If our people practice active listening, they will hear what's being said, respond, and act, which creates a chain effect throughout the company.

DEI takes hard work every day, but simply listening is a vital way to infuse it into everyday operations. We're grateful for the quality feedback we receive from employees at all levels; it's been invaluable in helping us see our blind spots, learn, and adjust our practices. Feedback is a vital part of our business culture, so integrating it into our DEI work was natural and an easy engagement point for the team.

**Pride-themed product, inspired by Columbia's Employee Resource Groups, led by volunteer employee leaders who draw on their culture, heritage, and identity to guide the company**

**What's one piece of advice you have for leaders who want to enhance their DEI programs?**

I encourage them to remember the basics: Lead by driving business results and be authentic. These elements are crucial for success and engagement, both internally and externally.

If we, as leaders, stray from our business goals, we ignore the organization's root motivations and objectives, and that will create tension and erode trust internally. The same can be said if leaders are not straightforward about their perspective or experience with DEI programs.

Authenticity is critical to developing relationships and trust with colleagues and customers. If leaders can

develop DEI programs that incorporate business goals with authentic and relevant approaches, they will find better alignment with their employees and a stronger brand reception when engaging with consumers.

Part of being authentic is looking to your history. For us, we look to our memories of Gert Boyle and her legacy for inspiration. If you walk through the halls today, you can still feel her presence and you get excited about what the company has already created and what's in our future. This inspiration gives us all a high sense of responsibility to move forward in a way that everyone can be proud of, whether we're improving our DEI programs, developing our next product, or working at one of our retail stores.

*Founded by a family that escaped Nazi Germany in 1937.*



Born Gertrude Lamfrom to a German Jewish family in Augsburg, Germany



Daughter of Marie and Paul Lamfrom



Married to Neal Boyle



Son Tim Boyle



Since 2019, Columbia has partnered with the [National Park Foundation](#) to support their Open Outdoors for Kids program, connecting students with their national parks through field trips, classroom activities, and educational activities.





Few industries have undergone as much turmoil over the past decade as construction. From pandemic shutdowns to rapidly changing technologies and regulations, new challenges are a part of the industry's everyday operations.

In this ever-evolving landscape, one century-old heavy civil construction company has

stood out for its unwavering commitment to its most valuable asset: its people.

Goodfellow Bros. LLC has carved a unique path in the construction field, through not just the structures it builds but also the culture it nurtures—a culture deeply rooted in caring for one another, fostering safety, and leading with humanity.

*Our core values or the "Goodfellow Way"*

*We embrace and empower our people.*

*We earn our customers' trust every day.*

*We strive to be respected corporate citizens in our communities.*

*We will build our company's future, living a culture of safety that extends to all around us.*

**GOODFELLOW BROS. INC.**  
ESTABLISHED 1921

Interview with Chad Goodfellow, CEO, and Scott Blaine,  
President, Goodfellow Bros. LLC.

By creating a workplace environment that empowers its employees and prioritizes the safety and well-being of its team on jobsites, the company's ethos fosters the simple yet powerful notion that every individual—from laborer to executive—deserves respect, support, and the opportunity to grow.

In a candid conversation with Goodfellow Bros. CEO Chad Goodfellow and president Scott Blaine, we delve into how they've embraced diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices to drive positive change and put compassion at the forefront of their culture.



## It's been an eventful few years since the start of the pandemic, and most businesses have made major changes. How has Goodfellow Bros.' company culture evolved?

The pandemic brought unforeseen changes, notably in the way we work. Remote work, once considered improbable in our industry due to its physical nature, became a reality. Goodfellow Bros. works in California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington. The shift to remote work helped us

recognize that whether in the field or in the office, work is just one part of life.

One aspect of our culture that has evolved in recent years is the emphasis on caring. It's something that's long existed at our company, but we've extended it to inform our DEI approach and keep safety at the top of our priority list, which is paramount in our field. Looking out for each other and focusing on collective well-being is at the heart of our culture, bringing DEI to the forefront in everything we do.



The "Goodfellow Way" reminds all that the company embraces and empowers people, earning customers' trust every day, striving to be respected corporate citizens, and building the company's future by living a culture of safety that extends to all.



## Tell us about the “Goodfellow Way” and how it influences your culture.

The “Goodfellow Way”—our vision for how we operate as a company—is core to our organization and significantly influences our culture. Our mission is clear: to be the contractor of choice for our clients, employees, and communities. We aim to develop high-trust relationships and retain talent to ensure future work opportunities.

### ***The Goodfellow Way has four core tenets:***

- 1. Embracing and empowering our people,***
- 2. earning customers’ trust every day,***
- 3. showing up as respected corporate citizens in our communities,***
- 4. and living a culture of safety.***

Through these tenets, we encourage our team to embrace diverse perspectives. Encouraging equitable treatment and inclusivity creates a conducive environment for diverse thought from all employees, which is vital for making well-rounded decisions.

Each of our regional locations engages in different types of work. Some may do more utility work, while others do more infrastructure work. Breaking down silos allows us to share expertise and innovative thinking across the organization.

In essence, embracing diverse perspectives fosters an environment where diversity thrives not just as a concept but also as a lived experience. It’s about recognizing that diversity of thought is an innovation driver within our field.



Goodfellow Bros. employees are involved in various efforts near and dear to their hearts. Cancer prevention and support, youth sports leagues, summer camps for children, and local emergency response aid are just a few ways they get involved. Additionally, Goodfellow Bros. offers a charity match program to support employees and the causes they care most about.

“

*At Goodfellow Bros. we help the community. Disasters, fires, storms, hurricanes, we are there. We’ve been trained all these years. We don’t hesitate. Goodfellow Bros. made us this way. That’s one thing I love, helping people.*

”

Morris Ahnee, Operator Foreman, Maui

## Walk us through your company's DEI practices, past and present.

To us, DEI is not a timely buzzword; it's deeply rooted in our history and aligned with the values my great-grandfather had when he founded the business. It's also rooted in our heritage as a company co-headquartered in Hawaii, where our community is a true cultural melting pot.

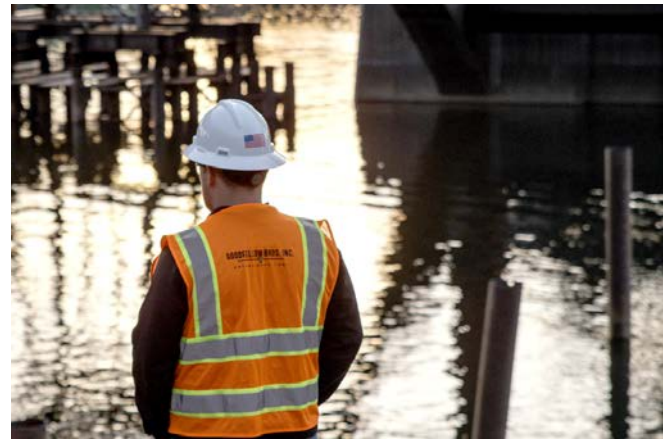
Rather than reinventing the wheel, we've focused on codifying and formalizing the practices that have existed in our organization for decades.



Surveying the land; Cowlitz Casino, Ridgefield, WA



Hana Like Military Community, Kailua, HI



Looking over the Sellwood Bridge Project, Portland, OR



We are "The Goodfellow Way." It means we embrace and empower our people.



In addition, we prioritize working with socioeconomically disadvantaged, minority-owned, or small start-up businesses when we subcontract work. We offer them mentorship and support to help them succeed. These practices have not only enriched our company's diversity but have also led to opportunities in new markets and industries.

We've recognized the importance of taking our DEI efforts a step further by amplifying these values to our team members across the organization; sharing what we're doing and why we're doing it is vital to getting everybody on the same page. Instead of just mandating DEI training, we highlight people who demonstrate DEI in their work and encourage employees to recognize and celebrate equitable treatment and inclusivity. It's about nurturing humanity's innate qualities to care for those around you within our organization.

### How are your employees engaged in your DEI efforts?

We've ingrained community service into our culture by planning multiple events throughout the year for employees to participate in across several regions. From Habitat for Humanity to fundraising for local nonprofits, it's a great way to connect and give back to the community while living our mission.

We also provide PTO specifically allotted to community service time and a company matching program for employee donations to 501(c)(3) organizations; this allows our employees to give back to community organizations close to their hearts. Community service involvement is contagious and fosters a culture of giving, which is core to our DEI approach. Part of our responsibility as a business is to give back, and when you do, you get more from everyone around you. It nurtures our culture to see our employees so engaged in these efforts.

### Humble Roots & Hard-Working Values



Jack Bert Jim

Just after World War I, the three Goodfellow Brothers — Jack, Bert, and Jim, Sr. — decided to take their love for building and start a construction company focused on people, and based on the values of character and hard work.



In 1921, they founded Goodfellow Bros. in Wenatchee, Washington.



They were building their country — roads, irrigation, and dams.



A century later, the company carries on this enduring legacy.



“...it’s crucial to instill in your company culture that everyone’s opinion matters, everyone can make a difference, and teamwork is essential.”

**Tell us how someone—an employee, customer, or partner—has directly benefited from your DEI programs.**

We have a program where employees can donate their sick days to colleagues facing hardship. Recently, employees across all of our locations donated hours to an employee who was going through a rough time, even if they had never met before. It was a remarkable display of care and unity. This selflessness illustrates the strength of our culture, and we strive to foster behaviors like this.

That’s what makes DEI, in practice, work. It’s not a training. It’s not a PowerPoint. It’s in employee behaviors and celebrating them that will get you where you want to be.

**What’s one piece of advice you have for leaders who want to enhance their DEI programs?**

When implementing DEI, it’s crucial to instill in your company culture that everyone’s opinion matters, everyone can make a difference, and teamwork is essential.

Lead by example by treating fellow team members at all levels of the business with kindness, respect, and appreciation. Celebrate behaviors that promote equity and inclusion, and focus on nurturing humanity within your organization.







Sheila Murty, Executive Vice President of People and Culture

## *Tillamook*

To Pacific Northwesterners, the Tillamook name is tried and true. From cheese and ice cream to frozen meals, Tillamook County Creamery Association and its dozens of delicious bites are a beloved part of our everyday lives.

This once-local gem has exploded nationally over the past decade, now boasting a \$1.2 billion brand, with products in roughly a quarter of all U.S. households.

Tillamook has long prioritized diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)—a pivotal practice that plays a key role in attracting talent, fueling growth, and driving innovation.

Executive Vice President of People and Culture Sheila Murty joined us to discuss how celebrating and cultivating different perspectives continues to push the brand forward, and how small acts of genuine care can add up to big impact.

**Interview with Sheila Murty, Executive Vice President of People and Culture, Tillamook County Creamery Association**



Tillamook opened a second cheesemaking plant in eastern Oregon to support its growth and to get cheese to more Tillamook fans across the country.

**Since the start of the pandemic, most companies have made major changes.  
How has Tillamook's company culture evolved?**

We aspire to create an enriching and fulfilling culture that provides a climate of inclusion where people feel a sense of belonging and feel that they matter to the business—because they do.

Like most businesses, the strength of our company culture was tested during the pandemic. The foundation we had laid prior to 2020, when we made a very intentional effort to establish our shared company values, gave us stable footing during that tumultuous time.

A lot has happened since the pandemic, and we've remained intentional and focused on the employee experience.

We recently asked our employees what's important to them right now, and they named three things: collaboration, celebration, and connection.

Listening to our employees and focusing on these priorities has allowed our culture to flourish.

The way people connect has, of course, changed drastically over the last few years. At Tillamook, we have a distributed workforce in both rural and urban locations, and in manufacturing, retail, and office roles. This required us to think creatively about how we foster connections and meet different needs across the organization.



For our office-based employees, we've focused on using space to build belonging and connection, where they feel seen, valued, and heard, and want to experience that sense of in-person connection. For example, our CEO used to host employee town halls virtually and now we hold them in person.

We have also been intentional about planning activities, meetings, and events to bring our people together, such as volunteering as a group and hosting a learning fair.

We, of course, also utilize food as a way to connect people and to bring joy, like celebrating grilled cheese day with an interactive grilled cheese lunch for our team members.

Our intentional efforts around connection have paid off. Now, when people come into the office, even if they were initially hesitant, they think, "I remember this feeling. I remember feeling connected to people, and I want to be here with others."



Sheila Murty showing off the "Grate Wall" at Tillamook's Portland Outpost office.



Tillamook County Creamery Association is a farmer-owned co-op comprised of farming families that own and benefit directly from the company's growth and success.

### How does Tillamook's DEI approach align with its company values and objectives?

We formalized our DEI approach because our business was expanding nationally, and we wanted to be intentional about our values and culture. Our company values created the foundation for our approach to inclusion and diversity.

We use an inclusion-centered approach because we believe we make better decisions and build stronger teams when we invite diverse voices, experiences, and perspectives into our work.

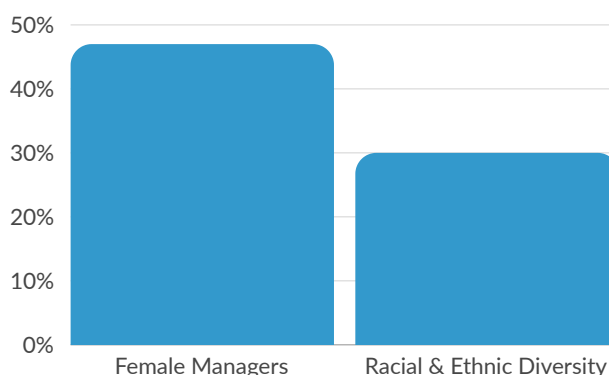
Expanding nationally in a competitive space is no easy task. We must innovate, think creatively, grow the business, and attract talent—and building an inclusive culture helps us accomplish that.

Tillamook can only grow if we create a culture where people feel they belong and can bring their best ideas. Our focus on inclusion perfectly aligns with our growth path and our company values. It also creates a more fulfilling and enriching experience for employees when they can contribute, feel valued, and bring their authentic selves to work.

### BUILDING A CULTURE OF INCLUSION

#### At the end of Q3 2023:

- 47% of managers and above are women
- 30% of the workforce is racially and ethnically diverse  
(increased by 9% since 2018)
- Doubled leaders of color since 2018





## Are your employees engaged in your DEI efforts? If so, how?

We don't use a one-size-fits-all approach, which is why we implement a variety of inclusion and diversity strategies to allow employees to find what works for them, whether they want to learn more or engage more deeply.



Tillamook's Inclusion & Diversity Framework outlines the four goals they work toward every day and the actions they're taking to accomplish them.

Language access is a crucial way we engage employees in DEI. Some of our vital front-line employees' primary language is not English, which can make communication challenging. To support our employees and improve their experience at work, we created language access opportunities, like offering a language-learning program by partnering with a local college, bringing in interpreters for employee town halls, and providing language-learning programs that employees can use on their phones anytime, anywhere.

Another important program we have is our Heritage Holiday, which allows employees to take a paid day off each year for any religious or cultural holiday that's meaningful to them. There are so many cultural celebrations, but we can't possibly have a paid holiday for each one. So we said: "It's your holiday; you choose the day that is most important to you."

Programs like Heritage Holiday have a big impact. After it was introduced, an employee told me it was the first time in their 30-year career that they've had the option to take a day off to celebrate their Jewish identity. When people tell me those kinds of things, it resonates.

Small actions can mean a lot.

1. Build conscious inclusion
2. Incorporate diversity of people and perspectives
3. Increase cultural agility
4. Create social impact on business and community

**Tell us about how someone—an employee, customer, or partner—has directly benefited from your DEI programs.**

So many individuals have told me they feel valued and seen because of our DEI programs, and that they feel they can show up in ways that they haven't been able to in much of their careers. It's gratifying to hear that our approach works.

For example, during Lunar New Year this year, an individual employee led a celebratory dumpling-making party at our Portland office.

They prepared different fillings and sat down with their teammates to teach them how to fold dumplings, while others steamed and fried the dumplings to enjoy. There was a huge turnout of employees who got the chance to learn from their teammates and celebrate Lunar New Year together. It was fun, well-received, and mattered so much to that employee who led the effort.

***We are doubling down on our commitment to fostering an inclusive workplace where employees feel their voices are heard and that they matter. And we will keep prioritizing our work on raising our collective awareness through educating, acknowledging, and speaking up when we see words or actions that are inconsistent with fostering an inclusive culture.***

Patrick Criteser  
President & CEO



## What's one piece of advice you have for leaders who want to enhance their DEI programs?

The most important piece of advice I'd share is to simply start where you are. There's no perfect place to start, and it's never too late. We were a 111-year-old cooperative when we intentionally began to focus on DEI and formalize our approach.

It's also vital that any DEI program has top-down commitment. DEI can't be just a program or initiative, and if DEI isn't infused into your everyday ways of working, it will not be sustained.

Integrating DEI into your business DNA and ensuring that it prevails long-term requires continuous executive commitment. For Tillamook, that's meant returning again and again to our values and finding ways to collaborate, celebrate, and connect. Leveraging the "small things" turns into big results for employees and for the business.



One of Tillamook's Shared Values: **Genuine Care**, serving each other with empathy and honesty, helping to keep each other safe in our work and lives, all while having fun along the way!

# CHANGE IS A JOURNEY.

TRAVEL  
**PORTLAND**

*Just Start Walking.*

Iconic craft beer and wine, vibrant cultural communities, stunning outdoor spaces, eclectic dining—all these and more make Portland, Oregon an extraordinary destination for global tourists who come for both work and play. Travel Portland harnesses everything special about the city to generate travel demand that drives economic impact for residents.

In 2022, tourism in the Portland metro region generated \$5.2 billion in visitor spending and supported more than 32,000 jobs. Given its commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) as an integral pillar of the business, Travel Portland promotes the city effectively and extends the impact of tourism to its many cultural communities.

We spoke with Angela Nelson, vice president of EDI at Travel Portland, who described the organization's extraordinary



Angela Nelson, VP of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Travel Portland

efforts to keep EDI at the forefront of its work. By championing practices within its internal culture and weaving its activities into the city's cultural tapestry, Travel Portland is on a mission to ensure every visitor embraces

the area's diverse and inclusive soul while balancing the needs of the community. Nelson walks us through how Travel Portland's unwavering dedication to EDI enhances tourism practices and helps all Portlanders flourish.

**Interview with Angela Nelson, VP of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Travel Portland**



## Why does Travel Portland use “EDI” instead of “DEI”?

We lead with equity because we focus on fairness, and equity is commonly the EDI practice that organizations and individuals find most challenging: Ensuring resources are fairly distributed is often where the hard work meets the road. Using EDI instead of DEI reminds us to be equitable in everything we do. It helps us walk the walk and prevents our work from being performative.

## What are Travel Portland’s current EDI practices?

Our EDI practices focus on creating mutually beneficial experiences for employees,



Pablo Gonzalez Mural on Portland’s Northeast Alberta Street

the Portland community, and visitors. Relationships, both in the community and internally, are at the core of our work, so creating a culture of respect and belonging is important.

One of the key ways we deploy EDI is by deepening the relationships between our minority- and women-owned businesses and the travel industry. For example, Travel Portland was a founding partner of My People’s Market, an annual market that connects BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) entrepreneurs in business, arts, fashion, and culture with travel industry professionals who can expand the visibility of the entrepreneurs’ businesses.



“Art Fills the Void” Portland mural

After supporting the market for several years, we wanted to spark a greater economic impact for vendors, so we created a mini-My People's Market experience with convention groups inside the Oregon Convention Center and exhibition halls, with each mini-market connecting three to four local vendors directly to conference attendees. This opportunity provides local businesses with exposure on a scale that may have been unattainable before.

Internally, our EDI training program is vital to achieving our organizational goals. We offer robust training in a variety of learning styles, including self-guided training, instructor-led sessions, and online resources.

Our employees can choose what works best for them. Inclusivity doesn't stop at cultural diversity; it extends to how people learn.

The program equips our employees with knowledge about diverse communities and empowers staff to support a wider swath of individuals' needs across the diversity continuum. It dives into topics that directly impact tourism, like accessibility, understanding Portland's Indigenous communities, and supporting our houseless community.

Often when people visit Portland, they interact with communities they may not be familiar with.



Audience at Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall; NASHCO Photo

Our training program gives our teams the language and understanding they need to successfully build business partnerships, develop content, navigate tough conversations with clients, and improve at their jobs.



The Alberta Rose Theater; Nick Mendez, [nickmendez.com](http://nickmendez.com)



## Are your employees engaged in your EDI efforts? If so, how?

Engaging employees in EDI extends to every aspect of our work, from onboarding to operations and executive communications.

For instance, our HR team collaborates with the EDI team to address employee concerns. One great example was when a neurodivergent employee's request for a sensory room led us to repurpose an area into a quiet safe space where employees can adjust the light and sound in their environment. It's an area where neurodivergent individuals have access to the surroundings they need to do their best work. It also serves as a lactation room for individuals who are breastfeeding.



Mississippi Studios and Bar Bar. Photo by Tojo Andrianarivo.



Unleash your inner foodie at Hawthorne Asylum Food Carts.

Jeff Miller, Travel Portland's CEO, hosts "Coffee with Jeff" sessions with non-managerial staff to foster open conversations and drive innovation. Jeff then takes action on the feedback, demonstrating that effective leadership goes beyond words. Our team loves having the opportunity to speak with him directly to share feedback on EDI and other practices.

In addition, our onboarding process ensures new employees understand EDI's centrality to our work from day one. It makes EDI not only a social imperative but also a systems-changing effort. The onboarding process is critical to making our employees feel valued and that they're part of a team that values equity and inclusion from the very beginning.

It only takes one person to wave the flag on an issue and generate great outcomes that benefit everyone, like with the sensory room. Making sure the whole team feels valued and heard is crucial to our organization.

## How has implementing EDI practices helped Travel Portland attract more tourists and conferences to the area?

EDI isn't just important for our team and community; it's also vital to drawing more tourists and conferences to the area. I serve as a thought partner to help our sales and marketing teams attract more multicultural groups—like the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science and Equality Federation—and ensure inclusivity in our content and visuals, pitching to national organizations like NAACP.

## Tell us how an employee, customer, or partner has benefited directly from your EDI programs.

We're lucky to have built EDI programs that directly benefit the community. For example, we know that food is a compelling reason for people to visit Portland. The city has several 2023 James Beard Foundation Award winners, and our PR team leveraged their stories to raise national awareness of the city's culinary scene. We also supported one of the winners, All the Homies Network, which documents Portland's culturally diverse

***Portland has had its historical challenges, but we won't shy away from the hard conversations that allow us to shift the narrative and show the progressive and welcoming community ...***

Angela Nelson, Travel Portland

The EDI team also works with our marketing team to ensure that there's representation through the stories we tell and the designs and photos we share on our digital platforms. That's how we tell the diverse stories of local businesses that make up the fabric of our community that non-locals otherwise wouldn't hear about.

Portland has had its historical challenges, but **we won't shy away from the hard conversations that allow us to shift the narrative** and show the progressive and welcoming community Portland has become. We want visitors to experience that difference when they get here.

food scene. Travel Portland covered the cost of the collective's transportation and airfare to attend the awards ceremony in Chicago.



Eating ice cream at Salt and Straw on Alberta  
NASHCO Photo



Our PR team is very intentional about pitching news and featuring stories with BIPOC or diverse representation to ensure that we're providing equitable resources and visibility to our community. Our services team also works directly with event planners to intentionally connect them with diverse local vendors that offer a wide range of services, from photography to transportation. We've received a lot of positive feedback about this work from both event planners and local businesses.



Portland Mercado food carts: Founded in 2015, this public market in SE Portland's Foster-Powell neighborhood is an incubator for Latin-owned businesses and features over a dozen businesses offering various Latin American foods and products.



A jogger runs past the waterfront skyline at Eastbank Esplanade. NASHCO Photo



Ankeny Alley, Old Town Chinatown  
Justin Katigbak, Travel Portland

### What's one piece of advice you have for leaders who want to enhance their EDI programs?

The main piece of advice I have for leaders interested in EDI is to just get started. Identify one or two areas that are essential for your organization, and encourage senior leadership to prioritize EDI by fostering conversations and creating urgency around inclusivity. Make it a collective effort and organizational priority instead of leaving it to individual contributors.

**EDI should focus on seeing people for who they are and letting them be.** We should honor people's choices and respect them, even when we hold different values or opinions. Choose what's important to you, have those hard conversations, and keep the momentum going. **Change doesn't need to be a sprint. It's a journey. You don't have to see the finish line to start walking towards it.**





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