

Monica Ohkubo, statement, candidate for Vice President

The racial awakening across the United States and the demands of our own Black Student Union have forced us to reflect on our response to anti-racism on the Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC) campus. The Academic Senate has discussed the need to diversify the Senate Executive Committee. However, there is a limited number of BIPOC faculty eligible to run for Senate leadership. After extensive consultation with colleagues, I have decided to run for Academic Senate Vice President. I believe I have lived experiences, academic preparation and demonstrable campus and community leadership to serve as the Vice President of SRJC Academic Senate. “Be the change you wish to see in the World. “
-Mahatma Gandhi. I hope you will vote for me, Monica Ohkubo, as your next Vice President to help enhance shared governance, leadership, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion on our Senate and across campus.

As an allied faculty member, and one of few on Senate, I work with one of the most diverse student populations (student-athletes) on campus on a daily basis. I get to learn about a variety of majors, programs and disciplines due to the hundreds of students I serve. I have invested the last 15 years at SRJC supporting and promoting excellence among students and student-athletes alike. My experience developing effective and novel student-centered programs for diverse student populations will be useful for the role of Vice President. I am organized and passionate about student success and dedicated to shared governance. My personal skill set allows me to effectively multi-task and apply both analytical and holistic thinking to my work. My scholarship and experience are indicative of the approach I would have as Vice President: student-centered, organized, dedicated, passionate, collaborative and self-reflective.

I have a demonstrated and successful leadership track beyond my duties as Head Athletic Trainer, Director of the Pre-Sports Medicine CE program and major and instructor. I am also the founder and President of the Sonoma County Athletic Trainers’ Association, Co-Chair of the California Community College Athletic Trainers’ Association (CCCATA) Medical Advisory Board, Interim Executive Director/Board Member of North Coast Concussion Management, a local non-profit, and CCCATA COVID-19 Advisory Committee Timeline Chair. In terms of equity-specific leadership experience, I am the founder and elected chair of the California Athletic Trainers’ Association Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee and the Far West Athletic Trainers’ Association Ethnic Diversity Advisory Committee Tri-Chair for the state of California. In all of these leadership positions, I have worked with partners from different academic and professional backgrounds. These experiences have provided me the opportunity to collaborate and develop strong leadership skills that will be useful as the Vice President of the Academic Senate.

I have also engaged in scholarship to inform my work with marginalized groups. My doctoral research focused on student success in the California Community College System. Specifically, I examined student success of pre-sports medicine students and uncovered the value of mentorship, networking and the establishment of foundational skills to these students. Prior to my doctoral work, my research focused on gender stereotypes and their impact on female athletic trainers. While I continue to research and publish in the areas of concussion and sports medicine, I have dedicated my sabbatical project to researching and understanding the experiences of Black/African American student-athletes in the California Community College system. I believe that my scholarly experience will help inform my work as Vice President in addressing Black Anti-Racism and equity work on the SRJC campus.

As a person, my intersectionality as a female BIPOC member of the LGBTQ+ community, coupled with my education, training and experience, allow me to intuitively understand and advocate for the diverse needs of our faculty and students. Working in a field of predominantly heterosexual white males has exposed me to challenges and provided me opportunities to understand marginalization, racism, sexism and homophobia first-hand. I do not ever wish I was afforded an easier path because my lived experience is what allows me to thrive in spaces of adversity and will support the practical application of my unique perspective to the Senate Vice President position.

During my last 15 years at SRJC, I have created innovative programs, such as our concussion management program, which I have presented locally, nationally and internationally. I have had the chance to participate in a variety of college service opportunities and gained a great deal of institutional knowledge and experience. The list below shows relevant institutional leadership experiences:

- Academic Senate (2 terms)
- Longest standing member of the District Faculty Staffing Committee (8 years)
- Guided Pathways Mapping & Scheduling Workgroup
- District Health & Safety Committee
- Senate 4.3.2 Hiring Policy Review Sub-Committee
- Kinesiology, Athletics & Dance Department Curriculum Committee
- Curriculum Cluster Tech Reviewer
- Student Health Advisory Committee
- Asian Pacific Islander Staff Association founding member
- Athletics COVID-19 Action Committee Chair
- Parking and Transportation Committee
- Numerous faculty, management and staff hiring committees

“Teamwork is what makes common people capable of uncommon results.” -Pat Summitt. We have a lot of work to do, and I have spent a great deal of time trying to do my part by engaging in activities which will improve my performance as a Senator and Senate Vice President hopeful. I have been studying Parliamentary procedure, the Brown Act, attended Senate Plenary and met with previous SRJC Senate Vice Presidents. I was inspired at the recent Senate Plenary, and at the same time also realized how far SRJC needs to grow to meet the equity needs of our faculty and students. Our college has the potential to be even more equitable, inclusive, diverse, supportive and innovative. I am excited about what SRJC’s future holds, and know that if we pair teamwork with efficiency, student-centeredness, organization and collaboration, we will succeed in advancing equity, student success and reaching the potential of this talented and dedicated Senate body. Thank you for your support.

Honors & Awards

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| California Community College Athletic Trainers’ Association Athletic Trainer of the Year Award | 2017 |
| NASPA Excellence Award, Grand Silver medal for SRJC’s concussion management program | Jan 2014 |
| NASPA Excellence Award, Gold (Athletics) for SRJC’s concussion management program | Jan 2014 |
| California Athletic Trainers’ Association Special Service Award | 2013 |
| 2012 John & Suanne Roueche Excellence Awards recipient | Dec 2012 |
| Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce Excellence in Education Award | June 2011 |