



PACA

Parents' Association of
Columbus Academy

PACA CONNECT 12/10/2025 MEETING MINUTES

DATE: December 10, 2025

TIME: 8AM

LOCATION: Fireside Dining Hall

- I. **Welcome and Introduction:** Michelle Singh, Vice President
- II. **Sweet & Savory Celebration: Faculty and Staff Appreciation Committee**
Sweet Celebration is an annual December tradition sponsored by the committee to thank all 300+ CA faculty and staff for their contributions to the school by sharing delicious holiday treats, ideally home-made
 - Sweet Celebration is scheduled for Friday, December 12th in the Trustees Room in Academy Hall
 - Families are asked to donate home baked goods and/or to donate up to \$20 to allow the committee to purchase baked goods for the event.
 - The committee is capping the monetary donation limit to \$20 per family this year to be mindful of families' budgets at this time of year
 - Opportunity still open for parents/guardians to help collect donated baked goods in the morning carlines on Thursday, December 11th and to help on Friday, December 12th – sign-ups through QR code
- III. **Pascal Losambe, Director of Diversity and Community Life:**
 - ☐ **PACA Presentation- Dec 10th***
 - This is his 9th year at Columbus Academy

- Introduced the Diversity and Community Life Team, comprised of four staff members here at CA, as well as the Community Coordinators that help with advisories from each division
- Timeline of Important Events regarding Diversity: In 1912, CA was founded as an all boys school from Grades 5-12
 - Grandfather and great grandfather of President G.W. Bush were some of the original founders of CA - shared a video from the Centennial Celebration that President Bush sent to congratulate CA on 100 years of education
- In 1963, the first “non-white” males are admitted - shortly following the televising of fire hoses and police dogs being unleashed on segregation protesters in Birmingham, AL, and more than a year before the Civil Rights Act was passed
 - Board of Trustees unanimously voted to remove a restrictive racial covenant from Academy’s charter in 1963
- In 1990, the first females are admitted, and Judy Karhl becomes first female Coordinator of Diversity and Coeducation
 - In 2005, Deirdre Hamlar became the first Director of Diversity, the first of that position in any Ohio school
- Columbus Academy’s mission statement highlights “valuing a broad diversity of students as it seeks to develop the complete person; mind, body, and character”... “fosters compassion, respect and moral courage...”
- Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs: when these needs are all met, the mission will be fulfilled
 - 1. Physiological needs: for food, water, clean air, etc.
 - 2. Safety: physical and emotional safety
 - 3. Belonging: to feel valued, recognized, supported, and included in this environment
 - 4. Esteem: to feel confident not only in what they do, but also who they ARE
- When does “Belonging” develop as a need? Begins in Preschool years of 3-6 years old: the felt need to be supported, recognized, and included
- Personal Identities: who you are, your experiences, your quirks, the significance of your name, history, and impact
 - Dr. Losambe had attendees answer two questions at their table and share amongst themselves: Where were you born? And what is the significance of your name?
 - Your personal identity affects your sense of belonging. What is your level of BEING KNOWN?

- Transformational empathy lives in the deepest level 3 of understanding
- Social Identities are created by society: Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Spirituality, Gender, Social Identities, Ability, Sexual Orientation, etc.
 - Which category is first noticed by children? They notice gender first, then race and status later on
- Showed a Junior speech by Olivia Brown on status: she noticed differences as young as a 2nd grader. She highlighted that not only was it something she noticed in others, but also how she perceived others see her.
- Stages of Identity Development:
 - Encounter: where they are treated differently, overhear something someone else says, etc., and this is where they learn that society has stratifications. This creates a brain change that highlights their identity.
 - Active Exploration comes next, where they try to make sense of what just happened. Dr. Losambe highlighted that the GAP between these first two stages is a very important juncture where we come in as educators and teachers to help establish and nurture their self worth, to lift them up and tell them who they really are, and then we can help them reach their full potential.
 - Commitment: They can then internalize that truth, and come to a commitment to help others who also are going through the same struggles and experiences, instead of internalizing the feelings of inferiority or stratification
- Dr. Losambe showed 2 Junior speeches from last year that highlighted this Encounter, Active Exploration, and Commitment stages
- Belonging comes from Relationships with trusted adults and from peers
- Affinity means gathering with others with shared values to learn about one's heritage and identity and create belonging and community
- Dr. Losambe shared that CA and Harvard conducted a joint study of more than 750 students and found that affinity groups were a source of positive belonging, especially to minority groups
- Showed a video compilation of several CA students speaking about their affinity groups and the positives they've experienced of belonging to one
 - Recurring themes of shared values, being together, connecting to others with similar heritage, learning more about their own identities, a place of safety and fellowship, getting involved in the found community, building roots, and not feeling alone!

- Dr. Losambe provided a printed list of MS and US Student Affinity groups to all attendees:

 [List of Middle and Upper School Affinity-Alliance Groups.pdf](#)

- Dr. Losambe ended with a quote by Archbishop Desmond Tutu: “My humanity is bound up in yours.”
- Ended with a short Q&A session

IV. Dr. Losambe highlighted the upcoming **Dinner of Great Conversations: Thursday, February 5th, 2026, 6pm-8pm** in the Dining Hall - a structured conversation time to form community and encouraged all to attend! Childcare will be provided with registration.

V. **Meeting Closure:** Michelle Singh, Vice President

- Michelle thanked Dr. Losambe for the presentation and thanked the attendees for their presence and participation

Next PACA Connect Meeting: January 14, 2025 at 8am, Fireside Dining Room, College Counseling

 [PACA Connect 12/10/25 Minutes](#)