

May 4, 2012

Oregon Commission on Black Affairs
Program of Work and Priorities

In assuming the role of Chair I wanted to share with you a few of my ideas about how the commission moves forward. It is my intention to refocus the commission on substantive issues of policy, legislation and cooperation with others in order to accomplish this goal.

Below are the priorities that I see as crucial to our success both in the near term and the foreseeable future. These priorities are not in any order of significance to me, just the order in which I thought of them based on my time on the commission, listening to discussions at meetings, working with community groups and the information I picked up during my new commissioner orientation program in Salem.

Your comments and suggestions are welcome.

Priorities

1. *Fill existing commission vacancies with subject matter experts in the areas of multicultural health, education, business, and justice/law.* The work of the commission should be tied more closely to policy initiatives being moved forward by our state legislature.

There is much good work that has been done in documenting disparities in the above areas and I am looking for people who can help craft solutions, which the legislature can support. I also want to focus our attention on economic development and contracting opportunities for our community.

2. *Develop greater working relationships with community-based agencies and other advocacy commissions:* The ability of OCBA to impact change is directly related to our ability to work with community based partners and the other advocacy commissions. Under my stewardship, the commission will make every effort to have at least one meeting annually where public testimony time is filled by community based partners.

This does not mean the public is not welcome to speak at other times before the commission but at least once per year we should focus our attention on community-based partners. It will be good for the commission to hear about their work and where we might support them.

3. *OCBA will also work more extensively with the other Advocacy Commissions:* There are a number of people who would like to see these commissions written out of existence. Only by working in concert with one another can we make progress in securing the resources and exert the type of influence that our communities deserve. Working together also means looking at the

upcoming legislative session to key on the issues we would like to move through the session and identify key legislative partners.

4. Each meeting is in the service of the people of the State of Oregon: Because we meet six times per year, our time together is valuable. It is my intent to ask more out of the committees. This is the place where ideas are born, road tested and recommendations emerge for votes by the entire commission. We will not use commission meetings for endless problem solving discussions on issues that can be worked out in the committees. To this end, we will review committee structure and assignments. Make no mistake; it is my intention that this is where we will do our detailed work so that meetings are more productive and a better use of everyone's time.