



Tuesday, December 28, 2021

## City of Olympia Social Justice and Equity Commission Application

Advisory committees are a structured way for community members to share their opinions and points of view, study issues, and develop recommendations in a focused small group to the Olympia City Council.

Commissioners will be tasked with aligning the Commission work plan to elevate the voices, perspectives, and needs of marginalized community members; mediation and investigation of discrimination and harassment complaints; studying issues; hearing public testimony; independent research; and reviewing staff reports and recommendations. The Commission will also prepare, discuss, put together and forward well-developed recommendations to the City Council.

Appointment to the Commission requires living or working within Olympia City limits.

The City of Olympia values participation from all perspectives and life experiences and looks for equity and inclusion in advisory commission appointments. The Olympia City Council's General Government Committee recommends appointments to the full Council. Recommendations are made following review of applications and interviews of qualified candidates.

To reduce barriers to community member participation the City offers stipends of \$25 per meeting attended to advisory commission members. Members who certify as low income are eligible to receive stipends of \$50 per meeting attended. Advisory commission members may waive the stipend upon request.

The City of Olympia is committed to the non-discriminatory treatment of all persons in employment and the delivery of services and resources. The City can provide reasonable accommodation for anyone who needs it to participate fully in the commission.

For questions, please contact Susan Grisham, Assistant to the City Manager, 360.753.8244, [sgrisham@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:sgrisham@ci.olympia.wa.us)

**Name**

Parfait Bassale

**Appointment to the Commission requires living or working within Olympia City limits. Do you:**

Live in Olympia

**Email Address**

[REDACTED]

**Home Address**

[REDACTED]

**Select the neighborhood where you live or work (whichever is applicable):**

Nottingham



View a larger, zoomable map here:

[https://www.olympiawa.gov/community/neighborhood\\_associations/index.php](https://www.olympiawa.gov/community/neighborhood_associations/index.php)

**Primary Phone Number**



## Interests & Experiences

Please keep answers concise and informative. You are introducing yourself to the Olympia City Council and sharing with them why you are interested in being considered for appointment. You may attach a resume.

**Attach a Resume**



Parfait Bassalé Resume Commission 2021.pdf

### **Why are you interested in serving on the Social Justice and Equity Commission?**

It has been my life journey to work to bring people together by helping them identify the ways in which they erect or maintain societal barriers to belonging and human flourishing. I do this work vocationally as the Executive Diversity Officer at South Puget Sound Community College and through trainings in our community. The newly created Commission's purpose to eliminate racism and fulfill human rights for a just and equitable Olympia for all people, aligns with my life purpose. In this role, I will learn about the injustices affecting Olympia residents to a greater extent and will be in position to impact outcomes more directly. This will be rewarding. Additionally, by hearing and seeing patterns of issues and the key players perpetuating them, it will help inform more effective advocacy and social justice work in other areas of my community engagement.

### **What is your understanding of, or experience in, issues related to social justice, human rights, racial and/or other forms of discrimination?**

To illustrate the challenges we face as a society around human rights, racial and/or other forms of discrimination, I often use the analogy of a swimming pool filled with chlorine and the fact that anyone who enters the pool will have deposits of chlorine on their skin. The chlorine is the equivalent of isms such as racism, sexism, classism, ageism, classism etc...in our society. The fact is that we have inherited an unjust society built on the premises of exploitation of many for the gain of some. Additionally, we have been socialized within biased and prejudiced family, educational and religious social systems that reinforced and rationalized the narratives to explain these injustices. The compounding effect and interplay of these dynamics present a complicated picture. A change requires intentionality, time and personal transformational. Hence we must meet people where they are and as they are with grace, patience and resolve acknowledging that we are all products of these systems and need re-education, correction and healing.

### **What lived experiences or skill sets would you bring to the Commission?**

I would bring to the Commission my lived experience as an African Immigrant to the USA, navigating a predominantly White and western society for twenty years and the lessons learned from that experience. I will bring my experience as a father of three mixed children in a racially tensed political landscape and trying to raise them to be contributors to a just society. I will also bring my experience as a diversity, equity and Inclusion executive championing belonging and equity at SPSCC. Lastly and most importantly, I will bring my skills of a peacemaker. After almost two decades of doing social justice work, I have found that often, people who are passionate about this work can still be in a place of reactivity to the trauma they have suffered. While the trauma is essential for driving motivation, if not healed, it can get in the way of meeting others where they are and as they are for productive and mutually beneficial outcomes. I am proud myself in doing this work with passion while meeting all stakeholders where they are and as they are.

**Describe a time when you experienced a personal bias and how you worked through that bias; or describe a time when you worked with someone with different viewpoints than yours and how you worked through those differences?**

Shortly after I was promoted to the Executive Diversity Officer position at SPSCC, I needed to hire an Executive assistant. As I put the hiring committee together, we began discussing existing biases related to the position. I disclosed that in my professional experience I have only seen women in the role of Executive assistants. This was further evidenced by the fact that at SPSCC, all existing Executive assistants were women at that time. The committee discussed how prevalent the stereotype of women in secretary roles was in society and we actively began discussing and imagining how successful at the role some men at the college would be, given their skillset. This exercise of naming the bias, discussing it with peers and actively working to mitigate the bias by imagining alternatives, proved effective. The top three candidates for the final round of interviews turned out to be two men and a woman.

Whether with biases or differences, naming the difference, engaging through the difference and actively working to find creative solutions is the recipe to success when facing diversity.

**Describe what a "just and equitable Olympia for all people" looks or feels like to you and how would you include all marginalized people into this vision.**

A "just and equitable Olympia for all people" looks like a community where we build systems and spaces like this Commission to hear people's stories and experiences in order to meet them where they are. It looks like a place where people feel seen because of the opportunity to speak, then, heard, because their needs are met based on the stories they tell.

I would include historically marginalized people by letting them know about the commission as a resource and by seeking out their voices and perspectives on issues that might impact them.

**Appointment to the Commission will require your attendance at evening meetings, and other types of work (reading, meeting preparation etc.). How many hours per month are you willing to commit as a volunteer?**

4 to 5 hours.

**Thank you for your interest in serving on a the City of Olympia Social Justice and Equity Commission!**

# Parfait Bassalé

Gifted communicator, bridge builder and EDI specialist, I am eager to contribute my talents and experience to advancing equity and human flourishing.

## Work Experience

### PARFAIT BASSALE, LLC | FOUNDER AND PROGRAM MANAGER

January 2008 – Present

- ❖ Designs and delivers high impact trainings and keynotes on topics such as inclusive leadership, fostering belonging to diverse organizations (state and federal agencies, higher education)
- ❖ Consults and coaches EDI leaders on strategy and next steps for successful culture change

### SOUTH PUGET SOUND COMMUNITY COLLEGE | Executive Diversity Officer

September 2017 – Present

- ❖ Serves as lead administrative supervisor to all DEI related initiatives; program development and engagement strategies to further a climate of equity and inclusion on campus.
- ❖ Chairs the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion advisory committee to the executive team by providing strategic direction to various task forces focused on critical initiatives to advance EDI on campus (hiring, ERGs, best practices, policy)
- ❖ Designed and directs the wrap around IGNITE program to foster belonging and academic success for historically underrepresented students.
- ❖ Designs and leads training in EDI subject matter and related topics, disseminates EDI knowledge and competencies throughout SPSCC by providing expert leadership and coaching.

### RUBICON INTERNATIONAL | CHANGE & IMPLEMENTATION SPECIALIST

January 2013 – September 2017

- ❖ Boosted employee's morale and motivation through empathetic leadership which resulted in a growing portfolio worth \$2.5 million.
- ❖ Created a culture of quality and consistency by collaborating with key players to establish procedures and protocols that streamlined the implementation process.

### RUBICON INTERNATIONAL | DIRECTOR OF DEPLOYMENT

January 2008 – December 2012

- ❖ Positively transformed the organization's culture by putting in place a quality assurance and capacity monitoring processes.
- ❖ Grew the department by building processes based on data and through advocacy.

## Publications & Certifications

- ❖ The Story and Song Centered Pedagogy: A new framework for teaching empathy in the classroom (2013).
- ❖ Certificate of Negotiation and Mediation, Portland State University (2009).

## Honors & Awards

- ❖ Keynote speaker, Society for College and University Planning – Pacific Regional Conference (2022)
- ❖ Leadership Thurston County Equity Day (2020, 2021)
- ❖ Keynote speaker, International Education week, Portland Community College (2013)

## References

- ❖ Tim Stokes – [tstokes@spscc.edu](mailto:tstokes@spscc.edu)  
Relationship: Supervisor – President South Puget Sound Community College
- ❖ David Pelkey – [dpelkey@spscc.edu](mailto:dpelkey@spscc.edu)  
Relationship: colleague – Vice President of student services at SPSCC



**Masters of Art  
Conflict Resolution**  
Portland State University  
(2012)

**Bachelors of Science  
Business Management**  
Portland State University  
(2007)

**Bachelors of Science  
Information Systems**  
Portland State University  
(2007)



## Key Skills

- Equity, Belonging & Empathy
- Change Management
- Mediation
- Motivational Interview
- Fluent in French
- Emotional Intelligence
- Consensus building
- Negotiation
- Cross-cultural communication
- Calm under pressure
- Self-starter

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