Equity Toolkit

A RESEARCH-BASED GUIDE TO OPERATIONALIZING EQUITY

Achieving
the Dream

Gratitude

Growing up in Washington, D.C., provided a unique look into the beauty and richness of diverse people and voices. It also impressed upon me the ills of bigotry, discrimination, classism, and racism. I attended internationally diverse public schools, integrated a summer camp, walked in marches for women's rights, and attended college in the deep South with threats of racial violence. My perspective has been shaped through interactions and relationships with people who have varied lived experiences. Their stories are vivid, sad, and joyful. The intentional legacy of interpersonal, institutional, and structural racism impacts me and those I care about. Diversity, equity, and inclusion work is personal for me. As a cisgender Black woman, I love and empathize with those who face oppression.

I believe that to truly help racially minoritized and marginalized community college students, we must move past looking at situations, data, and policies with an "equity lens." Lenses do allow us to see clearer, but they also can be removed at our will. Intersecting identities cannot be ignored or removed at will. Equity requires us to fully recognize our shared humanity, eliminate systemic obstacles, destabilize dominant culture, and disrupt one-sided narratives.

I am humbled and grateful to lead equity work at Achieving the Dream. Working alongside colleagues who are dedicated to ensuring equity at institutions previews the promise of an equitable future. As an equity leader, I am committed to lending my voice and my will to combat barriers to educational attainment. I truly believe that education is a form of resistance, empowerment, and transformation! I hope my legacy is one of liberation, Black joy, and love.

Supporting community colleges on their equity journeys requires patience, empathy, and passion for ensuring that students are successful. Their success is my success. In fact, it is all our success, and I am ready to celebrate!

Thoughtfully,

FRANCESCA ILA CARPENTER

Director of Equity Initiatives
Achieving the Dream | 2023

Our Equity Imperative

Addressing inequities in student success is the core tenet of Achieving the Dream's mission and has been since our inception 20 years ago. ATD was founded to support community colleges in their efforts to develop a data-informed culture of evidence aimed at increasing student success rates, particularly for racially and economically marginalized students. This work is particularly critical for our nation's community colleges, which enroll a higher share of students who are racially and economically marginalized, first-generation students, adult learners, and student parents.

This toolkit brings together lessons from research and ATD's two decades of experience working with community colleges to create more equitable institutions and student outcomes. It seeks to help institutions put into practice strategies that have proven effective. Results from leading community colleges indicate that when colleges intentionally design and implement equity-centered policies to increase student access, momentum, and mobility, institutions achieve elusive goals and students, families, and their communities thrive.

The success of ATD's leader colleges indicates that institutional transformation is doable but always begins with — and is continually renewed by — honest institutional self-assessments that put unexamined perspectives, practices, and processes to the test. Our colleges will only be as successful as the success of our most marginalized students. That requires that we remove barriers and structural inequities that particularly undermine success of those students who continue to be excluded based on the intersection of race, ethnicity, gender identity, language, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, economic status, and/or religion.

Data speaks to the urgency of the challenge. We know that Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students continue to be marginalized in higher education,[1] particularly in degree and credential programs that lead to family sustaining careers, and that equity gaps in persistence, retention, and completion persist.[2] Similarly, students who are economically marginalized are less likely to attend college and significantly less likely to attain a credential or degree.[3]

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1   Diana Ellsworth et al., "Racial and Ethnic Equity in US Higher Education," McKinsey & Company, July 18, 2022, https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/education/our-insights/racial-and-ethnic-equity-in-us-higher-education.

2   "Persistence and Retention: Fall 2021 Beginning Postsecondary Student Cohort," National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, July 27, 2023, https://nscresearchcenter.org/persistence-retention; Jennifer Causey et al., "Completing College: National and State Report with Longitudinal Data Dashboard on Six- and Eight-Year Completion Rate," National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, November 29, 2022, https://nscresearchcenter.org/completing-college.

3   Paul Fain, "Wealth's Influence on Enrollment and Completion," Inside Higher Ed, May 22, 2019, https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/05/23/feds-release-broader-data-socioeconomic-status-and-college-enrollment-and-completion.

The Equity Toolkit calls on institutional leaders to reflect and act on ATD's eight equity principles ranging from interrogating institutional practices, structures, and policies and embracing cultural competence and culturally responsive teaching to developing community partnerships to boost economic vitality and driving positive change through perseverance and power sharing.

The toolkit provides a comprehensive guide and framework for operationalizing equitable policies and practices at community colleges that can be a powerful lever that can greatly enhance the achievements of both students and the institution. It provides a diverse set of tools and exercises to intentionally place equity at the center of institutional considerations, conversations, and actions. Taken together, these can be used to evaluate current practice and policy and to change those that continue to create inequities for marginalized and minoritized students at our colleges.

Our work on this toolkit began well before this summer's Supreme Court decision on affirmative action and the wave of attacks on efforts to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education. And while those efforts are simply the latest iteration of a history of inequities in our nation's educational policies, leaders across the community college sector recognize that the work to strengthen diversity, equity, and inclusion must continue. Our students need us. We cannot risk losing decades of momentum in accelerating equitable student success outcomes and abandoning families and the communities we serve.

Our strategic vision is not a zero-sum game where some succeed at the expense of others. ATD's strategic vision is one where community colleges are "profoundly accessible hubs of learning, credentialing, and economic mobility that eliminate inequities in educational and workforce outcomes." The work that this toolkit seeks to engage in is central to that vision.

We know this work is local and that colleges are each in different places in their journey to bolster equity to achieve key indicators of student and community success. This toolkit is designed to allow multiple entry points that can advance progress in equitable mobility based on wherever an institution finds itself on that journey. Our hope is that colleges will explore the resources included here and identify how they can best be used to support your efforts.

As always, we stand ready and willing to support you in that work in whatever ways you need.

Sincerely,

DR. KAREN A. STOUT
President & CEO
Achieving the Dream | 2023

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Introduction

Achieving the Dream is pleased to share this inaugural version of our Equity Toolkit. Grounded in research and informed by the strong work of many ATD Network colleges, we have developed this toolkit to support individuals and college teams with enhancing equity on their campus. This toolkit supports ATD's Equity Statement and has been designed to provide resources to institutions seeking guidance on incorporating and operationalizing equity on their campus.

The toolkit is organized around the eight **ATD Equity Principles**. Each section offers equity practices, guiding questions, and selected resources. We also feature ATD Network college spotlights — stories on a range of programs and practices — to illustrate how institutions have successfully pursued equity and what they have learned along the way.

ATD'S RENEWED STRATEGIC VISION

To help our Network colleges catalyze equitable, antiracist, and economically vibrant communities through institutional transformation that advances community colleges as profoundly accessible hubs of learning, credentialing, and economic mobility that eliminate inequities in educational and workforce outcomes.

Advancing Equity, Access, and Community

EQUITY AT THE CENTER

Our renewed strategic vision is built on the fundamental belief that community colleges must strive to be more equity-centered, profoundly accessible, and community-driven. This vision recognizes that oppression of racially minoritized individuals is the most significant and persistent barrier to achieving equity in higher education. The strategy also recognizes that racial oppression must be addressed alongside other forms of oppression. A clear commitment to eliminating systemic inequities expands opportunities for colleges to address oppression faced by students because of their gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, primary language, and socioeconomic status. **Read ATD's full 2021–2025 strategic vision on our website.**

For years, ATD has focused on inequities in outcomes, and those inequities persist. For example, while the overall six-year graduation rate for students who start at community college (43.1%) still has significant room for improvement, disaggregated data shows the need to better support Black and Latinx students, who are completing at 31.1% and 38.8% respectively.[1] Low six-year graduation rates and the lag time to completion affects students' lifelong economic security as timely and successful credential and degree completion significantly increases lifetime earnings.

But we now recognize that to make progress, ATD and its Network colleges must commit to an antiracist approach that does not problematize students or community members, but instead courageously names and accurately analyzes institutional design as a contributing culprit in racial disparities in education, economic mobility, and community well-being.

ATD'S EQUITY STATEMENT

The 2020 release of ATD's revised Equity Statement set the direction we expect our colleges to navigate: one that reinforces an institution-wide commitment to transformational change and antiracism that eliminates systemic barriers, addresses student needs, and increases social justice and equity. ATD's Equity Principles are grounded in **Achieving the Dream's Equity Statement** seen on the following page.

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1   Causey et al., "Completing College."

Achieving the Dream Equity Statement (2020)

Achieving the Dream believes that equity — our core founding principle — is the driving force to achieve the educational, economic, and social benefits of higher education for the students we serve. We believe that when colleges intentionally design and implement antiracist and just structures, policies, and practices that combat oppression, students and their communities thrive. Higher education must interrogate the disconnect between institutionalized practices that impact student success and the systemic structures and processes that continue to oppress and exclude students based on the intersection of race, ethnicity, gender identity, language, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, economic status, and/or religion.

Achieving the Dream remains steadfast in our commitment to delivering student-centered strategies to guide and support colleges to disrupt and dismantle historical systemic discriminatory legacies, structures, and barriers that prevent community members from prospering. We expect ATD Network colleges to honor their institutional responsibilities to create and invest in thriving local communities by leveraging their leadership positions to actualize social, economic, and racial justice. Through bold actions, colleges must transform their practices to target and eliminate specific barriers to student success and address their students' needs by centering equity within their local context.

ATD'S EQUITY PRINCIPLES

ATD's Equity Principles, which supplement the Equity Statement, are framed with the premise that institutions of higher education are responsible for student learning and for creating equitable systems to ensure all students achieve success, with particular attention to systemically excluded students. The eight principles draw from existing equity research and best practices. They are not meant to be exhaustive but were created to provide a guidepost for institutions who are committed to pursuing equitable outcomes for all students.

To be clear, ensuring equity requires that we disavow the one-size-fits-all approach and that we intentionally consider institutional context and capacity for engaging in equity-minded work.

The 8 ATD Equity Principles:

1.
Develop an equity mindset

2.
Interrogate institutional practices, structures, and policies and replace those that are inequitable

3.
Integrate holistic supports throughout the student experience

4.
Embrace cultural competence and culturally responsive pedagogy

5.
Leverage existing and new data to support a culture of inquiry and evidence

6.
Drive positive change through perseverance and power sharing

7.
Engage with the local community to develop partnerships that lead to economic vitality

8.
Acknowledge the pervasiveness of racism and discrimination in the United States of America

How to Use This Toolkit

When institutions explicitly bring equity into operations and strategy, they are less likely to perpetuate systemic inequities. The equity tools in this document are designed to help college decision-makers firmly install equity in mindsets, behaviors, and interactions that affect policies, practices, programs, and budgets. These tools can aid in the development of strategies that reduce inequities for minoritized and marginalized groups, improving success for all groups as a result.

For these tools to be effective, we recommend that multiple levels of the institution engage in this process. When developing new programs or policies, it is crucial that equity principles guide the work from all sides — this requires alignment with institutional goals and collaboration across departments.

Working through the Equity Toolkit does not have to be a linear process. We have intentionally organized each tool around a guiding ATD Equity Principle that can be considered in isolation or as part of a larger whole. Teams and individuals should explore these tools based on their goals and readiness. And because institutions work as an integrated system, leadership, administration, faculty, and staff can and should use parts of the toolkit that are most relevant to their spheres of work.

Included in the ATD Equity Toolkit are reflections and response worksheets that can help individuals, teams, and institutions evaluate where they stand on their equity journeys. To effectively engage in equity work, individuals must first focus on improving themselves before extending their efforts to collaborate with others. Addressing DEI within oneself involves self-reflection, exploring biases, building empathy, and developing cultural competency. While self-improvement is crucial, collective efforts are indispensable for achieving comprehensive equity goals. Collaboration with others helps create a greater impact, encouraging institutional change.

DEVELOPING COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

Community agreements for group discussions provide a common framework for how people aspire to collaborate as they embark upon transformative actions. These agreements are not just beneficial but often critical to equity work.

The process of constructing agreements is often more important than the product. They are explicitly developed and enforced to help members execute a collective vision for how the group wants to be in relationship with one another.

They should come from a consensus-driven process where every person in the group identifies what they need from others and what they must commit to one another so that all feel safe, supported, open, and trusting.

Below are a few suggestions for developing community agreements.[2] First, we offer steps for when you have more time to spend during a meeting, followed by examples for when you have less time.

DEFINE WHAT A COMMUNITY AGREEMENT IS

For example, the facilitator can describe the community agreement as "consensus on what every person in our group needs from each other and commits to each other in order to feel supported, open, productive, and trusting, so that we can do our best work, achieve our common vision, and serve our students well."

EXPLAIN WHY COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS MATTER

- We can't achieve our vision in a hostile, disrespectful, or undermining group culture.

- Some of the most necessary conversations are emotional, painful, and uncomfortable, but we won't engage or make ourselves vulnerable without emotional safety and trust.

- Staff relationships model for students how human relationships should be; staff culture shapes institution culture.

- Healthy staff culture is key to personal sustainability in the challenging field of education.

ENGAGE PEOPLE IN THE PROCESS

- Ask participants to reflect and share their perspectives on the following question: "What do you need from every person in this group in order to feel safe, supported, open, productive, and trusting so that we can do our best work?"

- Each person shares an agreement and the facilitator groups similar agreements under one theme.

- The facilitator brings a revised list back to the large group in a subsequent meeting for final approval.

When you have less time to spend on developing community agreements, below are some alternate approaches.

- Option 1: The facilitator presents the group with a list of their own community agreements and asks participants to look over the list and suggest changes or make additions.

- Option 2: The facilitator asks each person to share what they need from others to participate effectively, which gives participants the opportunity to share and hear what is needed. It also increases the group's awareness.

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2   Adapted from "Developing Community Agreements," National Equity Project, https://www.nationalequityproject.org/tools/developing-communi-ty-agreements.

EXAMPLE COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS[3]

Speak your truth, speak for self.
Use "I" statements. Although we all identify as being a part of a larger whole, there are still unique identities among us. Let's not assume "all feel one way," and try to avoid generalizations.

Seek to learn, understand, and grow.
Enter the discussion with an open mind to others' contributions. Engage from a place of learning and curiosity, and actively listen before responding. Embrace and give constructive criticism and ask "why" to uncover the root concern.

Respect others' experiences.
We may have different or similar stories to share and contexts to draw from. All are legitimate. Listen with humility, knowing that one person does not have all the information to make the right decision alone. Assume the best intentions of everyone here today.

Confidentiality.
Do not share the experiences you hear in this space outside this space. If you share things you've learned, don't identify individual people or provide details that would allow someone in your story to be identified.

Disagree without discord.
Disagreement is expected. However, approach unexpected ideas with curiosity, not argument. Challenge ideas, not people, thoughtfully and with grace. Approach differences and missteps with "compassionate correction." If someone makes a comment that upsets you, approach them as an ally whom you can help to learn something new. If someone offers critical feedback about something you've shared (e.g., "I think you used an out of date/offensive term") or you feel compelled to offer this kind of feedback, please remember that this should come from a place of building connection and bridging misunderstanding (not shaming or blaming).

Share the air.
Make room for all voices to be heard, and don't dominate the conversation. Build in time for reflection for those who need it. Establish and use mechanisms to get input from key stakeholders who will be affected by the decision. Try to make space and time for the discussions to occur in full.

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3   Adapted from the Office of Equity and Inclusion, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

As you **engage in equity work,** we invite you to keep the following in mind:

INNER REFLECTION AND INDIVIDUAL LEARNING JOURNEYS REQUIRE LEARNING AND UNLEARNING

People who are leading meaningful equity work consistently invest in inner reflection. Institutions see the most progress when leaders invest significant time into their individual journeys on learning and *un*-learning.

LEARNING IS A TEAM EFFORT

When a group applies Equity Principles together, this is equity work at its best. Ideally, a diverse group of people from different backgrounds (professional, racial/ethnic, language, age, ability, gender, sexual orientation, and sexual identity) meet to discuss and respond to the questions together. Always keep in mind that one person does not represent an entire group of people. If the team realizes additional perspectives are needed, others should be invited to participate.

ENGAGE IN CONSTRUCTIVE AND HEALTHY DIALOGUE

We each have a different starting place in equity work and individuals or groups may not know the answer to every question all the time. Discussing the Equity Principles and tools on an ongoing basis is an opportunity to learn and unlearn, grow, and move the institution toward more equity-minded and race-conscious processes and outcomes. When engaging in conversations, start with community agreements to create a safe and productive environment for discussion.

KEY TERMS

ANTIRACISM:
An active and conscious effort to work against multidimensional aspects of racism.[4]

DIVERSITY:
Psychological, physical, and social differences that occur among any and all individuals, including race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability, and learning styles.[5]

EQUITY:
The intentional practice of identifying and dismantling unjust structures, policies, and practices that perpetuate systemic oppression based on but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender identity, language, disability, sexual orientation, economic status, and/or religion to establish corrective justice actions to realize students' academic and social mobility goals.[6]

EQUITY-MINDEDNESS:
According to Bensimon, equity-mindedness can be defined as framing the success of underserved and underrepresented students as an institutional and state responsibility.[7] One of the qualities of equity-mindedness includes being color-conscious in a critical sense, which entails understanding the inequalities experienced by racial, ethnic, and Indigenous communities in the context of a history of exclusion, discrimination, and segregation.[8] To create educational systems that center equity, it is essential that institutions have deep, honest discussions about the systems embedded within their respective institutions and that they engage in the work necessary to ensure all stakeholders embrace an equity-minded lens.

INCLUSION:
The actions of creating environments in which any individual or group can feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate and bring their authentic self.[9]

4   Robert J. Patterson quoted in Hillary Hoffower, "What it really means to be an anti-racist, and why it's not the same as being an ally," *Business Insider*, June 8, 2020, https://www.businessinsider.com/what-is-anti-racism-how-to-be-anti-racist-2020-6.

5   "Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA)," Indiana Arts Commission, https://www.in.gov/arts/programs-and-services/resources/inclusion-diversity-equity-and-access-idea/; "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Glossary," Rice University, https://business.rice.edu/about/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/glossary.

6   "Achieving the Dream Equity Statement," Achieving the Dream, February 15, 2022, https://achievingthedream.org/achieving-the-dream-equity-statement/.

7   "Improving Postsecondary Attainment: Overcoming Common Challenges to an Equity Agenda in State Policy," Center for Urban Education, USC Rossier School of Education, January 2017, https://cue.usc.edu/files/2017/02/Overcoming-Challenges_Final_Online.pdf.

8   "Protocol for Assessing Equity-Mindedness in State Policy," Center for Urban Education, USC Rossier School of Education, January 2017, https://cue.usc.edu/files/2017/02/CUE-Protocol-Workbook-Final_Web.pdf.

9   "Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA)," Indiana Arts Commission, https://www.in.gov/arts/programs-and-services/resources/inclusion-diversity-equity-and-access-idea/; "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Glossary," Rice University, https://business.rice.edu/about/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/glossary.

INTERSECTIONALITY:
The interplay of one's identities, the status of those identities, and the situational context of how, when, and where those identities show up and influence personal experiences within multiple dimensions of societal oppression. Intersectionality is a term coined by scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw to explain how individual aspects of our identities (gender, race, ethnicity, class, etc.) intersect.[10]

SENSE OF BELONGING:
In our work at ATD, we define sense of belonging as the presence of thoughts and feelings that affirm an individual as connected, accepted, respected, and valued — aspects integral to student persistence and success. Inclusion focuses on the actions. Belonging is the feeling experienced from those inclusive commitments taken by the organization.[11]

10   "Intersectionality," University of Colorado Office of Equity, https://www.ucdenver.edu/offices/equity/education-training/self-guided-learning/inter-sectionality.

11   Carol S. Dweck, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (Ballantine Books, 2007); Gavin Henning and Erin Bentrim, "The Emergence and Maturation of Student Affairs Assessment," *New Directions for Student Services* 2022, no. 178–179 (June 2022): 15–28, https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.20425; Paul Hernandez, *The Pedagogy of Real Talk: Engaging, Teaching, and Connecting With Students At-Promise* (Corwin Press, 2021); Sylvia Hurtado and Deborah Faye Carter, "Effects of College Transition and Perceptions of the Campus Racial Climate on Latino College Students' Sense of Belonging," *Sociology of Education* 70, no. 4 (October 1997): 324, https://doi.org/10.2307/2673270; Wendy Keyser, "Empathy in Action: Developing a Sense of Belonging with the Pedagogy of 'Real Talk,'" *Research Online* (2022), https://ro.uow.edu.au/jutlp/vol19/iss4/10; Louis S. Nadelson et al., "Is Equity on Their Mind? Documenting Teachers' Education Equity Mindset," *World Journal of Education* 9, no. 5 (2019): 26–40; Terrell L. Strayhorn, *College Students' Sense of Belonging: A Key to Educational Success for All Students* (Routledge, 2018); Annemarie Vaccaro and Barbara Newman, "Theoretical Foundations for Sense of Belonging in College," in *The Impact of a Sense of Belonging in College*, (New York: Routledge, 2023), 3–20, http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9781003447870-2.

EQUITY PRINCIPLE 1:

Develop an Equity Mindset

Achieving educational equity is an ongoing, collaborative journey. It is important that institutional leaders embrace an equity mindset and focus on how to set a foundation for the college to commit to equity.

Leaders set the tone and are key to meaningful shifts in mindsets, change, and institutional transformation. While institutional leaders may feel the urgency to address educational equity at a systems level, it is important to first apply this urgency inward. Effective and impactful equity leaders understand that doing their own self-reflection work is important, they understand that making mistakes is part of an equity and growth mindset, and they understand that equity work is an ongoing journey that includes taking ownership and making amends when they make mistakes.

Equity leaders also know that equity work requires collaboration and engagement across the entire institution. Developing an equity mindset will require that the institution provide stakeholders with opportunities for self-reflection and the opportunity to develop new perspectives, mindsets, and skill sets.

UNDERSTANDING EQUITY MINDSET AND EQUITY-MINDEDNESS

Building an equity mindset and an equity-minded campus culture is foundational in all equity work. Core to an equity mindset is a growth mindset,[12] the belief that skills can be improved over time, and that improving those skills is the goal of the work people do. People with a growth mindset believe that they can learn, develop, and grow. When individuals embrace a growth mindset, they accept that they will make mistakes, they own mistakes made, and they understand that mistakes are part of the learning and growth process — not an indictment on their character — and even after making mistakes, they continue in their equity journey.

The Center for Urban Education coined the term *equity-mindedness* to refer to the mode of thinking exhibited by practitioners who are willing to assess their own racialized assumptions, acknowledge their lack of knowledge in the history of race and racism, take responsibility for the success of historically underserved and minoritized student groups, and critically assess racialization in their own practices as educators and/or administrators.[13]

Equity-mindedness requires that practitioners are race-conscious and aware of the social and historical context of exclusionary practices in American higher education. Equity-minded practitioners call attention to patterns of inequity in student outcomes, they are willing to take personal and institutional responsibility for the success of their students, and they critically reassess their own practices. Also critically important is that the institution provides stakeholders with opportunities for self-reflection and space to develop new perspectives, mindsets, and skill sets.[14]

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12   Dweck, *Mindset*; Nadelson et al., "Is Equity On Their Mind?," 26–40.

13   "Developing a Practice of Equity Minded Indicators," Center for Urban Education, USC Rossier School of Education, 2016, https://cue.usc.edu/files/2016/02/Developing-a-Practice-of-Equity-Mindedness.pdf.

14   "Indicators of Equity Mindedness," Center for Urban Education, USC Rossier School of Education, 2016, http://www.3csn.org/files/2016/11/Indicators-of-Equity-1.pdf.

EQUITY PRACTICES FOR CULTIVATING AN EQUITY MINDSET

The following self-assessment can help individual leaders evaluate their own experiences, mindsets, and biases, and identify areas for growth.

*Read each leader statement and examine whether it applies to you. You may find that you have **not yet** implemented a practice, that you have begun work in a certain area but still **need to develop** your equity mindset, or that you have already **implemented** that practice and can focus on other areas of growth.*

LEADER SELF-ASSESSMENT

LEADER STATEMENT	NOT YET	NEEDS TO DEVELOP	NEEDS TO STRENGTHEN	IMPLEMENTED
1. As a leader, I invest in my own equity learning and demonstrate vulnerability in sharing my learning and practices with colleagues.				
2. As a leader, I understand that making mistakes is part of growing my equity mindset. I am comfortable taking ownership and making amends when I make mistakes. I practice grace and humility toward myself and others.				
3. As a leader, I regularly and transparently share the equity actions I am taking on.				
4. As a leader, I publicly model that I am turning my deepened awareness into new actions and behaviors. I share what I am learning and I share my understanding that equity as a practice is integral to effective leadership.				
5. As a leader, I create an environment where others take initiative and action toward a more equitable system.				
6. As a leader, I hold myself and others responsible for achieving equity goals and objectives.				

LEADER STATEMENT	NOT YET	NEEDS TO DEVELOP	NEEDS TO STRENGTHEN	IMPLEMENTED
7. As a leader, I communicate a unified commitment to creating a more equitable system and encourage others to join in.				
8. As a leader, I actively and regularly seek feedback from direct reports and others they lead.				
9. As a leader, I seek, establish, and promote ways for the institution to provide targeted equity learning and development opportunities to faculty, staff, and administration. This may include: examining one's identity, privilege, biases, and assumptions; skills development to navigate difficult conversations and learn about how systems of oppression operate in the wider culture; facilitated conversations about equity; and facilitating courageous conversations.				
10. As a leader, I identify ways for the institution to compensate leaders' participation in learning and development (e.g., release time, reward and recognition in annual performance and review).				
11. As a leader, I seek ongoing, developmental equity education that takes me through graduated stages of learning.				
12. As a leader, I have the support structures I need to promote my own ongoing self-growth and development.				

Team-Based Approaches for Operationalizing Equity

In a team-based approach, ATD guides community colleges in centering equity by supporting teams of administrators, faculty, and staff to better understand their students' lived experiences, to listen with intentionality, and to examine how their own biases and assumptions may influence teaching and student interactions and impede student progress. ATD works with colleges on strategies and practices designed to dismantle structural barriers to equity. Examples of that work include:

Facilitating courageous conversations on equity with broad groups of stakeholders

Using data to identify equity gaps and develop equity insight metrics

Developing culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy and student services that affirm student cultures, identities, and experiences

Connecting pedagogy to equity and justice by fostering critical analysis, reflective processes, and critical consciousness

Develop a College Equity Statement

An equity statement is a public statement that demonstrates to the community the institution's commitment to equity. An equity statement is what you can point to for accountability. It signals what the institution stands for and how it intends to serve the community.

Much like a college's mission, vision, and strategic goals, an equity statement can serve as a north star and guide your decisions. The institution's equity statement is vitally important in creating a conceptual framework that promotes culturally responsive behavior, but it is equally critical to apply that framework as you develop the statement itself. For example, are stakeholders involved in the development process? In what ways does the institution ensure that the equity statement reflects the community and populations that it serves? Does the institution see this task as a singular event, or has it planned for periodic review of the equity statement to ensure continued institutional responsiveness as needs, populations, or environments change?

EQUITY-MINDED DECISION-MAKING

Addressing equity on community college campuses requires a systemic approach that permeates the whole institution. Only by infusing principles of equity more intentionally into daily and strategic decisions to ensure policies and practices are designed to support students in achieving their goals can colleges see gains in student outcomes. Developing a strong understanding of societal biases, and how they manifest both nationally and locally, is the most effective way for colleges to identify and address systemic issues that reflect these biases.

Based on ATD's definition of equity, institutions should commit to using the following guiding questions as part of the decision-making process for all decisions related to institutional strategy, structure, resource allocation, policies, practices, and culture. This discussion should be embedded into the decision-making process at the exploration phase, where data and information are being collected, as well as in the final stages before implementation.

Colleges can use these guiding questions as a basis for building their own guide or as a starting point to tailor to their student and institutional context. Each institution's decision-making guide should be grounded in its own definition of equity.

QUESTIONS FOR IDENTIFYING DECISIONS THAT NEED TO BE REVISITED

1. **Where are the aspects of the student experience** that affect outcomes?

2. **What are the differential impacts of this aspect** on the experiences of marginalized or minoritized students at our institution?

3. **What decisions/actions around this aspect** of the student experience may be reinforcing the status quo that leads to current inequities?

QUESTIONS FOR THE EXPLORATION PHASE OF DECISION-MAKING

1. **How does the current reality impact marginalized or minoritized students at our institution?** Consider their experiences, academic and career outcomes, social mobility, etc.

2. As we reflect on the current reality's relationship to the topic at hand, ask:

   - **Why was it designed that way?** What criteria led to this design? What assumptions could have led to this decision?

   - **Who was it designed for?** What was its intended purpose?

   - **What differences exist** between those who the current reality was designed for and the students we serve today?

3. **What are the contextual factors affecting our students** that are relevant to the decision we are discussing? Consider social/societal biases, systemic inequities, power dynamics, and historical resource allocation.

4. Consider how the following may contribute to inequitable outcomes related to this decision:

   - **Institutional policies and practices**

   - **Programs that serve students**

   - **Communication mechanisms**

   - **Strategic goals**

   - **Resource allocation**

QUESTIONS FOR EVALUATING OPTIONS AND MAKING THE FINAL DECISION

1. **What alternative decisions/designs** could produce different outcomes?

2. **How will those options impact the experience and success** of marginalized or minoritized students at our institution?

3. **How will each decision impact** the college's ability to achieve our definition of equity?

4. **Could there be any unintentional disparate impact** along lines of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, ability, access, or power as a result of this decision? What harm can result from this decision? Consider both active and passive ways that inequities could be perpetuated by this decision.

5. **If so, what steps could be taken or what needs to change** to make sure this decision supports students equitably? Sometimes equity requires us to allocate additional resources to certain students who have been marginalized or negatively impacted by structural biases in society.

6. **What feedback loops and accountability mechanisms can be structured** into routine practices to ensure this decision continues to advance equity for our students?

QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROCESS

1. **How does my identity impact my understanding** of the decision point and its potential impact on students?

2. **How does my role at the institution,** and the power that comes with it, affect my understanding of the decision point and its potential impact on students?

3. **What assumptions am I making** about our students and their experiences?

STANDARDS FOR ENTERING DECISION-MAKING DISCUSSIONS

- **Enter the discussion with an open mind** to others' contributions.

- **Challenge ideas**, not people, thoughtfully and with grace.

- **Embrace and give constructive criticism** and ask "why" to uncover the root concern.

- **Listen with humility**, knowing that one person does not have all the information to make the right decision alone.

- **Try to make space and time** for discussions to occur in full.

- **Build in time for reflection** for those who need it.

- **Establish mechanisms** to get input from key stakeholders who will be affected by the decision.

- **Understand that designing for equity requires intentional planning.** Help faculty and staff think deeply about college structures that are within the control of the institution.

STRATEGIES TO FACILITATE EQUITY-MINDED CONVERSATIONS AND NAVIGATE RESISTANCE

Operationalizing equity involves navigating resistance. Developed by the Center for Urban Education,[15] the strategies below can be used by colleges interested in building their capacity to facilitate equity-minded conversations and respond to resistance to focusing on equity work.

Act as a mirror. Reflect back to the speaker what you heard them say and ask if this is what they intended to communicate.

Address the needs of the practitioner who made the comment. Consider what might be motivating the speaker's comment and focus the conversation on that underlying factor.

Ask, "Who benefits?" Think critically about who — in regard to educational opportunity — is best served by a particular way of thinking, policy, practice, etc.

Re-center race-consciousness. Call attention to the importance of being race-conscious in equity work, especially when conversations become race-neutral and when equity does not seem to be central to practitioners' actions and decision-making.

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15 "Laying the Groundwork: Concepts and Activities for Racial Equity Work," Center for Urban Education, USC Rossier School of Education, 2020, https://www.cue-tools.usc.edu/s/Concepts-and-Tools-for-Racial-Equity-Work_Summer2020.pdf.

Name practices that undermine equity. Explicitly point out approaches and concepts that, if left unchallenged, will lead to inequitable outcomes.

Use data to demonstrate that racial inequity must be addressed. Reference data at course, department, and/or campus levels showing inequities in outcomes for racially minoritized students.

Agree to hold each other accountable. Ask practitioners to speak up and name potential equity issues as they arise, as well as find alternatives.

Engaging in Courageous Conversations

In *Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools and Beyond,*[16] author Glenn E. Singleton encourages readers to open authentic dialogues around race at their institutions. Singleton reminds us that the initial action for entering Courageous Conversations is to commit to practicing the Four Agreements:

1. **Stay engaged,**

2. **Speak your truth,**

3. **Experience discomfort, and**

4. **Expect and accept non-closure.**

The Four Agreements, as part of the Courageous Conversation Protocol, support individuals and teams as they shape and focus conversations that lead to action.

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16   Glenn E. Singleton, *Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools and Beyond*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2022).

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"The Leadership Academy's Equity Self-Assessment." The Leadership Academy. https://www.nycleadershipacademy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/NYCLA_EquityContinuumTool_2020_10.pdf

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Singleton, Glenn E. *Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools and Beyond*, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2022.

EQUITY PRINCIPLE 2:

Interrogate Institutional Practices, Structures, and Policies and Replace Those That Are Inequitable

Inequities persist because they are ingrained in the operations and traditions of an institution. Interrogating institutional practices, structures, and policies must be an intentional exercise conducted by committee. Even the most talented educators cannot singlehandedly dismantle or reform institutions that have been historically designed to favor one group of people by upholding dominating culture. Educators can work together, however, to redress specific components of institutional barriers by using an equity-minded approach that replaces structures, processes, and resources with those that are inclusive and prioritize the needs of all students.

Equity Principle 2 begins with the essential component of interrogation — the process of questioning and conducting a systematic examination. A committee that asks questions and systemically examines institutional practices, structures, and policies will discover how operations and traditions contribute to inequities for marginalized individuals and groups.

During the interrogation process, it is important that the committee embody an equity mindset. An equity-minded approach is integral to identifying institutional barriers and then developing new structures, processes, and resources that replace them. While working toward removing the institutional barriers, connected or dependent policies and practices may surface. Ultimately, an institution that develops a systematic review process or protocol is assuming accountability to intentionally ensure that newly developed institutional practices, structures, and policies are not creating or perpetuating barriers.

Another major point to consider is how your equity efforts are funded. As Dr. Frank Hale, Jr., former vice provost for diversity and inclusion at The Ohio State University, once said, "Commitment without currency is counterfeit — and don't you let anyone tell you different."

It will be extremely difficult for institutions to accomplish their equity goals without adequate fiscal resources. How are financial resources embedded into practices, structures, and policies? Institutional budgets reflect how we value marginalized learners and the structures and supports they deserve to thrive.

The following tools, an equity practice self-assessment and a policy review, support Equity Principle 2. Use them to understand your current strengths, challenges, and areas for development when it comes to interrogating and replacing inequitable institutional policies.

INTERROGATING POLICIES, PRACTICES, AND STRUCTURES

The following self-assessment can help institutions evaluate their strengths and identify areas for development and strengthening.

*Read each statement and examine whether it applies to your institution. You may find that the institution has **not yet** implemented a practice, that it has begun work in a certain area but still **needs to develop**, or that it has already **implemented** and even **scaled** a practice and can focus on other areas of growth.*

ASSESSMENT

INSTITUTION STATEMENT	NOT YET	NEEDS TO DEVELOP	NEEDS TO STRENGTHEN	IMPLEMENTED	IMPLEMENTED AND SCALED
1. The institution can clearly demonstrate institutional improvements from meeting equity goals.					
2. Employee onboarding and orientation policies include equity content such as the college's equity statement, its commitment to equity, and the actions taken toward equity.					
3. All staff, faculty, and administrator performance is measured on equity goals set by the institution.					
4. The institution monitors and evaluates equity goals to track their effectiveness and makes improvements when necessary.					
5. Institutional leaders invest in research to study equity for both internal and external purposes.					

INSTITUTION STATEMENT	NOT YET	NEEDS TO DEVELOP	NEEDS TO STRENGTHEN	IMPLEMENTED	IMPLEMENTED AND SCALED
6. The institution provides adequate professional development, funding, resources, staffing, and support to help ensure implementation of its equity strategy.					
7. The institution's equity function is headed by an influential leader who is knowledgeable about the space. The most senior equity professional is an equal and influential partner on the senior leadership team.					
8. The institution establishes and supports communities of practice that serve as partners and advise on pedagogy, student success, communications, community engagement, and other institutional issues.					
9. Equity is well integrated into core institutional systems and practices.					
10. The institution embeds equity competencies in performance appraisal criteria.					
11. Leaders at all levels lead the institution's equity initiatives and are regarded as equity champions.					

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR POLICY REVIEW

Adapted from ATD's Equity Policy Inventory, these guiding questions can act as a filter through which your institution reviews policies, structures, and processes that affect equity. Take regular inventory and review these questions often to build capacity in equity language and establish a set of common practices for policy decisions.

Use this review process as a tool to:

- **Center equity in policy formation and evaluation**

- **Assess a policy's purpose and inclusiveness**

- **Uncover a policy's assumptions**

- **Disrupt barriers to equitable student success that are reinforced or codified in policy**

- **Invite reflection on the ways policy can advance equity**

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. **Policy Purpose and Design:**
   What process will you undertake to collaborate and engage in a dialogue with marginalized or minoritized communities (internally and/or externally) who have traditionally not been involved in the development, implementation, and evaluation of this policy?

2. **Impact, Outcome, and Design:**
   How does the policy reflect key drivers for equity (sociocultural, technological, environmental, economic, political, legal, and ethical)?

3. **Disparate Impact:**
   In what ways does the policy focus on disparate outcomes (based on race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, etc.)? Are there other areas of disparity to consider?

4. **Equity and Inclusion:**
   Will the policy have a positive impact on racial equity, inclusion, and full participation of all people (in the process, in implementation, in breadth of outreach and participation, in decision-making, and the culture of decision-making, etc.)?

5. **Responsibility and Accountability:**
   What are the mechanisms in place to ensure accountability (such as equity-focused benchmarks or indicators)?

6. **Language:**
   Are there biased or stereotypical assumptions made about students within the policy?

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

"Improving Postsecondary Attainment: Overcoming Common Challenges to an Equity Agenda in State Policy." Center for Urban Education, USC Rossier School of Education. January 2017. https://cue.usc.edu/files/2017/02/Overcoming-Challenges_Final_Online.pdf

"Protocol for Assessing Equity-Mindedness in State Policy." Center for Urban Education, USC Rossier School of Education. January 2017. https://cue.usc.edu/files/2017/02/CUE-Protocol-Workbook-Final_Web.pdf

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EQUITY PRINCIPLE 3:

Integrate Holistic Supports Throughout the Student Experience

Integrated support involves ensuring that stakeholders from across campus are well equipped to connect students proactively to the supports that meet their unique needs. Colleges must deepen their understanding of the unique populations of students they serve, recognize how students' intersectional identities influence how they engage at the institution, and then redesign academic and academic-adjacent supports to meet the needs of historically marginalized students in higher education.

Improving student outcomes through holistic student supports requires colleges to systematically address the multitude of factors that undermine student persistence and completion. These factors go well beyond academic support, to encompass students' sociocultural situation and their most basic needs for financial stability. To be truly student-centered and committed to equity demands rethinking how to provide not only academic services, but also a full range of support services.

The more institutions address the distinct interests, aspirations, cultural backgrounds, and life complexities of individual students and groups of students, the better their outcomes.[17] In addition, students are not monolithic. Even students from the same residence can have totally different life experiences. Lumping all students who may share common identities together is not equitable.

17   *Holistic Student Supports Redesign: A Toolkit for Redesigning Advising and Students Services to Effectively Support Every Student* (Silver Spring, MD: Achieving the Dream, 2018), https://achievingthedream.org/holistic-student-supports-redesign-toolkit/.

Integrating holistic supports through the student experience requires colleges to first understand the needs of the students they serve. Then institutions must redesign services and equip stakeholders — faculty, advisors, staff, administration, support services, financial aid — to proactively connect students to resources that will address needs. It is also critical that institutions understand their own structures, policies, and practices and the impact of those policies and practices on students. ATD has found that colleges see gains in equity outcomes when they build systems where all students are supported in achieving their goals through intentional and early development of academic, career, and financial plans combined with wraparound supports that address students' academic-adjacent needs.

In the following pages we offer two tools: Equity Practices for Holistic Student Support and Guiding Questions for Understanding the Student Experience.

How students experience an institution is influenced by their intersecting identities. As practitioners, it is important to recognize, respect, and affirm students' individuality, because it tells the story of who they are and how they show up in the world. Student supports that are inclusively designed ensure that the needs of the whole student are addressed. By incorporating intersectionality into student support services, community colleges can ensure that they appropriately address each student's needs.

EQUITY PRACTICES FOR HOLISTIC STUDENT SUPPORTS

The following self-assessment tool can help teams evaluate the institution's current student supports and identify areas for growth.

*Read each team statement and examine whether it applies to you. You may find that you have **not yet** implemented a practice, that you have begun work in a certain area but still **need to develop** equity-centered practices, or that you have already **implemented** that practice and can focus on other areas of growth.*

ASSESSMENT

TEAM STATEMENT	NOT YET	NEEDS TO DEVELOP	NEEDS TO STRENGTHEN	IMPLEMENTED	IMPLEMENTED AND SCALED
1. We evaluate each of our decisions to measure its impact on the college's ability to achieve our definition of equity.					
2. We know our students beyond basic demographic data and understand their intersecting identities and their lived experiences.					
3. We understand our institutional systems that make up the student experience and the impact of these systems on the student experience.					
4. We integrate the student voice into all feedback about current and potential new institutional systems.					
5. We implement connections to supports so students have access to them throughout their journey until completion.					
6. We communicate supports to students via multiple stakeholders, formats, and modalities using clear, transparent language.					

TEAM STATEMENT	NOT YET	NEEDS TO DEVELOP	NEEDS TO STRENGTHEN	IMPLEMENTED	IMPLEMENTED AND SCALED
7. We create opportunities for our students to form relationships and connections with faculty and staff.					
8. We design and offer supports that our students need.					
9. We tap external partners where necessary to provide holistic supports to our students.					

UNDERSTANDING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Before committing to a holistic redesign model and communicating that vision, teams should have an accurate understanding of the current student experience. This requires the intersection of both quantitative and qualitative data; resist the temptation to rely on anecdotal information. Base your holistic approach on data-driven knowledge of the students you serve, their current experience of support services, and the needs not yet being addressed. To design a support model that encompasses all students, the team should explore:[18]

- **Who they are**
- **Where they come from**
- **What they value**
- **What their goals are (academic, career, personal)**
- **How they feel about college and seeking support**
- **What they struggle with most**
- **What they think they need support in**
- **How they think they use your services**
- **How they actually use your services**

18 Achieving the Dream, *Holistic Student Supports Redesign*, 21

ACTIVITY: GET TO KNOW YOUR STUDENTS

The following chart, adapted from ATD's *Holistic Student Supports Redesign* toolkit, can help your team begin evaluating the extent of student need on your campus.

STUDENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR COLLEGE	0–20%	21–40%	41–60%	61–80%	81–100%	DON'T KNOW
1. What percentage of students work more than 20 hours a week?						
2. What percentage of working students experience regular changes in their shifts or number of hours?						
3. What percentage of students have children or care for family or friends?						
4. What percentage of students receive or are eligible for Pell Grants?						
5. Of those who receive Pell Grants, what percentage live below the poverty threshold for a family of four?						
6. What percentage of students receive income-based public assistance?						
7. What percentage of students feel they are carrying too much financial debt?						

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR COLLEGE	0–20%	21–40%	41–60%	61–80%	81–100%	DON'T KNOW
8. What percentage of students struggle to feed themselves and/or their families?						
9. What percentage of students have unstable living situations?						
10. What percentage of students have a disability or other health concern for which they may want assistance?						
11. What percentage of students come from households where English is an additional language?						
12. What percentage of students come from households where no one has a college degree?						
13. What percentage of students are being flagged for additional services?						

The Role of **Faculty**

Faculty, both full-time and adjunct, play a pivotal role in your holistic student supports work. Not only can they use data to improve course structure, pedagogy, and content, they are also one of the few people on your campus who have a regular (often long-term) relationship with students. Through this relationship, as well as conversations driven by late or incomplete assignments or missed classes, faculty often have the ability to spot student needs early. When equipped with information about the availability of support services and how to access them, faculty can refer students to needed supports before a crisis point is reached. Additionally, since faculty see students the most, they can serve as an excellent vehicle for delivering key information to students that may enhance their holistic experience outside the classroom. For example, if faculty are aware that food pantry utilization is up (an important data metric), it can be a helpful prompt for them to remind students in class that this service is offered on campus and tie adequate nutrition to improved academic success in a non-stigmatizing way.[19]

> While much of our ongoing work has focused on nonacademic supports for students, these persistent needs also have a direct impact on how we think about teaching and learning. We can no longer think about what often gets referred to as nonacademic needs as separate from students' academic needs. … college faculty have always been and will always be the first and most frequent point of ongoing contact with students. They are our "scalers." Yet we have left many of them behind. We need to engage and support faculty in their role as a critical link between students and the services and supports they need to be successful.[20]
>
> — DR. KAREN A. STOUT

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19 Achieving the Dream, *Holistic Student Supports Redesign*, 73.

20 Karen A. Stout, "The Urgent Case: Focusing the Next Generation of Community College Redesign on Teaching and Learning (2018 Dallas Herring Lecture)," Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research, 2018. https://belk-center.ced.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/128/2022/10/Dallas-Herring-Lecture-2018-M.pdf.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

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EQUITY PRINCIPLE 4:

Embrace Cultural Curiosity and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Institutions must engage in the challenging but necessary process of becoming culturally curious by implementing culturally responsive pedagogy. Culturally responsive pedagogy acknowledges, respects, and integrates students' cultural identities in relation to their learning experiences. To achieve this, the institution must provide faculty and staff with adequate resources and support such as professional learning, curriculum, and opportunities to engage with experts to better understand how to enhance practices so that they are more culturally affirming for the diversity of the students they serve.

Cultural curiosity and culturally responsive practices are important for creating a strong sense of community among students, faculty, staff, and administration. Within a culturally responsive context, students experience a sense of self-efficacy and engagement when educational material is relevant to their own experiences. Additionally, because culturally responsive pedagogy teaches to and through the strengths of these students' cultural identities, it results in increased classroom participation[21] and more effective learning.

Cultural curiosity (or responsiveness) can be developed at the individual, team, and institutional levels. No matter how much training or experience a person receives, it is impossible to achieve full understanding of another person's culture. But equity-minded educators and leaders can strive to continually evolve their awareness and understanding to better serve students.

At the **individual level**, cultural curiosity and responsiveness begins with cultural humility. Practicing cultural humility involves a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation, self-critique, and a willingness to suspend what one thinks they know about a person based on generalizations about their culture.[22]

At the **institutional level**, colleges commit to cultural curiosity (responsiveness), as a dynamic, ongoing process rather than a one-time achievement.

When an institution is culturally responsive, it has defined values and principles and demonstrates behaviors, attitudes, policies, and structures that enable effective work across cultures. A culturally curious (responsive) institution values diversity, conducts self-assessments, manages dynamics of difference, and adapts to the cultural contexts of the communities it serves. The institution incorporates the above in all aspects of policymaking, administration, teaching, and learning and systematically involves all stakeholders.[23]

21   Gloria Ladson-Billings, "Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy," *American Educational Research Journal* 32, no. 3 (Fall 1995): 465–491.

22   Melanie Tervalon and Jann Murray-García, "Cultural Humility Versus Cultural Competence: A Critical Distinction in Defining Physician Training Outcomes in Multicultural Education," *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved* 9, no. 2 (May 1998): 117–125.

23   Tawara D. Goode, "Promoting Cultural & Linguistic Competency: Self-Assessment Checklist for Personnel Providing Services and Supports in Early Intervention and Early Childhood Settings," National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development, 2009.

EQUITY PRACTICES FOR CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

The following self-assessment tool can help teams evaluate the institution's current student supports and identify areas for growth.

*Read each statement and examine how well it applies to your college. You may find that the institution has **not yet** implemented a practice, that it has begun work in a certain area but still **needs to develop** stronger equity practices, or that it has already **implemented and/or scaled** that practice and can focus on other areas of growth.*

ASSESSMENT

INSTITUTION STATEMENT	NOT YET	NEEDS TO DEVELOP	NEEDS TO STRENGTHEN	IMPLEMENTED	IMPLEMENTED AND SCALED
1. Institutional leaders communicate their commitment to embracing cultural competence and culturally responsive pedagogy in support of equity.					
2. Institutional leaders provide faculty, staff, and administrators with resources, support, and guidance to develop cultural competence and culturally responsive pedagogy meaningfully in instruction and interactions.					
3. Institutional leaders provide faculty, staff, and administrators multiple and consistent opportunities to reflect on how their biases impact their practices through professional learning and curriculum redesign.					
4. Institutional leaders provide faculty, staff, and administrators opportunities to engage with equity-minded practitioners and practices to better understand how to interrogate and redesign practices so they are more reflective of the diversity of the students.					
5. Institutional leaders recognize staff, faculty, and administrators for their implementation of equity-minded and culturally responsive practices.					
6. The institution offers and incentivizes a culturally responsive pedagogy professional learning series that is ongoing.					
7. Institutional leaders offer learning opportunities that focus on specific dimensions of diversity (such as disability, gender identity, sexual identity, social class, first-generation college student, culture, religion, race, and ethnicity) based on identified needs.					

INSTITUTION STATEMENT	NOT YET	NEEDS TO DEVELOP	NEEDS TO STRENGTHEN	IMPLEMENTED	IMPLEMENTED AND SCALED
8. Curricula across the institution reflect multiple and diverse perspectives by race, ethnicity, gender, ability, and socioeconomic status, and are integrated throughout instructional materials and resources.					
9. Curricula across the institution include culturally relevant content and assessments that connect students' learning to real-life issues.					
10. Institutional leaders offer a variety of innovative pedagogical equity tools, including both self-directed and instructor-led learning resources, that are accessible to all regardless of location.					
11. Institutional leaders engage in ongoing self-analysis to identify and address personal and cultural biases.					
12. Institutional leaders participate in hands-on training opportunities and seek practice and feedback that build toward mastery of responsive needs assessment techniques.					
13. Institutional leaders seek opportunities to engage in cross-cultural activities and interactions.					

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

Eynon, Bret, and Jon Iuzzini. *Teaching and Learning Toolkit: A Research-Based Guide to Building a Culture of Teaching and Learning Excellence*. Silver Spring, MD: Achieving the Dream, 2021. https://achievingthedream.org/teaching-learning-toolkit/

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"Equity-Minded Inquiry Series: Web Scan." Center for Urban Education, USC Rossier School of Education, 2020. https://www.cue-tools.usc.edu/s/Web-Scan-Protocol_Summer20201.pdf

EQUITY PRINCIPLE 5:

Leverage Existing and New Data to Support a Culture of Inquiry and Evidence

It is important to collect data (such as course-level, completion and transfer, momentum, and retention data) disaggregated by race and ethnicity each semester to identify where inequities exist. Understanding the nuances relative to student performance by disaggregated groups will allow institutional leaders to make important decisions about which marginalized groups to prioritize when setting equity goals. In addition, data can show leaders what factors might be contributing to equity gaps, better enable them to address inequities through process redesign, and inform how faculty and administrators scale high-impact practices, update programming, and determine resource allocation.

Data has the power to provide better questions, better answers, and better solutions. Data that is equity-based thoughtfully considers context and approach for the collection, use, and analysis of individual and collective data. The goal is to use equity-minded practices to reduce bias and harm. This means examining where our data comes from, who is included and excluded from the data, how data was collected, and who benefits from or is harmed by our current data practices.

When working with data — no matter if it's a small or large project — decisions are made that have equity implications. These decisions include how data is collected (e.g., qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods), analyzed, displayed, described, and interpreted. The standard practice in higher education of using one student group as the reference point perpetuates bias. When disaggregating data, setting student success outcome goals for all student groups (at the institutional, program, and course levels) is the recommended practice, rather than comparing one group to another.

This ensures that data is equity-based rather than reinforcing intersectional forms of structural discrimination. For example, instead of comparing Black males to White females, compare your highest performing Black males to your lowest performing Black males. Another strategy is to compare any demographics to an agreed-upon standard and not to each other.

Operationalizing data equity includes having a systematic process (tools, checklists) of identifying the levers of power in choices around data collection, analysis, narrative, and visualization. A systematic process equips a data-informed team to intentionally support equity goals the institution has identified and also allows individuals to better understand each place in the data work where power, perspective, and agenda may influence the process.

Understanding the nuances relative to student access, momentum, and social and economic mobility by disaggregated groups may require that teams collect and analyze data that is not the standard for the institution. Important types of data to collect include data about working students, student Pell Grant eligibility, whether students are parents or caretakers, income, debt, food insecurity, students with unstable living situations, disability or other health concerns, multilingual households, and first-generation college students.[24]

Dashboards like those available through the **Postsecondary Data Partnership** (PDP) enable institutions to apply a variety of filters to explore intersections and outcomes on enrollment, early momentum, persistence/retention, transfer, completion, and time to credential. The PDP empowers institutions with more comprehensive data, easier analysis, and better visual representations to help you understand, improve, and communicate student momentum, outcomes, and equity.[25] Dashboards are most useful in advancing equity when they are paired with a process of equity-minded sense-making and use of open-ended questions like:

- **What patterns do you notice in the data?**
- **Which racial groups are experiencing inequities?**
- **Which racial groups would you prioritize for goal setting and why?**
- **What are your equity goals?**
- **What are your hunches about what might be contributing to the equity gaps?**
- **What additional data do you want to collect to better understand the gap?**
- **What equity-minded questions might you pursue with further inquiry?**

The questions above are not intended to be a comprehensive list but are intended to spark discussion and support a culture of inquiry to guide decision-making.

24   Achieving the Dream and Advising Success Network, *Knowing Our Students: Understanding and Designing for Success* (Silver Spring, MD: Achieving the Dream, 2023), https://achievingthedream.org/knowing-our-students-guidebook/.

25   "Postsecondary Data Partnership," National Student Clearinghouse, accessed May 4, 2021, https://www.studentclearinghouse.org/colleges/pdp/.

EQUITY PRACTICES FOR USING DATA

The following self-assessment tool can help teams evaluate current data practices and identify areas for development.

*Read each statement and examine whether it applies to you, your team, or your institution. You may find that the institution has **not yet** implemented a data practice, that it has begun work in a certain area but still **needs to develop** equity-centered data practices, or that it has already **implemented and/or scaled** that practice and can focus on other areas of growth.*

ASSESSMENT

INSTITUTION STATEMENT	NOT YET	NEEDS TO DEVELOP	NEEDS TO STRENGTHEN	IMPLEMENTED	IMPLEMENTED AND SCALED
1. The institution collects, disaggregates, analyzes, and communicates comprehensive demographic data (e.g., self-identification of disability status, race, ethnicity, income, DACA, first-generation student, gender, military status, parenting status, and identification of LGBTQ+).					
2. The institution uses intersectional disaggregated data and information in collaborative planning and decision-making.					
3. To inform equitable student outcomes, the institution prioritizes student voice in data gathering through qualitative data (e.g., interviews or focus groups with students).					
4. The institution conducts an annual anonymous survey (e.g., National Assessment of Collegiate Campus Climates) to students, staff, faculty, and administrators about topics such as student engagement, campus climate, and key indicators of institutional culture and analyzes data for inequities by disaggregated demographic data.					
5. The institution identifies and targets populations who have traditionally not pursued postsecondary education to help address equity gaps at the community level.					

INSTITUTION STATEMENT	NOT YET	NEEDS TO DEVELOP	NEEDS TO STRENGTHEN	IMPLEMENTED	IMPLEMENTED AND SCALED
6. The institution identifies equity gaps by program enrollment to ensure all students are on a path toward economic and social mobility.					
7. The institution works toward equitable access for all populations and minimizes exclusionary access programs.					
8. The institution monitors early momentum metrics by student group to identify who needs additional assistance to progress through college and where there may be institutional barriers to address.					
9. Milestone metrics like completion and transfer are tracked by student group.					
10. The institution tracks workforce outcomes like sector employment, economic mobility, and return on investment to ensure all students can recoup the cost of college in a timely manner.					
11. Leaders share equity data and information with stakeholders, including survey results, successes, and failures.					
12. Data is used in decision-making about budget allocations.					
13. Leaders routinely engage in equity-minded sense-making to reflect on institutional performance gaps and identify potential barriers to address.					
14. Leaders apply equity awareness in data visualization by using people-first language; ordering labels purposefully; considering missing groups, color choice, icons, shapes, and audience needs; and using asset-based language.[26]					

26 Jonathan Schwabish, Alice Feng, and Wesley Jenkins, "Do No Harm Guide: Additional Perspectives on Data Equity," Urban Institute, September 28, 2022, https://www.urban.org/research/publication/do-no-harm-guide-additional-perspectives-data-equity.

TOOLS, GUIDES, AND RESOURCES TO ADVANCE EQUITY IN DATA

EQUITY-MINDED DATA TOOLS

As part of the Center for Urban Education's Equity-Minded Inquiry Series, their **Data Tools guide** outlines how institutions can use data to address equity and why student outcome data should be disaggregated by race and ethnicity.[27] The guide presents tools and strategies that are designed to assist practitioners in identifying racial equity gaps and taking equity-minded action to close those gaps and create more equitable campus environments for racially minoritized students. Each tool in the guide includes concepts and techniques that help make equity actionable. The Data Tools guide also includes worksheets that offer guidance on how to apply the concepts and techniques to your institution's data.

EQUITY IN ENROLLMENT AND COMPLETION

In their "Unpacking Program Enrollments and Completions With Equity in Mind" guide,[28] the Community College Research Center (CCRC) presents examples and instructions for data analyses colleges can conduct to better understand student enrollments and completions in particular programs. Such analyses can help colleges scrutinize representation of historically marginalized groups in programs leading to greater opportunity after graduation. There is an equity imperative in this effort: Without disaggregating program enrollments with an eye toward what opportunities those programs lead to —

and interrogating and redesigning practices and policies perpetuating inequities — student success reform approaches such as guided pathway will likely continue to reinforce existing racial, gender, and socioeconomic stratification.[29] Examining representation across college programs with equity in mind is an important complement to the work colleges are doing to increase completion rates overall and close equity gaps.

CCRC recommends that colleges undertake a series of data exercises and reflective discussions based on the following three questions:

1. **What programs** are our students currently enrolled in?

2. **What opportunity** does each program lead to in terms of further education (e.g., transfer to bachelor's programs or bridges into more advanced workforce credentials) and/or immediate job prospects and earnings? Which programs lead to greater or lesser opportunity?

3. **Is student representation** across programs proportionate? Which subgroups of students (by race/ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, and age) are underrepresented in higher-opportunity programs?

To answer these questions, the authors demonstrate how to carry out a set of relatively simple data analyses that colleges can replicate using their own data. Similar analyses can be used to examine program completions.

27   "Equity-Minded Inquiry Series: Data Tools," Center for Urban Education, USC Rossier School of Education, 2020, https://www.cue-tools.usc.edu/s/Data-Tools_Summer2020.pdf.

28   John Fink and Davis Jenkins, "Unpacking Program Enrollments and Completions with Equity in Mind," Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University, 2020, https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/unpacking-program-enrollments-completion-equity.html.

29   Davis Jenkins, Hana Lahr, and Amy Mazzariello, "How to Achieve More Equitable Community College Student Outcomes: Lessons From Six Years of CCRC Research on Guided Pathways." Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University, 2021, https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/equitable-community-college-student-outcomes-guided-pathways.html.

SUGGESTED METRICS & DATA SOURCES

- **Invasion of America** (ArgGIS Online) — Indigenous land map. https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=eb6ca76e008543a89349ff2517db47e6

- **Migration Flow** (U.S. Census Bureau) — Interactive map at county level. https://flowsmapper.geo.census.gov/map.html

- **Mapping American's Diversity with the 2020 Census** (Brookings Institution) — Interactive map at county level. https://www.brookings.edu/research/mapping-americas-diversity-with-the-2020-census/

- **How Racially Representative Is Your College?** (Urban Institute). https://apps.urban.org/features/college-racial-representation

- **2020 Census Demographic Data Map Viewer** (U.S. Census Bureau) — Interactive maps at county and Census tract levels. https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2021/geo/demographicmapviewer.html

- **America's Demographics Are Changing. How Has Your County Shifted?** (Washington Post) — Interactive map on ethnic/racial population change. https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/interactive/2021/census-maps-race-population-demographics

- **The Opportunity Atlas** — Comprehensive Census tract-level data set of children's outcomes in adulthood, using anonymized longitudinal data and estimating children's earnings distributions, incarceration rates, and other outcomes in adulthood by parental income, race, and gender. https://opportunityatlas.org

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

Hawn Nelson, Amy, Della Jenkins, Sharon Zanti, Matthew Katz, Emily Berkowitz, T. C. Burnett, and Dennis Culhane. "A Toolkit for Centering Racial Equity Throughout Data Integration." Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy, University of Pennsylvania, 2020. https://aisp.upenn.edu/resource-article/a-toolkit-for-centering-racial-equity-throughout-data-integration/

"Race Equity Crosswalk Tool." The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2017. https://assets.aecf.org/m/blogdoc/aecf-raceequitycrosswalk-2018.pdf

Achieving the Dream and Advising Success Network. *Knowing Our Students: Understanding and Designing for Success.* Silver Spring, MD: Achieving the Dream, 2023. https://achievingthedream.org/knowing-our-students-guidebook/

"Equity-Minded Inquiry Series: Data Tools." Center for Urban Education, USC Rossier School of Education, 2020. https://www.cue-tools.usc.edu/s/Data-Tools_Summer2020.pdf

Ching, Cheryl D., and Maxine T. Roberts. "Equity-Minded Inquiry Series: Conducting Student Interviews and Focus Groups." Center for Urban Education, USC Rossier School of Education, 2020. https://www.cue-tools.usc.edu/s/Conducting-Student-Interviews-and-Focus-Groups.pdf

Schwabish, Jonathan, Alice Feng, and Wesley Jenkins. "Do No Harm Guide: Additional Perspectives on Data Equity." Urban Institute, September 28, 2022. https://www.urban.org/research/publication/do-no-harm-guide-additional-perspectives-data-equity

McNair, Tia Brown, Estela Mara Bensimon, and Lindsey Malcom-Piqueux. (2020). *From Equity Talk to Equity Walk: Expanding Practitioner Knowledge for Racial Justice in Higher Education.* Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2020. (See chapter three on data.)

"National Assessment of Collegiate Campus Climates." USC Race and Equity Center. https://race.usc.edu/colleges/#naccc

"Postsecondary Data Partnership." National Student Clearinghouse. https://www.studentclearinghouse.org/colleges/pdp/

Shotton, Heather J., Shelly C. Lowe, and Stephanie J. Waterman. *Beyond the Asterisk: Understanding Native Students in Higher Education.* Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2013.

"Toolkit for Actionable Decision Making in Times of Disruption." Achieving the Dream, 2020. https://achievingthedream.org/toolkit-for-actionable-decision-making-in-times-of-disruption/

"The Data Equity Framework." We All Count. https://weallcount.com/the-data-process/

Zielinskie, Ginger, and Lindsey B. Gottschalk. "The Voices We Trust: Building Equity-Centered Community Data Ecosystems That Work for Everyone." data.org, 2022. https://data.org/reports/recode-report/

EQUITY PRINCIPLE 6:

Drive Positive Change Through Perseverance and Power Sharing

Equity work is challenging. Institutions will engage in hard work to establish a culture grounded in equity-mindedness, and observable changes will happen slowly and incrementally. Equity work requires leaders who embrace an equity-centered as well as an equity-driven mindset and who lead by example. Leaders must be comfortable demonstrating vulnerability, embracing humility, creating space for individuals who are typically unseen or unheard, and intentionally cultivating a campus environment where students can develop a sense of belonging. They must also exert this same energy for their colleagues across campus at all levels. This allows everyone to build agency and increase their self-efficacy.

Power sharing is an important aspect of operationalizing equity. But what does it look like to share power? In an article on power sharing, Cortes and Krzanowski discuss that in order to share power, one must first understand where power is concentrated, if there are existing trends in power concentration, and who is at the decision-making table.[30] Because power cannot be shared 100% of the time, Cortes and Krzanowski offer a framework for power-sharing made of three levels: voice, vote, and view:

> **"Voice is when leadership listens to the voices of employees and uses input to influence decisions. Vote is when employees have active involvement in decision making and what the outcome is going to be. View is when leadership has already made the decision and simply communicates to employees what it is (and perhaps, how they came to that outcome)."**

Integrating this three levels of power-sharing approach offers opportunities for an institution's students, staff, faculty, administrators, and leaders to be included and feel connected. It allows individuals and groups whose voice and perspective are not typically part of the decision-making process to influence leaders by disrupting a potentially homogenous group's thinking.

Before embarking on conversations related to power sharing, it is important for all stakeholders to understand a college's organizational and governance structure. Each institution is unique, and the structures and processes in place through which faculty, staff, administrators, and students are involved in the development of policies should be considered.

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30   Antonio Cortes and Steven Krzanowksi, "Power Sharing – An Important Part of Integrating DEI," *Nonprofit HR News*, June 22, 2019, https://www.nonprofithr.com/keys-to-integrating-dei-transparency-power-sharing-and-accountability-2/.

EQUITY PRACTICES FOR PERSEVERANCE AND POWER SHARING

The following self-assessment tool can help teams evaluate their current capacity for power sharing and identify areas for development.

ASSESSMENT

TEAM STATEMENT	NOT YET	NEEDS TO DEVELOP	NEEDS TO STRENGTHEN	IMPLEMENTED	IMPLEMENTED AND SCALED
1. Leaders demonstrate vulnerability by sharing their learning and practices with colleagues.					
2. Leaders listen deeply and exercise humility when hearing feedback that challenges their personal narrative or perspective.					
3. Leaders provide individuals who are typically unseen or unheard with opportunities to give feedback in different ways (e.g., annual surveys, anonymous feedback platform, listening sessions, office hours), and that feedback is heard and used to implement change.					
4. Leaders intentionally create a campus environment that cultivates a sense of belonging for every student.					

TEAM STATEMENT	NOT YET	NEEDS TO DEVELOP	NEEDS TO STRENGTHEN	IMPLEMENTED	IMPLEMENTED AND SCALED
5. Leaders embed equity values in current leadership competencies and establish accountability measures (i.e., leaders are expected to build diverse teams as a competency within "leading others" and leverage that diversity to ensure that teams feel safe, respected, engaged, and valued for who they are and for their contributions toward institutional goals).					
6. Equity councils and/or committees are composed of students, faculty, staff, and administrative leaders representing the diversity of the institution.					
7. Faculty, staff, and administrators are involved in the development, delivery, and reinforcement of equity, cultural competence, pedagogy, and professional learning.					

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR POWER SHARING

Use these questions as a tool to steer conversations around power sharing, vulnerability, embracing humility, creating space, and cultivating belonging among teams and across your institution. Revisit them often to continually build capacity and ensure accountability to yourself, your peers, and your students.

1. **How does your organization** position itself as engaging in inclusive conversations?

2. **To what extent do you have conversations** across different dimensions of equity? What makes them effective or ineffective? What would make them more effective?

3. **To what extent do you personally feel comfortable** talking about equity topics? Which ones are you most/least comfortable with? Why?

4. **What are the personal/organizational benefits** of learning how to have inclusive conversations about equity?

ACTIONABLE ALLYSHIP

> **"Allies are people who recognize the unearned privilege they receive from society's patterns of injustice and take action to change it."**[31]

Individuals who are supportive of equity are not always effective in their efforts. Some who genuinely aspire to act as allies can be harmful and despite their best intentions, perpetuate the pain they seek to change. Various motivations of those who aspire to be allies can lead to differences in effectiveness, consistency, outcome, and sustainability.[32]

The following chart asks three questions to help readers understand their positionality on any given issue. Answer each question, from left to right, to understand the character and their description in relation to positionality.

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31   Monnica Williams and Noor Sharif, "Racial allyship: Novel measurement and new insights," *New Ideas in Psychology* 62 (August 2021), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.newideapsych.2021.100865.

32   Keith E. Edwards, "Aspiring Social Justice Ally Identity Development: A Conceptual Model," *NASPA Journal* 43, no. 4 (2006): 39–60.

Does it negatively impact you?	Does it negatively impact people you care about?	Are you using your privileges and position to stop the pain?	Character	Description
Yes	Yes	Yes	Community Champion	Someone actively using their privileges and position to support all because the issue impacts everyone.
Yes	No	Yes	Solo Champion	Someone actively using their privileges and position to counteract an issue that directly impacts them.
Yes	Yes	No	Frozen Actor	Someone who recognizes inequities that they and others suffer and are not using their privileges or position to interrupt it.
Yes	No	No	Silent Sufferer	Someone suffering from an inequity that they believe they are the only one suffering, and do not feel empowered enough to interrupt it.
No	Yes	Yes	Altruistic Allyship	Someone who recognizes inequity others are suffering and uses their privileges and position to interrupt it, even though it doesn't personally affect them.
No	Yes	No	Apathetic Actor	Someone who recognizes the inequities others may suffer. They might vocalize displeasure but will not actively do anything to disrupt it.
No	No	Yes	Eristic Savior	Someone who doesn't really care about how different audiences may be suffering and merely engages for the sake of arguing.
No	No	No	No Commitment	Someone who doesn't believe anything needs to be changed, so they flow with the status quo.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

Edwards, Keith E. "Aspiring Social Justice Ally Identity Development: A Conceptual Model." *NASPA Journal* 43, no. 4 (2006): 39–60.

Selzer, Robin, Josie Evans-Phillips, and Marcus Johnson. "Stepping Up to Talk About Race: Race-Conscious Leadership in Higher Ed." *Women in Higher Education* 26, no. 10 (October 2017). http://robinselzer.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/RCL.pdf

Singleton, Glenn E. *Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools and Beyond*, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2022.

Williams, Monnica, and Noor Sharif. "Racial allyship: Novel measurement and new insights." *New Ideas in Psychology* 62 (August 2021). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.newideapsych.2021.100865.

EQUITY PRINCIPLE 7:

Engage With the Local Community to Develop Partnerships That Lead to Economic Vitality

Community colleges have the potential to be profoundly accessible hubs of learning, credentialing, and economic mobility that eliminate inequities in educational and workforce outcomes. Equity-centered institutions need to work with community partners to ensure that students and their families advance their social and economic mobility. To address institutional barriers and disrupt inequitable systems, institutions must strive to deeply understand the community — their dynamics, history, and day-to-day experiences — including obstacles, resources, and opportunities for innovation.

Community engagement is an important aspect of operationalizing equity at a community college. While communities should be informed, consulted, and involved in an institution's equity work, deeper engagement can unleash unprecedented capacity to develop solutions that address institutional barriers and disrupt inequitable systems.

Meaningful community engagement should be continuous and sustained. To deeply understand the community, an institution must allocate considerable time and patience: Engaging communities is a long-term process that includes both addressing immediate challenges and thinking strategically about longer-term development and capacity building. Forming authentic relationships with communities involves getting to know people personally and meeting them where they are across civic and social service sectors (e.g., local organizations, restaurants, churches, and community events).

Inclusive community engagement requires addressing and removing barriers that prohibit community members from participating in equity work. This may include providing transportation, child care, refreshments, translation and interpretation services, or accessibility accommodations. It is also important to offer multiple options to engage at different times of the day, on different days of the week, and across various settings. Additionally, technology access is critical to community engagement — the institution should engage in ways that are most effective for the various communities (e.g., email, text messaging, and phone calls) and be willing to adapt.

EQUITY PRACTICES FOR ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

The following self-assessment tool can help teams evaluate their current community engagement practices and identify areas for development.

*Read each statement and examine whether it applies to you, your team, or your institution. You may find that the institution has **not yet** implemented an aspect of community engagement, that it has begun work in a certain area but still **needs to develop** a practice, or that it has already **implemented and/or scaled** that practice and can focus on other areas of growth.*

ASSESSMENT

INSTITUTION STATEMENT	NOT YET	NEEDS TO DEVELOP	NEEDS TO STRENGTHEN	IMPLEMENTED	IMPLEMENTED AND SCALED
1. The institution works with community partners to ensure that students and their families advance their social and economic mobility.					
2. The institution deeply understands the community — their dynamics, history, and day-to-day experiences — including obstacles, resources, and opportunities for innovation.					
3. The institution provides incentives for staff, faculty, and administrators to engage in community service and volunteerism.					
4. Community involvement reflects long-range planning and supports underserved segments of the population.					
5. Institutional activities promote economic growth of the whole community, particularly communities that have been historically denied access to resources.					
6. Community involvement reflects long-range planning and supports underserved segments of the population.					

INSTITUTION STATEMENT	NOT YET	NEEDS TO DEVELOP	NEEDS TO STRENGTHEN	IMPLEMENTED	IMPLEMENTED AND SCALED
7. The institution promotes economic growth of the whole community, particularly communities that have been historically denied access to resources or are presently in the greatest need.					
8. The community is perceived as a core to institutional equity goals.					
9. Community perspectives are centered and amplified and their perspectives are respected and valued.					
10. The institution has mutually beneficial community relationships where the institution learns from, prioritizes, and elevates the experiences of diverse communities.					
11. The institution measures the impact and success of community engagement to enhance relationships and improve the impact of products and services.					
12. Community engagement is continuous and sustained.					
13. The institution removes barriers that prohibit college members and community members from participating in community engagement efforts.					

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

ATD's equity statement asserts that to create equitable student outcomes, institutions must address the historical racist structure of our higher education system, take meaningful steps and actions to dismantle these structures, and create antiracist systems that serve all students. Community partnerships can help institutions build equitable systems that expand beyond the boundaries of campus.

When structuring strategic community partnerships, the institutions should consider how:

- Student access and success in higher education continue to be impacted by the effects of structural racism and systemic poverty;

- Opportunity gaps among student groups reflect structural inequities that are often the result of historical and systemic social injustices; and

- These inequities typically manifest themselves as the unintended or indirect consequences of unexamined institutional or social policies.

Every community and technical college should do all they can within and outside of their institutional walls to ensure that each student receives what they need to be successful through the intentional design of the college experience.

Colleges must invest in equity-minded policies, practices, and behaviors that lead to success for all students. The dismantling of historically racist systems, structures, policies, procedures, practices, and attitudes can redistribute power in an equitable manner.

SEEING AND UNDERSTANDING LOCAL OPPORTUNITY IN NEW WAYS

ATD sees community colleges as strong engines of economic mobility with a pivotal role to play in creating more economically vibrant communities. For this to be achieved, institutions must commit to a thoughtful process of direct influence that promotes long-term community success. This process starts with seeing and understanding local communities in new ways, improving access for traditionally disconnected populations, and tracking the right institutional metrics to ensure progress and success for all student groups — all of which can lead to upward mobility for individuals and their families and help communities thrive. At the core, we recognize that none of this is possible without addressing systemic inequities at both institutional and community levels.

ATD encourages colleges to consider the following when developing strategic partnerships and maintaining relationships with the community:

Comprehend community diversity and cultures with depth. Many community colleges pay close attention to the diversity of people within the communities they serve. We urge colleges to think more about place — not only in terms of the present place, but also its history and future. It is more important than ever that colleges understand the lived and learned experiences of the students they serve if we are to create more welcoming places and enriched sense of belonging for students of diverse backgrounds.

Engage people experiencing poverty and financial hardship. Knowing that postsecondary education holds the promise of higher lifetime earnings and economic mobility, ATD urges colleges to intentionally target those experiencing poverty and financial hardship to ensure steps are taken to provide affordable college access and pathways to prosperity for these households/families.

Reach justice-impacted and reentry populations. Centering community colleges as hubs of economic mobility requires looking beyond demographic and socioeconomic composition alone. ATD encourages colleges to identify, recruit, and support those who have experienced racial injustice, including the justice-impacted population.

Support immigrant, refugee, and migrant worker populations. Develop shared goals and measurements that align with the demographics of your local region.

Reconnect with vulnerable youth who represent the future of our communities. The Brookings Institution uses the terms "disconnected" or "opportunity" youth in reference to young people not working and not in school. As Brookings points out, most teens do not need to work to support themselves or their families, but the decline raises concern that teens are missing out on learning new skills and gaining experience needed to improve job prospects later in life.

These strategies are explored in greater depth in *Leveraging Our Localness to Create Equitable & Economically Vibrant Communities: A Guidebook for Change,* a forthcoming resource from ATD. The guidebook will call on colleges to collectively help millions more Americans — especially those who have been disconnected from postsecondary education — achieve greater financial security resulting in significant individual, family, and societal gains.

Examples of Populations Historically Disconnected From Postsecondary Education

(this list is not exhaustive)

- **Adults with some college, no degree**
- **BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), AAPI (Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders), Latinx/Hispanic populations of any race**
- **LGTBQIA+ individuals/communities**
- **Households living below the federal poverty threshold**
- **Low-wage households experiencing significant financial hardship**
- **Parenting students**
- **People experiencing homelessness or living in subsidized public housing**
- **People with visible and invisible disabilities**
- **Immigrants and refugees**
- **Migrant workers**
- **Justice-impacted populations**
- **Substance recovery populations**
- **Youth aging out of the foster care system**
- **Youth not in school nor working (AKA "opportunity" or "disconnected" youth)**

REFLECTION QUESTIONS: LEARNING ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY

Use the following reflections, adapted from the Movement Strategy Center's "The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership,"[33] to assess current community engagement efforts and set goals for how efforts can advance equity. This exercise can be carried out by a collaborative entity that includes multiple stakeholders.

1. **What are the roots of systemic marginalization** in the identified communities?

2. **What does information flow look like** for impacted communities? What is contributing to information flow? What is hindering it?

3. **Reflecting on existing community assets,** what will it take for impacted communities to have equitable access to information about the issues that directly impact them?

4. **When is it appropriate** for impacted communities to be in a consultation role? What should impacted communities be consulted on?

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33   Adapted from Rosa Gonzalez, "The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership," Movement Strategy Center, 2019, https://movement-strategy.org/resources/the-spectrum-of-community-engagement-to-ownership/.

5. **What is needed to move beyond consultation** and get to solutions that benefit from the genuine engagement of impacted communities?

6. **What does it take** for residents of impacted communities to have an active voice in the decision-making that impacts them? What are the examples?

7. **To what extent have impacted communities built an informed base** of community members with the power and influence to achieve policy and systems change?

8. **What culture shift and system changes** are needed for authentic collaboration between institutions and impacted communities?

9. **What role will community engagement play** in closing equity gaps?

10. **What is your collective vision** for community engagement?

11. **What can you be doing now** to lay the groundwork for community engagement?

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

"A Community Builder's Tool Kit: A Primer for Revitalizing Democracy From the Group Up." The Institute for Democratic Renewal. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mM2ATbM9aUwBRFxuk7O1hgIjzYYV5IKI/view

Gonzalez, Rosa. "The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership." Movement Strategy Center, 2019. https://movementstrategy.org/resources/the-spectrum-of-community-engagement-to-ownership/

"Building Strategic Partnerships for Holistic Student Supports." Achieving the Dream, 2022. https://achievingthedream.org/building-strategic-partnerships-for-holistic-student-supports

EQUITY PRINCIPLE 8:

Acknowledge the Pervasiveness of Racism and Discrimination in the United States of America

The long legacy of racism and systemic oppression in the United States must be addressed if the promise of justice and equal opportunity for all Americans is ever to be fully realized. Community colleges exist within systems that entrench privilege and must identify the ways in which historically marginalized students are harmed (e.g., housing and food insecurity, microaggressions, discriminatory practices, limited access to resources). This principle requires an ability to engage in difficult yet crucial conversations about the systems and structures that continue to persist in educational institutions, creating unequal and inequitable experiences for Black, Latinx, Asian, and Indigenous people.

One way an institution demonstrates its commitment to equity is by examining its practices to see whether — intentional or not — the practices are consistent with its commitment to equity. At any given institution, we and the people before us have built systems, structures, policies, programs, and rules from our own perspectives. By engaging in difficult conversations about the systems and structures that persist in educational institutions, leaders have an opportunity to take responsibility and be accountable for the ways in which their institution has caused or continues to cause harm to marginalized or minoritized students. Cultivating an equity mindset, equity-mindedness, and cultural humility are foundational to this aspect of the work.

The Education Debt

What are the solutions that directly address the education debt experienced by students of color? What implemented supports and policy redesign positively impact other student groups at the institution?

EQUITY PRACTICES TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE PERVASIVENESS OF RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

The following self-assessment tool can help leadership teams evaluate their current position and identify areas for development and growth.

Once completed, discuss your rating with a colleague and explore what is needed to create full implementation.

*Read each statement and examine whether it applies to your institution's leadership. You may find that the institution has **not yet** implemented a practice, that it has begun work in a certain area but still **needs to develop** equity-centered practices, or that it has already **implemented** that practice and can focus on other areas of growth.*

ASSESSMENT

LEADER STATEMENT	NOT YET	NEEDS TO DEVELOP	NEEDS TO STRENGTHEN	IMPLEMENTED
1. Leaders, staff, faculty, and administrators openly acknowledge the institution's history and leaders' contributions of racism and systemic oppression and share specific commitments in support of change, equity, and justice.				
2. Leaders share institution-wide what they have learned to date and what they will dig deeper into learning related to inequitable policies, practices, and procedures.				
3. Institutional leaders provide opportunities for staff, faculty, and administrators to build the skills needed for navigating difficult conversations.				
4. Institutional leaders offer staff, faculty, and administrators structured learning and development opportunities to engage in conversations about the systems and structures that influence the experiences of racially minoritized students.				
5. Leaders are skilled at navigating difficult crucial conversations across dimensions of difference.				
6. Engaging in conversations across dimensions of difference is part of the fabric of the institution's culture.				

LEADER STATEMENT	NOT YET	NEEDS TO DEVELOP	NEEDS TO STRENGTHEN	IMPLEMENTED
7. Leaders encourage and create space for self-examination and difficult crucial conversations.				
8. The institution shares its perspective and commitment to equity externally on multiple platforms (e.g., website, flyers, social media).				
9. Leaders regularly share updates (in meetings and in written communications) that are easily understood and accessible to all.				

REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES THAT PERSIST IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

To create educational systems that center equity, it is essential that college leaders have deep, honest discussions about the structures embedded within their institutions.

An equity mindset requires an understanding of the inequalities experienced by racially minoritized and Indigenous communities in the context of a history of exclusion, discrimination, and segregation.

The following questions can guide reflection for individuals and team discussions centered on the history of their institutions.

QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS[34]

1. **How often do I find myself aware of inequity and racism in my and others' everyday life?** Can I identify a recent example?

2. **How often do I find myself discussing inequities and racism?** Where do I discuss these topics? Who am I talking to when this happens? What is the content of these conversations?

3. **What is my comfort level talking about race/racism?** Does this comfort level change if I am talking about my own race vs. other people's race? Or how racism affects other people vs. how it affects me?

4. **What gets in my way when talking about race/racism?** (Fear, lack of knowledge, obscurity of the topic to me, etc.)

5. **What are some ways I might participate in racism,** even if it is not necessarily something I am mindful of or have malicious intent in doing so?

6. **How can I move past just talking?** What can I actually **do** as antiracist work?

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE TEAM DISCUSSIONS AS YOU INVESTIGATE YOUR INSTITUTION'S HISTORY[35]

1. **What is the collective understanding of your institutional history?** Gauge what is already known by your university community and what the public sentiment is toward historical exploration. Take inventory of existing archives, memorials, and grassroots initiatives to inform the scope of your project.

2. **What expertise do you already have access to?** Faculty, librarians, and student researchers can be valuable sources of information and guidance in conducting methodical historical exploration.

3. **How will you center the voices of harmed communities?** Institutions have a responsibility to prioritize the needs and perspectives of present-day harmed communities that are most impacted by legacies of racism. Consider how you can establish rapport with the harmed communities and how their voices are or will be centralized in the development of your initiatives.

4. **How will you embed this history into your institution's culture?** Engagement is a critical factor to design for when considering your project's impact. Plan for how all members of your community will engage with your initiative. Decide early on how the analysis of historical harm will become a prominent facet of your institution's history for future generations of students, staff, and faculty.

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34   Adapted from "Being Antiracist," National Museum of African American History and Culture, accessed August 2, 2023, https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/topics/being-antiracist.

35   Adapted from "Essential Guidance for Exploring Your Institution's Legacies of Racism," EAB, https://eab.com/insights/blogs/strategy/exploring-institutions-legacies-racism/.

INSTITUTIONAL RACIAL EQUITY SUCCESS CONTINUUM

Teams can use the rubric below to gauge their current and aspiring levels of readiness to operationalize racial equity.

Exploration	• **Begins to engage in conversations related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.** • **Examines racial equity student success data.** • **Explores the history of systemic barriers in policy and practice.**
Awareness	• **Seeks to understand and educate the college community about the importance of racial equity, terminology, and advocacy.** • **Educates the college community on the effects of racism and antiblackness in higher education.** • **Examines the link between racially minoritized students' success and their sense of belonging inside and outside of the classroom.**
Commitment	• **Centers the experiences of racially minoritized students in attempts to develop a practice of equitable and restorative learning opportunities.** • **Understands the importance of creating anti-oppressive and liberatory learning environments for racially minoritized students.** • **Reviews and revises hiring practices to reflect the institution's student population.**
Implementation	• **Approaches advocacy and action for racial equity as a way to disrupt and dismantle inequities and injustice.** • **Demonstrates commitment to racial equity at all levels of the institution.** • **Accelerates action in closing racial equity gaps.** • **Actively employs steps to redesign the student experience as a just, equitable, supportive, unbiased, and antiracist experience.**

EXAMPLES OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES LEARNING ABOUT THEIR HISTORY

Below are examples of educational institutions learning about and acknowledging their history of racism and discrimination in the U.S.

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- "Commission on Historic Campus Representations: Final Report." Baylor University, 2020. https://historiccommission.web.baylor.edu.

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- MacKenzie, Ellen. "Reaffirming our commitments to inclusion, diversity, anti-racism, and equity following a difficult revelation." Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, December 9, 2020. https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2020/reaffirming-our-commitments-to-inclusion-diversity-anti-racism-and-equity-following-a-difficult-revelation.

- Lee, Robert. "Morrill Act of 1862 Indigenous Land Parcels Database." *High Country News*, March 2020. https://www.landgrabu.org

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- Wilder, Craig Steven. *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013. See also: "Ebony and Ivy with Craig Steven Wilder" (podcast).

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

"Essential Guidance for Exploring Your Institution's Legacies of Racism." EAB. https://eab.com/insights/blogs/strategy/exploring-institutions-legacies-racism/

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Ching, Cheryl D. "Why Race? Understanding the Importance of Foregrounding Race and Ethnicity in Achieving Equity on College Campuses." Center for Urban Education, USC Rossier School of Education, 2013. https://cue.usc.edu/files/2016/01/CUE_WhyRace_2013.pdf

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"Fostering Constructive Dialogue." Constructive Dialogue Institute. https://constructivedialogue.org

"Resources for Colleges." Marking Caring Common Project, Harvard Graduate School of Education. https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/resources-for-colleges

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Appendix A

In their position paper "Anti-Racism Education in the California Community Colleges," the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) states that antiracism education is necessary to respond to this moment in time and to transform systems of higher education.

ASCCC offers recommendations for individual self-growth, local academic senates, colleges and districts, and the Board of Governors.[36] They are intended to guide academic and system leaders to facilitate the development of antiracism education as an integral part of the equity-driven systems movement.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL SELF-GROWTH

- Use the work and scholarship of Black scholars to recognize and address challenges of Black students and Black colleagues.

- Participate in implicit bias training in the context of oppression and racism.

- Learn the history of discriminatory laws and practices that contribute to the stratification of U.S. society by race.

- Actively explore various methods of assessments to adapt to technological disparities exacerbated by COVID-19.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOCAL ACADEMIC SENATES

- Convene Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and other people of color to understand lived experiences and to inform cultural climate and structural updates to academic senate constitutions, bylaws, rules, policies, and processes.

- Intentionally increase representation on the local academic senate by identifying, including, and empowering missing voices.

- Create a local academic senate goal focused on antiracism/no-hate education.

- Hold a series of discussions of structural racism and color-blind culture and address the topics of race consciousness, lifting the veil of white supremacy, danger of the good-bad racist binary, the dilemma of dismantling the "master's house with the master's tools" and what this means for shared governance, and the need for calling-in culture.

- Enact culturally responsive curricular redesign within disciplines, courses, and programs and with curriculum committees.

- Acknowledge, without assigning blame, that the structure of the college houses the institutional biases and prejudices of its founding time. Those biases have privileged some and disadvantaged others, particularly Black, Indigenous, and Latinx communities.

- Partner with administration and faculty collective bargaining leadership to transform faculty hiring, onboarding, evaluation, and tenure processes with an antiracism focus.

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36 "Anti-Racism Education in California Community Colleges: Acknowledging Historical Context and Assessing and Advancing Effective Anti-Racism Practices for Faculty Professional Development," Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, 2020, https://asccc.org/papers/anti-racism-education-california-community-colleges.

- Work with your administration and students to offer constructive ways for students to express themselves about their lived experiences and the structural and historical biases that exist for Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and other minoritized groups and to center student voices more predominantly in governance and decision-making.

- Provide organizational and transformational leadership faculty training and support and ongoing online faculty development, including racial literacy education.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COLLEGES AND DISTRICTS

- Explicitly make a commitment to antiracism and incorporate it into guiding institutional documents such as diversity, equity, and inclusion statements, values statements, and mission statements.

- Conduct a racial climate survey to better understand racial attitudes and issues.

- Implement restorative justice practices into district and college culture.

- Fund and create a professional development program in culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy.

- Scale up and appropriately fund programs and services dedicated to advancing racial equity through a holistic approach.

- Provide professional development in equity-mindedness and antiracism.

- Provide resources and professional development opportunities to critically interrogate and reflect on the impact of key discriminatory laws and practices in the U.S. on higher education.

- Examine and update current policies and procedures using both an equity and antiracist lens.

- Incorporate explicit antiracism training in new faculty onboarding processes and programming as well as existing professional development.

- Center student voice more predominantly in governance and decision-making.

- In partnership with unions, conduct an audit of collective bargaining agreements through a lens of equity and racial and social justice.

Appendix B

AUSTIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Austin, Texas

Designated as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI)

Equity Principles Addressed: Principle 1 (Develop an Equity Mindset) and Principle 4 (Embrace Cultural Competence)

Principle 1 in Action
Austin Community College (ACC) is striving to instill equity-minded design in their teaching and curriculum development. New faculty receive orientations and onboarding sessions throughout the entire academic year devoted to ACC's narrative on equity. These learning opportunities help the latest faculty develop fresh skills centered in equity.

ACC practices ongoing innovation and research in seeking options to create and provide for staff supervisors, hiring managers, and classified and technical employees belonging and purpose-driven training to create a more welcoming and engaging environment where all thrive and succeed regardless of how they identify or are situated historically in relation to current systemic and structural inequities.

ACC is taking a campus-wide approach to provide opportunities for stakeholders to develop new perspectives and reframe their understanding of equity principles. Their focus is on developing a growth mindset across the institution. The college remains committed to helping students discuss the relationship between race and student outcomes, identifies ways in which society privileges some individuals over others, and uses Dr. Singleton's Courageous Conversation protocol when engaging in conversations about race.

Principle 4 in Action
ACC offers faculty and staff multiple professional development opportunities intended to bolster cultural competence. They include programming to foster faculty self-examination and critical reflection, examine how students are treated inequitably, support the retention and success of students from historically marginalized or underserved communities, and lead robust discussions around the theories of antiracism, white supremacy culture, and the impact both have on students and institutional racism. "Through engaging in authentic, courageous conversations, faculty will identify and develop action plans that can create a welcoming environment and support their students' success," college officials said.

Appendix C

CHATTANOOGA STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Chattanooga, Tennessee

Equity Principles Addressed: Principle 6 (Power Sharing)

Principle 6 in Action
Chattanooga State Community College (CSCC) has focused on power sharing at all levels of the institution. Representatives of new groups, including the faculty senate president and the leadership of the support and professional staff associations, are now represented in weekly cabinet meetings and other executive-level decision-making processes. The college's employee resource groups, including the Black Employee Alliance, have met regularly to voice concerns, highlight accomplishments, and provide professional development. Community governance was further strengthened by a vote to continue campus-wide meetings in a virtual format to eliminate barriers to attendance and "demonstrate our commitment to consider as many voices as possible," college officials said.

CSCC President Rebecca Ashford continues to "make room at the table" for a diversity of perspectives in weekly cabinet meetings. Since 2020, CSCC's leadership has continued creating accessible and flexible learning opportunities for faculty and staff members. A strong targeted outreach campaign has increased community participation for immigrant communities via Latinx-focused events, family engagement, and educational programming. The focus is on reaching underserved communities and giving them access to educational opportunities.

Appendix D

COAHOMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Clarksdale, Mississippi

Equity Principles Addressed: Principle 5 (Equity-Driven Data)

Principle 5 in Action
During the fall 2021 semester, Coahoma Community College (CCC) identified equity gaps in course success between gateway courses (English Composition I and College Algebra) and non-gateway courses that warranted action. A deeper analysis of the data revealed that these equity gaps existed within multiple student populations, (first time ever in college, first-year developmental course, extracurricular activities, and GPA under 2.0). An intentional collaboration between Academic Affairs and Student Engagement paved the way for the hiring of an academic success coach, offering supplemental instruction during evenings, implementing mandatory tutoring, and facilitating mental health counseling. The college also used Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF) issued during the pandemic to close the technology gap by providing students with laptops and Wi-Fi access.

The college's efforts yielded positive results. By the end of the fall 2021 semester, the number of students with GPAs under 2.0 decreased by 25%. Approximately 75% of students had an average GPA increase of 0.65 points. Furthermore, the course success rates for both College Algebra (60.58%) and English Composition I (56.88%) were significantly higher than the previous fall's rate of 25%.

While these results are exciting, the college recognized the need to continue the work. During the spring 2022 semester, CSCC began focusing on scaling student success efforts to ensure all students had access to tools and resources. As a result, the college hired a director for its newly established Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning. The goal is for the center to help scale efforts by offering student-centered, culturally relevant, and evidence-based professional and personal development to administrators, faculty, staff, and students.

Appendix E

COMPTON COLLEGE
Compton, California

Equity Principles Addressed: Principle 8 (Acknowledge Pervasive Racism)

Principle 8 in Action
Compton College has long served as a battleground for countering racial and societal inequities by way of serving its student population that consists primarily of Black, Latinx, Asian, and Indigenous students. First, in response to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Call to Action, Compton College developed and implemented a response.

More recently, the college has taken intentional steps in being unapologetic about serving its most systemically oppressed populations in the development of the Black and Males of Color Success Initiative, which included hiring a director for this initiative. The initiative seeks to bring the topic of Black male student success to the forefront while unabashedly naming environmental, geographic, and national issues that impact the rates of academic success experienced by this demographic. Institutional-level conversations that will ultimately impact decision-making consider insights shared by the Black and Males of Color Success Initiative, as the institution continuously strives to make the campus a place where sense of belonging and inclusion are a number-one priority.

Resources that have been provided at Compton College include a bevy of professional development opportunities for faculty, staff, administrators, and students alike. More recently, the college saw great success in attendance with an antiracism workshop series as well as their Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access professional development week. In addition, Compton College has provided networking and conferencing opportunities for the entire institutional community to engage in conversations around topics such as addressing racism, thriving as a Black academic leader (both as students and professionals), and participating in intersectional allyship.

Appendix F

KINGSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Brooklyn, New York

Equity Principles Addressed: Principle 1 (Develop an Equity Mindset)

Principle 1 in Action
Kingsborough Community College (KCC) is working to develop an institution-wide equity mindset through the use of communities of practice — cross-functional teams of faculty and staff. Initial work by two communities of practice in spring 2022 focused on discussions of equity issues among staff members and a review of possible institutional equity tools to implement.

The staff community of practice met over six weeks to examine three themes: structural change, marketing and messaging, and student needs. They used the "Equity Minded Indicators"[37] tool and "Avoiding Racial Equity Detours"[38] by Paul Gorski to address structural change and ATD's "Knowing our Students" guide to examine student needs. They shared their conclusions with the college community at Assessment Week, a college-wide forum for presenting and discussing assessment standards and trends.

They suggested KCC leadership further support dedicated colleagues who are focusing on this effort and are willing participants in creating equitable change for students. The community of practice also urged colleagues to value, respect,

and commit to creating an equitable environment for all members of the KCC community. They encouraged participants to envisage change that they can implement from their role in the immediate, short, and long term.

The faculty community of practice split into two groups. One group structured dialogues among faculty from different disciplines about how to foster a process for an institutional culture shift. They used an autobiographical tool from the book *Teaching Across Cultural Strengths: A Guide to Balancing Integrated and Individuated Cultural Frameworks in College Teaching* by Alicia Fedelina Chávez and Susan Diana Longerbeam (Routledge, 2016). The group discussed their own educational histories and identified practices that might have emerged from those experiences. They wondered whether some of those practices might not always benefit students. They also discussed the need to develop teaching statements that reflect their educational histories. The group developed a set of guiding questions that educators who were new to equity work might use as an on-ramp to further professional development at the college. They decided to focus on how they could recreate safe spaces for faculty to engage in this process moving forward.

Several members have also participated in book clubs, panel discussions, and a fireside chat sharing their educational histories.

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37   Center for Urban Education, "Developing a Practice of Equity Minded Indicators."

38   Paul Gorski, "Avoiding Racial Equity Detours," Educational Leadership 76, no. 7 (April 2019), https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/avoiding-racial-equity-detours.

The other group focused on developing a set of practical tools that faculty could use when trying to create a more equitable classroom environment. To this end, they redesigned the Center for Urban Education syllabus tool to include a fillable PDF and a Qualtrics equity survey. They also used Qualtrics to create two syllabus checklist tools derived from the syllabus tool: one using a checklist approach and the other using the coding approach. The group believed that breaking the tool into pieces would be more manageable for department chairs, program directors, and individual educators. They also drafted equity statements to be included in a revised syllabus and each shared their final draft for feedback and revision. They decided to present the syllabus to students in the spring semester. Two of the members used a social annotation tool, Hypothesis, to collect student feedback about the revised syllabus and statement and two members used a workshop approach to foster discussion. They met to discuss how best to share these results and are considering writing a publication.

This seminal work will be supported and amplified through existing structures, including the Office of Institutional Research, the Center for E-Learning, and the Center for Teaching & Learning.

Until now, KCC has taken a macro-level, systems approach to addressing the educational disparities that many of its students experience. Specifically, the provost and President Claudia V. Schrader have secured funding for a collaborative teaching and learning seminar for 35 faculty over the past two semesters with ATD coaches. Each participant will produce a revised equitable syllabus and incorporate one additional tool or strategy to implement in the fall semester.

Going forward, community members will use disaggregated section-level data to inform teaching strategies and student support services. These structural components are essential to the next phase of KCC's planned institutional transformation, a move toward establishing equity in the classroom. There are a growing number of related developments including an exciting CUNY-wide initiative to explore and develop a Black, Race and Ethnic Studies (BRESI) program including grant funding secured by several members of the Kingsborough community. A cultural shift has begun at Kingsborough and the fault lines separating old and emerging habits are beginning to be revealed.

Appendix G

LEE COLLEGE
Baytown, Texas

Designated as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI)

Equity Principles Addressed: Principle 2 (Interrogate Institutional Structures), Principle 3 (Integrate Holistic Student Supports), and Principle 4 (Embrace Cultural Competence)

Principle 2 in Action
At Lee College, the creation of the Equity and Anti-Racism Council allowed for colleagues to participate in professional development that included taking action and not just receiving information. The Council divided into three sub-committees to analyze policies and practices impacting students, personnel, and instruction. The student sub-committee revised the bias and discrimination policy to make the language and complaint process easier for students to understand. It also explicitly listed the types of prohibited discrimination instead of just generalizing them as "federally protected classes," which made it easier for students and administrators to understand and identify bias and discrimination. Updating these old structures drew more attention than was expected and helped reframe the narrative around DEI and what it means in the context of teaching and learning practices.

The new policy and the work of the council has helped the college modernize its system belief structure around equity.

Lee College is also revising its professional development offerings in a more collaborative campus-wide way with the help of Dr. Victoria Marron. Dr. Marron is leading a DEI Community of Practice cohort model and pairing offerings of other topics with the college's Empirical Education Center. This faculty-supporting committee has been tasked with delivering mandatory professional learning that focuses on rooting campus culture in a community of care, with data-informed prioritization of topics throughout the year. The new focus is helping deepen the institutional structures and practices around inequity for marginalized groups.

In the 2022–23 academic year, two mandatory "Improving Student Interactions" trainings were held for faculty to support continued growth and awareness of topics such as microaggressions and implicit bias, while connecting the importance of the culture of care at Lee College and the common purpose that "we are all educators."

Principle 3 in Action
Lee College has focused on ensuring that student supports are more visible and available to students. The Student Resource and Advocacy Center provides students with holistic student supports including child care, emergency aid, transportation assistance, housing information, food, and hygiene items.

The Center was designed to provide a highly visible source of comprehensive support, "not a hidden backpack program or a pantry in a closet behind the scenes on campus," as Dr. Marron emphasized. Lee College has almost completed a $5 million renovation and addition to the Student Center to better serve student needs thanks to a MacKenzie Scott donation.

Principle 4 in Action

Dr. Marron works to improve student retention and learning outcomes. Under her guidance, the college is using professional learning to provide an equity-minded, campus-wide cultural shift to ensure that students feel a sense of belonging and acceptance. She notes that professional learning is an important factor for faculty and facilitates their understanding of how to integrate their own lived experiences and educational journeys into their day-to-day student interactions, whether as a faculty, advisor, foundation employee, or grounds and facilities support. The college is also providing mentoring through the Puente Project Mentoring Program, a cornerstone program rooted in culturally responsive professional development. This program offers students support in accessing scholarships, career guidance services, and service-learning opportunities.

Appendix H

MOTT COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Flint, Michigan

Equity Principles Addressed: Principle 8 (Acknowledge Pervasive Racism)

Principle 8 in Action

Mott Community College (MCC) seeks to intentionally ensure fairness and inclusivity by encouraging all members of the community to be change agents to address systemic racism, critique college systems to remove barriers for people of color, remove deficit mindsets that label minoritized students as problems, and implement inclusive practices.

While MCC's own equity audit showed that the college was taking significant steps to promote inclusivity in learning, the audit found a perceived lack of infrastructure that formally institutionalizes systems, processes, communication, programming, and accountability metrics for diversity, equity, and inclusion. MCC is introducing a new framework for leaders that will drive critical thinking, professional development, and community accountability.

The framework encourages decision-makers to set data goals for implementing programs and practices and measure those programs' impact on access, retention, completion, and/or workforce statistics for specified employee and student groups.

Appendix I

PIERCE COLLEGE DISTRICT
Pierce County, Washington

Equity Principles Addressed: Principle 2 (Interrogate Institutional Structures) and Principle 5 (Equity-Driven Data)

Principle 2 in Action
Pierce College has transformed its tenure process to center racial equity. The new process centers reflection and action to explicitly advance Black and Brown student excellence, inclusive pedagogies, and the faculty member's racial equity journey. Guided by the Board of Trustees, the overhaul was a collaborative undertaking of the college's faculty union and administration that focused on both equitable student success and a process that would center and nurture the approaches and experiences of new faculty rather than replicating systemic oppression and assimilation inherent to tenure processes.

A Pierce College Racial Equity Leadership Academy team member shared, "We wanted to be explicit that advancing equitable access, opportunity, and success is at the core of the faculty role; and we needed to create an ecosystem that was welcoming and supportive of new faculty in the same way that we want to be welcoming and supportive to students." The new tenure process included bias and antiracism training for the trustees (who award tenure) and for all tenure committee members.

Principle 5 in Action
When Pierce College began to take a concentrated look at its aggregated student success data over 12 years ago, it found that retention, course completion, and graduation rates were not at acceptable levels. Now, after disaggregating data and identifying sustained, systemic areas of inequity, the college has the most racially diverse leadership structure in their history and are redesigning their professional development for faculty and staff. The college is focusing on racial equity and advancing Black and Brown student excellence in their first-year introduction program. Pierce is committed to dismantling their existing model and rebuilding it to put historically marginalized students and leaders at the center. By being transparent about their student success data, the administration is actively making fundamental changes to their student retention and success strategies.

Excerpt from the Introduction to the Tenure Process Guide:

The tenure process provides you the opportunity to develop and excel in community. This process centers our Black and Brown students because they have been historically disempowered throughout our institutions of higher education.

The tenure process is an evaluative process of your effectiveness in five key areas deemed by the Board of Trustees to be essential to the faculty role in advancing the college mission and achieving Black and Brown student excellence.

- **Black & Brown Student Excellence**
- **Discipline/Field Excellence Applying Inclusive Pedagogies**
- **Student Experience, Mentoring & Advising**
- **Racial Equity Learning Journey**
- **College & Community Engagement**

Each area is necessary but insufficient on its own. We celebrate that you bring a unique identity that is formed through your lived experiences. And we acknowledge you find yourself in various stages of growth in each of these five key areas. This process expects, supports, and documents your learning in each area.

Educators have had a long history of upholding barriers yet are also situated to disrupt them. In the tenure processes, this means acknowledging the implicit and explicit bias of candidates, students, committee members, administrators, and board members; and includes committing to training to both identify and eliminate personal bias. This also means taking action in the learning environment and in other student-oriented situations to promote student learning and development, even if such steps are preliminary and imperfect. Within these efforts, Pierce supports humility, reflection, and growth.[39]

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39   Ilder Betancourt Lopez et al., "Tenure Process Manual 2021–22," Pierce College District (2021).

Acknowledgments

ABOUT ACHIEVING THE DREAM

Achieving the Dream (ATD) is a partner and champion of more than 300 community colleges across the country. Drawing on our expert coaches, groundbreaking programs, and national peer network, we provide institutions with integrated, tailored support for every aspect of their work — from foundational capacities such as leadership, data, and equity to intentional strategies for supporting students holistically, building K–12 partnerships, and more. We call this Whole College Transformation. Our vision is for every college to be a catalyst for equitable, antiracist, and economically vibrant communities. We know that with the right partner and the right approach, colleges can drive access, completion rates, and employment outcomes — so that all students can access life-changing learning that propels them into community-changing careers.

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