COSUMNES RIVER COLLEGE
EST. 1970

Office of the Vice President of Institutional Equity & Research and Planning

Equity-Minded Decision-Making Guiding Principles

The following offers guidance for adopting an equity-minded process for decision-making related to institutional policies, practices and transformational change toward a more just college. The infusion of guiding principles that are equity-minded provide a more intentional and strategic planning process that ensures policies and practices are designed to support students in achieving their goals and improve institutional gains in achieving equitable student outcomes.

Developing a strong understanding of inequities and institutional barriers, and how they manifest both nationally and locally, is the most effective way for CRC to identify systemic inequities and make decisions that correct and remove these barriers.

This guide builds on CRC's organizational change paradigm and is grounded in our work of transformational leadership and institutional racial equity.

Working Agreements to Create Brave Spaces for Discussions
- Open minds, open hearts.
- 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.
- Create space and time for discussions to occur in full.
- Build in time for reflection.
- Establish and use mechanisms to get input from key stakeholders who will be affected by the decision.
- Understand that designing for equity is about intentional planning and practices at the college.
- Help others think deeply about college structures that are within the control of the institution.
- Be race conscious.

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Guiding Questions to Ask Before, During and After Decision-Making

Based on CRC's mission, vision and values, and cultural competence statement the following guiding questions help inform our equity-minded decision-making process related to resource allocation, practices, and procedures. This list of guiding questions helps to frame the discussion and embed equity into the decision-making process. As institutional leaders, we must build in time for reflection and as ourselves at every juncture of the process who benefits, and who loses from the decisions made.

As institutional leaders, adopting an equity-minded framework and guiding principles for decision-making requires us to interrogate the status quo and frequently ask *who benefits* and *who loses*?

Questions for Identifying Decisions that Need to be Revisited (Considerations)

◆ Where are the aspects of the student experience that affect outcomes?
◆ What are the differential impacts of this aspect of the student experience on historically underserved students at our institution?
◆ What decisions/actions around this aspect(s) of the student experience may be reinforcing the status quo that leads to current inequities?

Questions for the Exploration Phase of Decision Making
◆ How does the current reality differentially impact historically underserved students at our institution? Consider their experiences, academic and career outcomes, social mobility, etc.

◆ Reflecting on the current reality around the topic(s) we are deciding on:
  ○ Why was it designed that way? What criteria led to the decision to go with this design? What assumptions were/could have led to this decision?
  ○ Who was it designed for? What are the defining characteristics and experiences of those students?
  ○ What differences exist between those who the current reality was designed for and the students we serve today?

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

◆ Have you considered qualitative and/or quantitative evaluation report/analysis of the program or activity?

◆ Consider how the following contribute to inequitable outcomes related to this decision;
  o Institutional policies and practices
  o Programs that serve students
  o Communication mechanisms
  o Strategic goals/direction decisions
  o Disaggregated data analysis
  o Resource allocation decisions

Questions for Evaluating Options and Making the Decision
◆ What alternative decisions/designs could produce different outcomes?
◆ How will those options impact the experience and success of historically underserved students at our institution?
◆ How will each decision impact the college's ability to achieve our definition of equity? Equity goal?
◆ 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? Consider both active and passive ways that inequities could be perpetuated by this decision.
◆ 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 historically underserved or are/were negatively impacted by structural biases in society.
◆ What feedback loops and accountability mechanisms can be structured into routine practices to ensure this decision remains in the best interest of equity for our students?

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Questions for Decision Makers Participating in this Process (Self Reflection)
- How does my identity impact my understanding of the decision point and its potential impact on students?
- How does my role at the institution, and the power that comes with it, impact my understanding of the decision point and its potential impact on students?
- What assumptions am I making about our students and their experience?

Identifying Potential Impacts of Making the Decision

Groups Impacted	Potential Positive Impacts	Potential Negative Impacts	Potential Short Term Goals	Potential Long Term Goals

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What are examples for how you might operationalize this tool?

Additional Tools and Further Reading

The following are also useful tools to help institutions embed equity, with an emphasis on racial equity, into their decision-making process.

- Race Forward's Racial Justice Impact Assessment
  https://www.raceforward.org/sites/default/files/RacialJusticeImpactAssessment_v5.pdf

- Racial Equity Tools Racial Equity Impact Assessment for Economic Policies and Public Budgets
  https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/keleher1.pdf

- Center for Urban Education's Equity Minded Indicators Guide
  https://cue.usc.edu/files/2016/02/Developing-a-Practice-of-Equity-Mindedness.pdf

- Racial Equity Resource Guide
  http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary

- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Glossary of Terms, Pacific University, Oregon
  https://www.pacificu.edu/life-pacific/support-safety/office-equity-diversity-inclusion/glossary-terms

- Sample Equity-Minded Decision-Making Guide, Achieving the Dream, 2016.

- Budget Equity Assessment Tool, Office of Equity and Human Rights, City of Portland.

- CRC Student Equity Plan 2019. Institutional Effectiveness.

- Adams, M., Bell, Lee Anne, Griffin, Pat. 1997. Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice. Routledge. New York. London

- Kendi, I.X. How to Be An Anti-Racist. 2019. One World. New York.

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Social Justice Glossary of Terms

This is a working list of key terms and definitions that inform College policies, practices and procedures related to equity, diversity and inclusion. Social justice terminology is ever changing and evolving based on the conditions in society. This list was compiled from the research of the Center for Urban Education, University of Southern California Rossier School of Education.

Anti-Racist: One who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea. (Kendi, I. 2020)

Equity: Takes into consideration the social identifiers (race, gender, socio-economic status, etc.) do in fact affect equality. In an equitable environment, an individual or a group would be given what was needed to give them equitable advantage. This would not necessarily be equal to what others were receiving. It could be more or different. Equity is an ideal and a goal, not a process. It ensures that everyone has the resources to succeed. (Bensimon and Malcom 2012; Center for Urban Education; Dowd and Bensimon 2015)

Equity-Mindedness: The term "Equity-Mindedness" refers to the perspective or mode of thinking exhibited by practitioners who call attention to patterns of inequity in student outcomes. These practitioners are willing to take personal and institutional responsibility for the success of their students, and critically reassess their own practices. It also requires that practitioners are race-conscious and aware of the social and historical context of exclusionary practices in American Higher Education.

Equity-mindedness is a schema that provides an alternative framework for understanding the causes of equity gaps in outcomes and the action needed to close them. Equity-mindedness encompasses being (1) race conscious, (2) institutionally focused, (3) evidence based, (4) systemically aware, and (5) action oriented. (Bensimon and Malcom 2012; Center for Urban Education; Dowd and Bensimon 2015)

Intersectionality: An approach largely advanced by women of color, arguing that classifications such as gender, race, class, and others cannot be examined in isolation from one another; they interact and intersect in individuals' lives, in society, in social systems, and are mutually constitutive. Exposing [one's] multiple identities can help clarify the ways in which a person can simultaneously

experience privilege and oppression. For example, a Black woman in America does not experience gender inequalities in exactly the same way as a white woman, nor racial oppression identical to that experienced by a Black man. Each race and gender intersection produces a qualitatively distinct life. (Crenshaw, K. 1989)

Institutional Racism: Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as non-white. (Racial Equity Resource Guide)

Oppression: The systemic and pervasive nature of social inequality woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness. Oppression fuses institutional and systemic discrimination, personal bias, bigotry and social prejudice in a complex web of relationships and structures that saturate most aspects of life in our society. (Adams, M., Bell, Lee Anne, Griffin, and Pat 1997)

Privilege: Unearned access to resources (social power) that are only readily available to some people because of their social identity group membership; an advantage, or immunity granted to or enjoyed by one societal group above and beyond the common advantage of all other groups. Privilege is often invisible to those who have it. (Adams, M., Bell, Lee Anne, Griffin, and Pat 1997)

Race Consciousness: In an affirmative sense involves noticing racial inequities in educational outcomes and experiences, naming those specific racial/ethnic groups that are experiencing equity gaps, and shying away from euphemisms often used to avoid open and honest discussions of the roles that race and racism play in the perpetuation of educational inequity. (Bensimon and Malcom 2012)

Racial equity: is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. When we use the term, we are thinking about racial equity as one part of racial justice, and thus we also include work to address root causes of inequities, not just their manifestation. This includes elimination of policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them. (Source: Center for Assessment and Policy Development)

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