
Policy on Social Justice

June 2021

Commission Commitment to Social Justice

The Commission recognizes the moral necessity of promoting equity and diversity through its policies and practices, and creating a climate of inclusion and anti-racism among its membership. While issues of diversity encompass many historically marginalized groups, the pressing nature of racial inequity in higher education demands immediate attention. Therefore, the Commission's current commitment to promote equity, diversity, and foster inclusionary practices is rooted in its understanding of historical and systemic institutional racist structures and policies that exist in society, stemming from prejudice, discrimination, and implicit biases, which have benefited white people and disadvantaged people of color.

Consistent with its mission to advance educational quality and student learning and achievement, the Commission is committed to applying its leadership, advocacy efforts, and position of influence to dismantle historical and institutional racism and eradicate educational inequities. To this end, the Commission will engage in anti-racist work by taking an equity minded approach to its Standards and the revision process leading to the 2024 Standards. In addition, the Commission will recruit more colleagues of color for peer review teams; recruit more colleagues of color to be Commissioners; and infuse anti-racism discussions into ACCJC's professional development programs through conferences, symposiums, and webinars for member colleges and for ACCJC staff and Commissioners.

Commission Expectations for Representatives of the Commission

The Commission expects that all individuals associated with the Commission, whether as Commissioners, peer review team members, consultants, administrative staff or other agency representatives, will embrace and carry forward this commitment to social justice, in all interactions; work effectively with people from diverse backgrounds and professional levels; and respect multiple perspectives to support the advancement of educational quality in the region represented by ACCJC's public and private institution types, dispersed in wide-ranging geographical locations from California to Hawai'i and the Pacific Region, Guam, American Samoa, the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and all other geographic areas where the Commission may conduct its business.

Commission Expectations for Member Institutions

The Commission is committed to a mission-based higher education model that assures equity, educational opportunity, and success for all students by upholding standards that require member institutions to address historical inequities. The Accreditation Standards thread together the following principles and requirements for institutions to strengthen their ongoing culture of continuous quality improvement to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion:

- An institution's mission and goals reflect a commitment to meeting the educational needs of its students (Standard IA, Eligibility Requirement 6);
- Provide data disaggregated and effective mechanisms to identify performance gaps, implement strategies to mitigate gaps, and engage in dialog on student equity (Standard IB, Eligibility Requirement 11 and 19);
- Effective use of delivery modes, teaching methodologies, and learning support services that reflect the diverse and changing needs of its students, in support of equity in success for all students (Standard IIA);
- Learning outcomes on the ability to engage diverse perspectives (Standard IIA);
- Providing appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services to students regardless of service location or delivery method to assure equitable access (Standard IIC, Eligibility Requirement 15);
- Promoting policies that support diverse personnel and assessment of employment equity and diversity (Standard IIIA);
- An institution's mission and goals are the foundation for financial planning to meet the educational needs of its students (Standards IIID, Eligibility Requirement 18);
- Policies and procedures for decision making roles and responsibilities to ensure appropriate consideration of relevant perspectives (Standard IVA);
- Ethical and effective leadership throughout the organization guides the accomplishment of the mission and supports institutional effectiveness and improvement (Standard IVA, IVB, IVC).

The Commission is deeply committed to embracing the diversity of its member institutions in the context of their unique mission. It therefore requires member institutions to use data and evidence to inform practices to improve equity and expects that institutional policies and practices foster a sense of inclusion and belonging among its diverse stakeholders. While each institution will address in their own way the opportunities to improve educational equity, support diversity, and create a campus culture of inclusion, the Commission is dedicated to supporting institutions in their pursuit of educational excellence.

Adopted January 1994; Revised June 2021

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