FOOTHILL COLLEGE

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR EQUITABLE CORs

Believing a well-educated population is essential to sustaining a democratic and just society, we commit to the work of equity, which is to dismantle oppressive systems (structural, cultural, and individual) and create a college community where success is not predictable by race.

- [Foothill College Strategic Vision for Equity](#)

This document was inspired by the recent national dialogue around systemic racism in the U.S. and our recognition that implicit and explicit racism exists in our curriculum at Foothill College. Although Foothill College has undertaken the process of educating faculty on the topic of student equity, and many have implemented real change within their classrooms and on campus, we recognize that there is still work to be done. We recognize that through our curriculum we as faculty contribute to the **lack of a sense of belonging, safety, and space allocation for students of color**[1]. We also recognize that **many programs perpetuate structural racism by failing to educate students in the history and ongoing racism implicit and explicit in their disciplines**[1]. We acknowledge that we as faculty provide **insufficient culturally responsive, relevant, and sustaining pedagogy and other asset-based approaches in teaching and serving our students of color**[1]. We believe that creating more equitable curriculum is just one of the numerous equity objectives that Foothill College faculty can utilize to counteract some of the effects of institutional racism that perpetuates in higher education. The intent of this document is to assist faculty as they strive to address the issues outlined above and work to create safe, inclusive, and equitable spaces and learning opportunities for students of color.

We acknowledge the powerful role curriculum plays in forming our identities as educators and scholars in our respective academic fields, and as human beings. There are difficult questions ahead. We invite all Foothill College faculty to join us as we reflect critically on our curriculum in a community of scholars working in solidarity, without judgment, and without fear. We believe such a community is essential to bringing about the changes we want to see. Please join us.

DEFINITIONS

Accessibility is the practice of allowing everyone equal access to education, employment, healthcare, and other resources. Accessibility empowers individuals by helping them understand their rights and advocate for themselves so they can live with independence and dignity. Accessible curriculum recognizes and reduces barriers to student success; and designs syllabi, activities, and assignments that acknowledge neurodiversity, integrate support for students, and are guided by scientific principles about how students learn (often referred to as Universal Design for Learning, or UDL). (Sources: Glendale Community College DSPS and CAST)

Antiracism encompasses a range of ideas and political actions which are meant to counter racial prejudice, systemic racism, and the oppression of specific racial groups. Antiracism is usually structured around conscious efforts and deliberate actions which are intended to provide equal opportunities for all people on both an individual and a systemic level. As a philosophy, it can be engaged in by the acknowledgment of personal privileges, confronting acts as well as systems of racial discrimination, and/or working to change personal racial biases[2].

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) recognizes and celebrates that our students come from a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and traditions, including (dis)ability cultures like Deaf culture. CRT curriculum connects activities, assignments, readings, and projects to students' home cultures and experiences. CRT classrooms are communities where knowledge is created within the context of students' cultural, traditional, and social experiences. CRT instructors are facilitators and guides in these communities. (Source: Glendale Community College C&I)

Decolonization encourages the representation of multiple perspectives in the curriculum. It makes space for all voices and experiences and does not privilege one point of view. Decolonization is not just a matter of including "other" material within a dominant white, European framework. Instead, it provides a way for a variety of experiences, traditions, theories, and ideas to inform each other and critique the way we construct knowledge and ideologies. Decolonization also enables us to examine the way we teach so we can identify and eliminate biases in our curriculum. Ultimately, decolonizing the curriculum promotes student validation, engagement, and a sense of belonging in our classrooms and across our campus. (Source: Glendale Community College C&I)

DEIA is an adopted acronym for the concepts of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. There may be an additional letter presented for accessibility (DEIA) depending on usage. (Source: Glendale Community College C&I)

Diversity is the presence of differences that may include race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, language, (dis)ability, neurodiversity, age, religious commitment, or political perspective. (Source: eXtension)

Epistemology is the study or a theory of the nature and grounds of knowledge especially with reference to its limits and validity. Epistemology seeks to understand one or another kind of cognitive success (or, correspondingly, cognitive failure). (Sources: Merriam-Webster and Stanford University SEP)

Equity refers to fair and just practices and policies that ensure all campus community members can thrive. Equity is different than equality in that equality implies treating everyone as if their experiences are the same. Being equitable means acknowledging and addressing structural inequalities—historic and current—that advantage some and disadvantage others and providing access to resources for success. (Source: University of Iowa)

Inclusion is an outcome to ensure that students of diverse backgrounds are treated fairly and respectfully. Inclusion outcomes are met when you, your institution, and your program are truly inviting to all and where diverse individuals can participate fully in the decision-making and development opportunities within an organization or group. (Source: eXtension)

HOW CAN ONE PERSON MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Structural and cultural changes are needed to enact true change as an institution. However, we all own the responsibility to engage in individual change and professional and personal development. All levels of system-change dimensions can impact and influence one another. By addressing all levels of change at the same time, a more transformative institutional shift can occur.

CREATING MORE EQUITABLE CURRICULUM

By building and revising courses and programs through an equity lens, we can construct curriculum that meets the needs of all students and promotes student success. As you write new courses or revise your existing courses, look to incorporating the suggestions, below, which focus on specific sections of the COR. Also provided are before/after examples from Foothill CORs which have gone through the process of being updated using an equity lens.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

- Does it demonstrate a welcoming approach? Does it engage students and invite them as participants/co-participants?
    - o For introductory or general courses, mention that little to no experience in the topic/field is necessary to enroll
- Does it have inclusive language?
    - o Use "the student" as much as possible, rather than he/she, or his/her
    - o Use active versus passive voice, minimize jargon and/or define discipline-specific terminology
- Does it include DEIA content that will be covered in the course?
- Example(s) from Foothill CORs:
    - o Before:
    - o After:

COURSE CONTENT

- Does the content communicate a philosophy that values diverse knowledge and abilities?
- Is it timely? How has the topic/field evolved over time, and does the content reflect the most current iteration?
    - o Address historical and/or contemporary misconceptions
- Is it relevant to the lived experiences of the students?
- Is the language inclusive? Does it show a commitment to help students succeed/accomplish SLOs?
- Does it acknowledge the reality of racism and/or include topics related to DEIA?
- Does it offer opportunity to critique the historical foundations of the discipline?
- Does it explore a broad range of diverse contributions to the topic/field?
    - o Move away from including only "canonical" contributions
- Are students empowered to attain an ownership of their knowledge, instead of having it bestowed upon them?
- Example(s) from Foothill CORs:
    - o BIOL 40A Human Anatomy & Physiology - added the following topics:

- History of anatomy and physiology acknowledging bias in the fields toward contributions of men of European descent
- Recognition of historical contributions of individuals such as Wang Qingren, Imhotep, Ibn al-Nafis, Alessandra Giliani, Sushruta, etc.
- Evolution of skin colors and misconceptions regarding a biological basis for race
- Disparities related to the underrepresentation of individuals with darkly pigmented skin in textbooks, medical training, and clinical testing
- Examination of health disparities, social determinants of health, and health inequities as related to … organ systems
- Examination of the contributions of scientists from a diversity of backgrounds to the fields of anatomy and physiology

METHODS OF EVALUATION

- Are we as instructors considering our own biases when constructing and evaluating assessments?
- Are the methods detailed and descriptive?
  - Avoid listing, simply, "essays, quizzes, final exam, etc." without including additional information about what is included for each
- Are course activities aligned with core principles of universal learning design? Are there multiple means of representation, action, and expression, and/or engagement?
- Does assessment/evaluation consider the multiple ways students learn and use authentic assessment principles?
- Are students given the opportunity to revise and resubmit work?
- Are assignments assigned in stages so that subsequent assessments incorporate the students' previous work and instructor feedback?
- Example(s) from Foothill CORs:
  - Before:
  - After:

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

- Are the methods detailed and descriptive?
  - Avoid listing, simply, "lecture, lab, exercises, etc." without including additional information about the delivery of each
    - Consider including definitions of terms such as "lecture," "lab," etc.
  - Provide overview of delivery of course content; when possible, include information such as ratio of lecture to group work and whether the course is teacher-centered or student-centered

- Does the course allow for peer review and/or cooperative work, and/or incorporate other opportunities for discussion between students and student-to-student feedback?
- Do the methods aid students in connecting course content to their lived experiences?
  - As appropriate, include opportunities for students to engage in self-reflection, group discussion, journaling, etc., to better engage with content
- Example(s) from Foothill CORs:
  - Before:
  - After:

REPRESENTATIVE TEXTS/MATERIALS

- Are there free texts available? Check with your library liaison and/or the Academic Senate OER liaison for OER (Open Educational Resources) or subscription library resources available for free to students (e.g., databases, articles, journals, magazines, newspapers, eBooks, streaming videos, etc.). (Accessibility and affordability issues in education disproportionately affect marginalized groups.)
- Do the texts/materials amplify the struggles, advancements, achievements, and experiences of authors from a variety of racial, gender, cultural, (dis)ability, and experiential backgrounds?
- Are diverse authors and voices represented?
  - Move away from including only "canonical" texts/materials
- Are the texts/materials current—do they address current issues that are relevant and meaningful to students?
- Do they encourage students to connect course content to their own sociocultural backgrounds and/or the sociocultural backgrounds of others? Do they help students see themselves in the topic/field?
- Do the texts/materials engage in respectful discussion of history and contemporary experiences of discrimination, racism, exclusion, and marginalization? Do they address biases within the topic/field, both historical and contemporary, and include counter-narratives?
- Are the language and content accessible to students from a variety of backgrounds and abilities?
  - If films/videos or online resources are listed, are these accessible to those students with disabilities (e.g., closed captioned, compatible with screen readers)?
- Are the texts/materials appropriate for the prerequisites and course level?
- Look beyond traditional textbooks—are there other types of "texts" relevant to the topic/field?
  - Consider the following: films/videos, articles, online resources

- o Check with your [library liaison](#) for subscription library resources available for free to students (e.g., databases, articles, journals, magazines, newspapers, eBooks, streaming videos, etc.)
- Example(s) from Foothill CORs:
  - o BIOL 40A Human Anatomy & Physiology - added the following materials:
    - ▪ Articles on representation of skin color in medical training

TYPES/EXAMPLES OF REQUIRED READING, WRITING, AND OUTSIDE OF CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

- Do assignments elicit students' prior knowledge of the content?
- Can students engage with course material and respond to assignments in a variety of meaningful ways that includes real-world examples?
- Do assignments encourage students to connect course content to their sociocultural backgrounds and eclectic experiences and/or the sociocultural backgrounds and experiences of others? Do they help students see themselves in the topic/field?
- Are you including prompts that encourage reflection to specific resources?
- Are activities designed to encourage students to construct their knowledge through contextualized experiences/activities?
- Are assignments relevant to the type of course?
  - o As appropriate, consider using "non-traditional" assignments, such as internships or e-portfolios
- Are assignments assigned in stages so that subsequent assessments incorporate the students' previous work and instructor feedback?
- Example: Ask students to reflect on how their diverse knowledge and unique life experience impact their learning or semester-long e-portfolio that synthesizes academic, professional, and personal growth through weekly reflection/journaling.
- Example(s) from Foothill CORs:
  - o BIOL 40A Human Anatomy & Physiology - added the following assignments:
    - ▪ Analysis of the contributions to anatomy and physiology by scientists from a diversity of backgrounds

CONCLUSION

This work is ongoing, and this document will be updated to include additional examples of changes made to Foothill CORs. Please share examples of the work you've done to incorporate equity into your CORs by contacting any member of the CCC leadership team. [Current members are listed under Curriculum Contacts on the CCC website](#).

REFERENCES

1. Curriculum-related goals set forth in the Foothill College Academic Senate Equity Action Plan:

- **Issue 5: Lack of a sense of belonging, safety, and space allocation for students of color.**
    - Goal 7: Curriculum and instruction norm multi-cultural and multi-ethnic perspectives.
- **Issue 6: Many programs perpetuate structural racism by failing to educate students in the history and ongoing racism implicit and explicit in their disciplines.**
    - Goal 1: Curriculum is explicitly race conscious.
        - Course outlines in every discipline include the epistemology of the field, highlighting the contributions of racially diverse scholars, and address the discipline's historical and contemporary racial equity issues.
        - Curriculum policies and processes prioritize equity outcomes. Where disproportionate impact is the outcome of policy implementation or compliance, the College Curriculum Committee and Administration take action to analyze the disproportional impact, and mitigate it and when necessary, and work to advocate for change at the board and/or state level where the policy or process is beyond local control.
    - Goal 2: Pedagogy is race conscious.
        - Faculty are knowledgeable about the epistemology of their disciplines, especially about the contributions of racially diverse scholars, and they effectively educate students in these topics.
        - Faculty are knowledgeable about historical and contemporary racial equity issues in their disciplines, and they effectively educate students on these issues.
        - Faculty are aware of approaches for using their discipline to prepare students to be racially conscious, and community and global leaders through opportunities such as service leadership.
        - Faculty use culturally responsive pedagogy and engage in ongoing professional development around their teaching practices.
    - Goal 3: Faculty are supported in their efforts to deepen their understanding of the racialized contexts of their discipline, including the contributions of diverse scholars in their field, update their curricula, and iteratively refine their teaching.
- **Issue 7: Insufficient culturally responsive, relevant, and sustaining pedagogy and other asset-based approaches in teaching and serving our students of color.**
    - Goal 2: Faculty are supported in their efforts to iteratively self-evaluate their proficiency with culturally responsive pedagogy.
    - Goal 3: Content and pedagogy are inclusive of and created with communities of color in mind.
    - Goal 4: The college creates an Ethnic Studies Division and hires demographically diverse faculty.

2. "Being Antiracist". National Museum of African American History and Culture. 2019-10-01.