

# INSTITUTIONAL EQUITY PLAN



AMERICAN  
RIVER  
COLLEGE

## Laying the Foundation for Equity

- Equity Definitions
- Equity Framework
- Equity Lens
- Themes and Opportunities

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## INTRODUCTION

The Institutional Equity Plan Project Team invested nine months deeply examining the college community's environment, assets, and needs in order to create a three-to-five year plan with the goals of improving equity, access, and success at American River College (ARC). The team consulted with hundreds of students, faculty, staff, and administrators to create a plan that is rooted in principles and values of equity, social justice, inclusion, and liberation. This plan is not intended as a prescriptive list of actions to produce specific results, but rather a guiding framework with recommendations to transform the institution and those who work and exist within it.

Although there might be high hopes, this plan will not eliminate racism, sexism, transphobia, Islamophobia or any other systemic injustice; however, it will acknowledge those systems and norms in the organizational context; challenge the historical and societal forces; and seek to create methods to actively push against injustices. The project team acknowledges that there are many positive equity-focused efforts currently in action; nonetheless, the college aspires towards continuous growth and improvement of outcomes and experiences for those who are disproportionately impacted and marginalized in society and on campus. The overarching goal of the plan is to improve the climate, so that the ARC community is in a better place in five years.

The planning document proposes a foundation for this work as well as exploring the opportunities and challenges that surfaced in dialogue with stakeholders. Recommendations are offered across the following categories which will be explored in detail:

- Understanding and improving campus climate
- Creating an organizational structure focused on equity
- Developing human resources
- Creating an equity communication plan
- Enhancing instruction
- Enhancing physical spaces
- Enhancing student support

This plan should be considered a living document that is regularly visited, evaluated, and adapted.

## Acknowledgements

The project team was comprised of a group of students, staff, faculty and administrators who contributed their efforts to development of the ARC Institutional Equity Plan. The membership included:

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## OVERVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The summary below showcases the recommendations for continuous growth and improvement. Please see the pages listed for further discussion including suggested strategies.

Category	Recommendations
Setting the Foundation for Equity (p. 6-11)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Affirm the proposed definitions of equity-related terminology</li> <li>2) Adopt the proposed equity framework and lens</li> </ol>
Campus Climate (p. 12-13)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) Focus on welcoming disproportionately impacted communities at ARC</li> <li>4) Conduct a climate study and a corresponding climate audit that utilizes an equity lens</li> <li>5) Build institutional capacity in cultural awareness and equity consciousness</li> </ol>
Organizational Structure (p. 14-15)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6) Cultivate a clear sense of accountability for making institutional equity a priority</li> <li>7) Foster greater collaboration related to equity issues and interests</li> <li>8) Extend transparency</li> </ol>
Human Resources (p. 16-17)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9) Offer training and professional development to all employees specific to equity and social justice</li> <li>10) Nurture the essential conditions to hire and retain people of color</li> </ol>
Communication (p. 18-19)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11) Operationalize the shared definitions, framework, and lens</li> <li>12) Develop and execute a communication plan focused on equity</li> <li>13) Assess and collaboratively revise college policies and procedures</li> <li>14) Infuse equity communication by leaders throughout the organization</li> </ol>
Instruction and Curriculum (p. 20-21)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15) Provide faculty with resources to help prioritize curriculum that is inclusive of students from marginalized communities</li> <li>16) Ensure faculty have access to information (data) necessary for promoting the success of students from marginalized communities</li> <li>17) Sustain and support instructional approaches for supporting students of color</li> </ol>
Physical Spaces (p. 22-23)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18) Improve physical space to promote success for people with disabilities</li> <li>19) Equip classrooms with flexible seating configurations</li> <li>20) Foster a more welcoming and safe physical environment for transgender and non-binary people</li> <li>21) Dedicate more space to supporting marginalized students</li> <li>22) Adapt the physical environment to better support student parents</li> </ol>
Student Support (p. 24-25)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>23) Increase planning and training related to hate and bias incidents</li> <li>24) Promote collaborative planning at the department/unit-level</li> <li>25) Expand mental health services focused on marginalized students</li> <li>26) Plan to strategically and comprehensively meet basic needs for students</li> <li>27) Enhance and increase onboarding efforts for marginalized students</li> <li>28) Allocate regular staffing in physical spaces designed for marginalized communities</li> </ol>

Table 1: Overview of Recommendations



## THE PLANNING ENVIRONMENT

The Institutional Equity Plan has been developed as one component of American River College's integrated planning process so that it can provide a framework through which ARC's commitment to social justice and equity can be thoughtfully addressed across all other plans. It strives to develop a shared vision and guiding direction for actualizing the commitment across the institution.

### Governance and Strategic Plan Connections

The project team was initiated through ARC's established governance process and the proposed plan will be considered through appropriate governance channels including the Academic Senate, Institutional Effectiveness Council, and the Executive Leadership Team. Governance at ARC involves how policies, practices, or procedures are established to guide the operation of the college. Participatory governance is a collaborative goal-setting and problem-solving process built on trust and communication that involves representatives from appropriate constituent groups who engage in open discussion and timely decision-making. The purpose of governance is to achieve **valued outputs** which are strategies, solutions, and/or recommendations that advance ARC in the direction of maximizing institutional effectiveness. Valued outputs are achieved through **participation** and **dialogue**. Project teams are the collaborative method by which the college produces specific deliverables such as planning documents.

All components of the integrated planning process, including the Institutional Equity Plan, are centered on the institution's vision, mission, and commitment to social justice and equity (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: Overview of ARC Integrated Planning Model

Recommendations of the Institutional Equity Plan are mapped to the strategic goals that they support. These goals include:

***Students First*** – The College engages and connects students early and often to people, programs, and services as an integrated educational experience. By providing personalized, proactive support, the College fosters relationships that ensure all students, particularly the historically underserved and marginalized, persist, learn, and succeed.

***Clear and Effective Paths*** – The College provides easily recognizable pathways to, through, and beyond ARC. Offering well defined and supported pathways provides a foundation for success as students enter the College, make timely progress toward achieving their informed educational goals, and seamlessly transfer to other colleges and universities or find employment in their chosen career.

***Exemplary Teaching, Learning, & Working Environment*** – The College ensures an equitable, safe, and inclusive teaching, learning, and working environment. Culturally relevant curriculum, innovative, high-quality instructional methods and technologies, exemplary academic and student support services, and comprehensive and integrated professional development create the best conditions for teaching and learning. The College promotes liberation and honors the dignity, humanity, and contributions of all members of our community.

***Vibrancy and Resiliency*** – The College promotes a culture of innovation, entrepreneurship, sustainability, and transparent communication. Proactive, effective, and efficient operational systems and governance and data-informed approaches to planning, decision-making, and resource allocation provide a high level of service to our students, community, and to one another.

### Intent of the Project

Based on the project charter, the work of the project team was intended to lay the foundation for a comprehensive Institutional Equity Plan. The resulting plan was expected to articulate short-term and long-term goals, strategies, priorities, and resource needs as well as identifying expected outcomes on how to measure success of the plan. The adopted equity plan will influence and guide the planning efforts of future project teams by providing a framework for equity and inclusion at ARC.

#### VISION:

Transform the future of all students and our community through inclusive, equitable education.

#### MISSION:

American River College places students first in providing an academically rich, inclusive environment that inspires critical thinking, learning and achievement, and responsible participation in the community.

American River College, serving the greater Sacramento region, offers education and support for students to strengthen basic skills, earn associate degrees and certificates, transfer to other colleges and universities, and achieve career as well as other academic and personal goals.

#### COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY:

American River College strives to uphold the dignity and humanity of every student and employee. We are committed to equity and social justice through equity-minded education, transformative leadership, and community engagement. We believe this commitment is essential to achieving our mission and enhancing our community.

#### INDIGENOUS LAND STATEMENT:

We acknowledge the land which we occupy today as the traditional home of the Maidu and Miwok tribal nations. These sovereign people have been the caretakers of this land since time immemorial. Despite centuries of genocide and occupation, the Maidu and Miwok continue as vibrant and resilient federally recognized tribes and bands. We take this opportunity to acknowledge the generations that have gone before as well as the present-day Maidu and Miwok people.

## THE PLANNING PROCESS

Beginning in August 2018, the chairs (Moon Johnson and Chao) pulled together a team of students, faculty, staff, and administrators; developed the project charter; gathered articles on higher education equity and social justice as well as samples of equity reports; and conducted a full day retreat to create team expectations, communication tools, and a common foundation. The team generated a timeline and actions steps for the process. The team hired a nationally known social justice facilitator, Gabriel Javier, to create a foundation on equity, social justice, and dialogue techniques as well as hosting a half-day training for the team. Meetings occurred multiple times per month throughout the fall semester.

### Information and Data Collection

The team began its information gathering and sharing by hosting a campus-wide Equity Town Hall during which the project was introduced and the team gathered input. The town hall had nearly 100 participants who shared experiences, needs, and ideas for the equity plan. (Please see [Appendix B](#) for details of the facilitation method.) The team identified stakeholder audiences and prepared for additional data collection. Nearly twenty listening sessions conducted as informal focus groups were held with college stakeholders with a focus on, but not limited to, marginalized communities. (Please see [Appendix C](#) for the list of stakeholder groups.) The team also created [abbreviated literature reviews](#) from national research on topics important to an institutional understanding of equity.

### Information and Document Analysis

A subgroup of the project team was assigned to review and analyze all documents. The sub-team was trained on basics of qualitative research by Tyler Rollins (Planning, Research & Technology). Co-chairs Chao and Moon Johnson created a list of themes, issues, and needs for ARC.

### Crafting the Recommendations

Once areas of opportunity were identified, seven sub-teams were tasked with focusing on one of the opportunities. Each sub-team then created recommendations based off examining campus-wide growth opportunities, examining research on effective practices, and benchmarking effective models at other institutions. The sub-teams brought recommendations to the larger team to gain feedback and to synthesize the recommendations into broader campus themes.

### Developing the Draft Plan

After months of information gathering, listening sessions, and analyzing national research, the team designed a draft plan that presented both a guiding foundation and recommendations arranged in seven categories. Key elements included:

- Guiding Foundation
  - Proposed phased approach
  - Proposed ARC definitions of equity-related terminology
  - Proposed equity lens
  - Proposed equity framework
- Opportunity Categories
  - Campus Climate
  - Organizational Structure
  - Human Resources
  - Communication
  - Instruction and Curriculum
  - Physical Spaces
  - Student Support

## A GUIDING FOUNDATION FOR INSTITUTIONAL EQUITY

The Institutional Equity Plan proposes definitions, an equity framework, and an equity lens that can serve as a solid foundation for creating shared meaning related to American River College's efforts to advance an equitable and just educational environment. This foundation is a prerequisite for implementing many of the recommendations that emerged during the planning process.

### Proposed Phased Approach

While the Institutional Equity Plan is a comprehensive document, it is suggested that it be realized through three phases. These phases should not be viewed as sequential; however, it would be prudent for parts of Phase I to be in process prior to moving into certain actions in subsequent phases. For example, the Equity Framework should be established before developing specific initiatives focused on student support. The diagram below depicts the proposed approach to implementing the recommendations based solely on the project team's planning perspective. It is recognized that the actual implementation strategy and action steps will be determined by college leadership after adoption of the institutional equity plan.



Figure 2: Proposed Phased Approach



## **Proposed ARC Definitions of Equity-Related Terminology**

The following definitions are provided as a shared point of reference for the terminology used throughout this plan. Upon adoption, the stated definitions could be made available to the college community to provide clarity to future implementation efforts and serve as reference material for future planning processes.

### **Social Justice**

Social justice is both a process and a goal. Social justice is a way of seeing and acting aimed at resisting unfairness and inequity while enhancing freedom and possibility for all. It focuses on how people, policies, practices, curricula, and institutions may be used to liberate rather than oppress others, particularly disproportionately impacted persons.

### **Equity**

Equity is focused on providing educational opportunities and support that meet the needs of the community, especially those who are historically underserved, marginalized, and/or disproportionately impacted. These communities include:

- People of color including Black and African American, Asian and Asian American, Pacific Islander American, Latinx, Native American, multiracial, and other people disadvantaged due to racial and ethnic identity
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and others (LGBTQ+)
- Women-identified and females
- Undocumented, DACA, AB540, and mixed-status families
- Low-income and first-generation
- Current and former foster youth
- People with disabilities
- Non-majority religious and spiritual groups
- Refugees and persons holding Special Immigrant Visas (SIV)
- International students
- People with limited use of the English language

### **Community Engagement**

ARC is committed to engaging our community in efforts to eliminate inequities and to promote positive social change.

### **Transformative Leadership**

ARC commits time and resources to supporting the development of courageous leadership. This includes the development of skills that address individual and systematic oppression.

### **Equity-Minded Education**

Equity-minded education values students and their life histories and experiences, making them central to the teaching and learning process. The histories, cultures, and contributions of diverse groups are included in the student experience. Learning environments and curricula directly address racism, sexism, classism, linguicism, ableism, ageism, heterosexism, religious intolerance, audism, xenophobia, and intersectionality.

### **Liberation**

Liberation is the act of dismantling systems of oppression and disrupting systems of power and privilege. This process includes the voices of those who have been excluded or marginalized. Liberation strives beyond equity through social justice to pursue true freedom.

## Proposed ARC Equity Framework and Lens

In order to create an equity framework and an equity lens to apply to individual work and the collective efforts of the institution, it is necessary to recognize that there is a developmental process to operationalizing values and ideals. At the same time, the college community is engaged in the demands of the day-to-day activity of an educational institution which requires direct and immediate response.

### Purpose of the framework

A frame/framework becomes the schema used to understand equity and to apply an institution's equity lens. According to Curtis Linton, the equity framework includes necessary beliefs, expectations and foundations educators need to guarantee that students succeed, rather than simply hoping that the students will conform to the teaching habits. The Center for Urban Education (CUE) at the University of Southern California expands upon this to outline a cognitive frame as an interpretive framework through which individuals make sense of phenomena and determine which questions may be asked, what information is collected, how problems are defined, and what action should be taken (Bensimon and Malcolm 2014, 101).

Defining equity is critical to any frame or framework. To American River College, equity is defined as providing educational opportunities and support that meet the needs of the community, especially those who are historically underserved, marginalized, or disproportionately impacted. The ARC equity statement affirms that the college is committed to equity and social justice through equity-minded education, transformative leadership, and community engagement. Further, the institution strives to uphold the dignity and humanity of every student and employee since that is essential to achieving its mission and enhancing its community.

Equity and equitable education assumes rigor and equitable outcomes for all groups. Curtis Linton, in *The Equity Framework*, states that the characteristics of equity *that are critical for student success include expectations for high achievement, rigor to provide the skills and learning that students need to achieve, relevancy to connect the learner with the instruction and the curriculum, and relationships for the student to believe, engage, and respond* (Linton 2014, 54).

### Organizational Approach

Equity is complex and experienced or demonstrated simultaneously on multiple levels: personally, interpersonally, organizationally or institutionally, and systemically. Because of that, the ARC framework is organized into three main areas of understanding: Personal Equity, Educational/Professional Equity, and Institutional Equity. These three areas are utilized to gain the personal and informational knowledge necessary to expand each individual's equity awareness and create an equity frame. It is expected that professional development is provided to answer these questions and apply the lens.

According to Curtis Linton, the author of *The Equity Framework*, personal equity is defined as centering yourself in equity. That centering includes claiming responsibility in a "journey to racial literacy" (Linton 2014, 70). Racial literacy is explained as the ability to talk with people in order to understand and address racially loaded controversies. (Bolgatz 2005, 1). Racial literacy is grounded in the idea that it is necessary to be fluent about issues of race and understand the power and impact it has on employees and students in the institution (Bolgatz 2005, 2).

Individuals at American River College have been exposed to the idea of personal equity and racial literacy through the concepts of racial and equity consciousness (The Center for Urban Education (CUE) at the University of Southern California (USC)). Racial and equity consciousness challenges individuals to become best practitioners through development of the ability to see racial inequities and their structural roots (Bensimon 2006, CUE Workshop). This skill set is acquired through developmental processes that include subjective and objective elements such as self-knowledge, empathy, a racial knowledge base, awareness of structural inequities and power, and practice.

Educational and professional equity is rooted in ensuring that professional actions are equitable and that equitable environments exist in which to create equitable outcomes. Institutional equity is about designing the educational policies, processes, and practices of an institution to guarantee students are provided with the individual support they need to reach and exceed a common standard or expectation (Linton 2011, 87, 111).

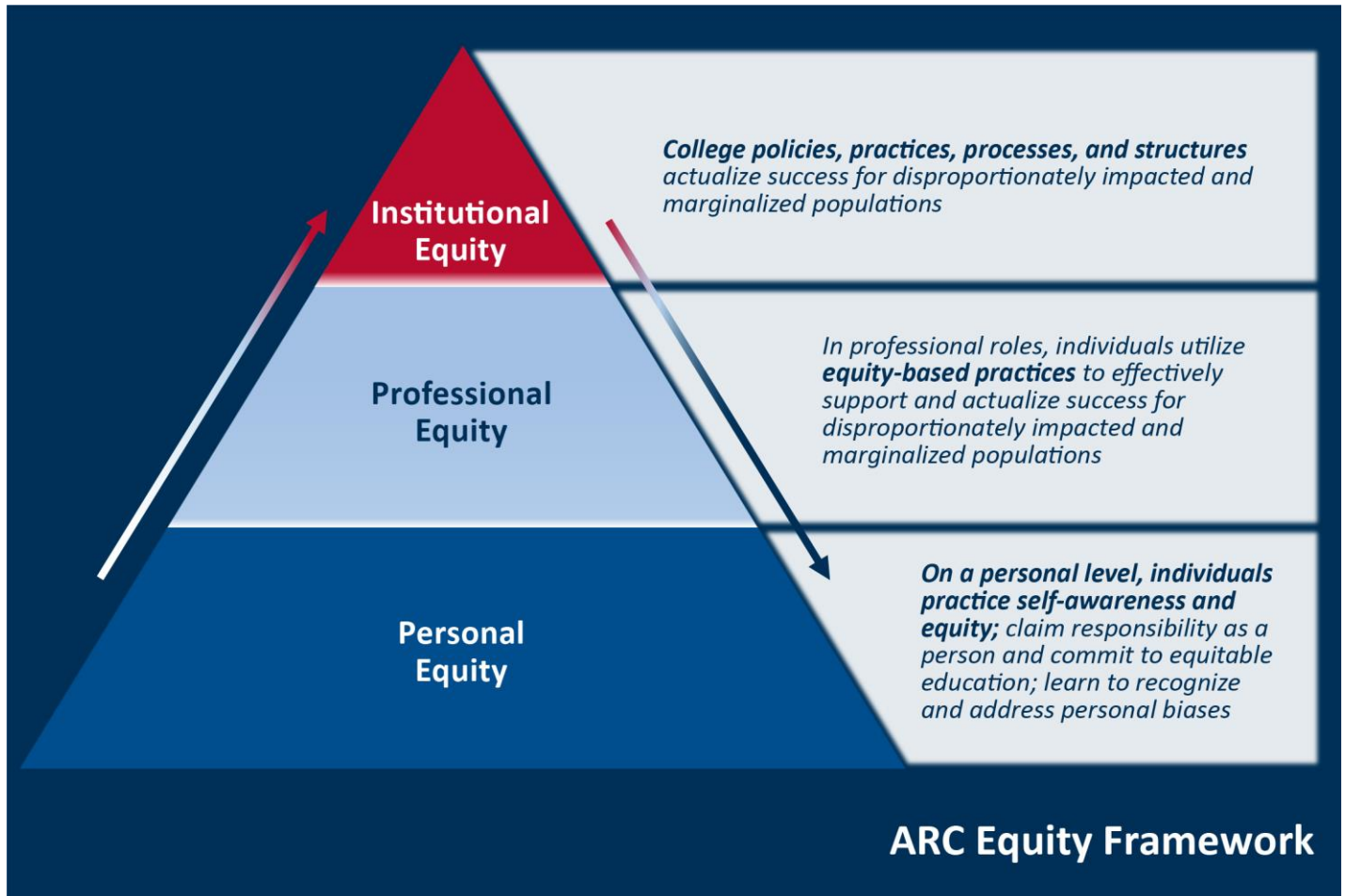


Figure 3: ARC Equity Framework

## Ascertaining Your Place in the Equity Frame

### Personal Equity: *(Who am I?)*

It is helpful to ask yourself the following questions:

- What is your level of commitment to equitable education? Are you interested or committed? To you, what is the difference between interested and committed?
- Do you know why equitable education matters to you?
- Do you actively work to learn about your own biases?
- Do you question yourself about your own identities, including your racial identity, and how your identities impact your work?
- Do you actively work to develop your equity consciousness (CUE) by exploring, understanding, and working with different forms of racism and isms, bias, power and positionality, oppression, and internalized oppression?
- Do you know your triggers and how to stay present when you are triggered?
- Do you engage in healing work so you can stay engaged in social justice and equity work?

(Curtis Linton, USC Center for Urban Education, Veronica Neal, DeAnza College, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, Chao)

### Educational/Professional Equity: *(What do we do?)*

It is helpful to ask ourselves the following questions:

- Do you provide all students with the individual support they need to reach and exceed a common standard or expectation? (Linton 2011, 87)
- Do you engage as an equitable “best practitioner”?
- Do we design our personal and institutional support systems and our professional environment to help actualize success for all students?

### Institutional Equity: *(Who are we?)*

It is helpful to ask the following questions developed from CUE's five principles of Equity by Design:

- Is there clarity in language, goals, and measures for all equitable practices?
- Is “equity-mindedness” the guiding paradigm for language and action?
- Are practices and policies designed to accommodate differences in the contexts of students' learning rather than to treat all students the same?
- Is ARC enacting equity through a continual process of learning, disaggregating data, and questioning assumptions about relevance and effectiveness?
- Is equity enacted as a pervasive institution- and system-wide principle (see reference below)?
- Is there visible leadership and accountability for equity?
- Is there accessible professional development in place to develop your equity frame and support your equity learning and equity success?

Reference: <http://cue.usc.edu/equity-by-design-five-principles/>

Once the frame or framework is set, the equity lens can be applied to systematically evaluate equity readiness and equity consciousness. The equity lens gauges whether institutional practices are designed to be equitable by providing educational opportunities and support that meet the needs of the community, especially those who are historically underserved, marginalized, or disproportionately impacted. The equity lens applies the following questions to all practices and products of an institution.

### Equity Lens for ARC

**Think about a specific policy, practice, or teaching methodology (pedagogy/andragogy). Consider these questions:**

1. Does the item:
  - utilize data available on disproportionately impacted populations at ARC?
  - identify racial/ethnic, disproportionately impacted, and marginalized groups **who** are affected?
  - identify racial/ethnic, disproportionately impacted, and marginalized groups and **how** they are affected?
  - address eliminating the opportunity gap and serving disproportionately impacted and marginalized populations?
  - reflect the equity framework or include key individuals who are part of the process who understand, have been trained in, and practice the equity framework?
2. How have you evaluated it for:
  - explicit racial consciousness from an equity perspective?
  - explanations or rationales from a deficit frame in order to eliminate and shift that deficit model to an equity frame?
  - content that addresses and is sourced from disproportionately impacted and marginalized communities?
3. How have stakeholders who are also members of the communities affected been intentionally involved?
4. What are the support systems for equitable outcomes?
5. What are the barriers to equitable outcomes?
6. Who is accountable for the outcomes?
7. Which strategic goal or goals will it advance?

### Example: Applying the Equity Lens

*Pretend that your department is participating in program review this year. You and your colleagues are expected to assess how effective the department has been and develop a plan for the future. How might you contemplate equity and identify any opportunities to improve equity in your program?*

- Has anyone in your program been trained to understand the [Equity Cognitive Frame](#) (as used by USC's CUE Institute); the deficit mindset; and disproportionately impacted populations affected by the program review report? If not, did you seek assistance from outside your program?\*
- Did you identify and plan strategies to address racial/ethnic disproportionately impacted groups?\*
- Thinking about your program review recommendations:
  - will any items affect disproportionately impacted groups?\*
  - will your recommendations help eliminate the [opportunity gap](#)?
  - have members of disproportionately impacted groups been intentionally included in the dialogue?\*
- Have you reviewed and responded to data provided on disproportionately impacted populations?\*

*\*Disproportionate impact occurs when an inequitable practice, policy, or approach limits access to key resources or otherwise hampers the academic success of a particular group when compared to all students [Title 5, §55502].*

Or to say it another way, **what is being done to ensure that all students, particularly students of color and other marginalized groups** (see p. 7), **have equitable opportunities and access to resources** (e.g., curriculum, instructional practices, services, academic supports, processes, policies) **that are designed to enable their success?**



## THEMES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The opportunities for growth encompass broad campus-wide issues tied to systemic inequities present within society and within educational systems. Moreover, the issues also include unique ways in which these social inequities surface at ARC. The following sections provide more detail concerning the opportunities related to each thematic category. It should be noted that many recommendations are closely related to multiple categories.

### Campus Climate

#### What ARC Learned: Opportunities Gleaned from Community Input

ARC opportunities related to campus climate include cultural contexts, subtle and overt messaging, and sometimes intangibles that all affect the overall feel and inclusion of people coming from marginalized and disadvantaged backgrounds. Marginalized populations often do not feel included or a part of the ARC community, and state they have limited or no physical symbols of belonging and inclusion that intentionally represent marginalized groups. These campus climate challenges emerged in the form of:

- Microaggressions and bias towards racial group members and members of other marginalized communities
- Christian centric practices and policies (food, holidays, and decor)
- Lack of knowledge and support for diverse religious identities and other marginalized communities
- Lack of diverse and equity-minded employees, resulting in limited mentor and role model opportunities
- Fear and concerns for safety (emotional and physical)
- Marginalized populations seen as problematic when they raise equity issues
- Lack of information on campus climate that is intentionally focused on marginalized groups and their experiences inclusive of faculty, staff, and student voices of those groups
- Lack of inclusion of many groups in previous campus climate data despite an interest in improving their outcomes
- Lack of tools for understanding campus climate and assessing progress

#### Planning Considerations

Campus climate speaks directly to the college culture. How do we create a cultural shift such that the college is defined by student success and equitable practice? This is a long-term commitment to change individual perspectives and methods as well as institutional beliefs, values, processes, and practices. Campus climate also speaks directly to how day-to-day practices are conducted to meet students' immediate needs and advance ARC's strategic goals.

Culture shift will require that everyone who works at ARC is supported with the tools to understand and implement equitable practices. Leaders must visibly model equitable behavior in their decisions, statements, and interactions. There must be clarity in communicating what equitable practices look like when implemented and what the consequences are for not being deliberately equitable. Change creates discomfort and different strategies will need to be employed whether that discomfort is caused by personal belief systems, a need for information, or how the institution communicates expectations and accountability. (Merton 1976, 189-216; Wood, M2C3 Webinar).

Even though there are varied approaches towards cultural and institutional change, it is hoped that the equity frame and lens will be a useful tool to achieving both. Shifting campus climate will be a slower movement and will include implementing equitable teaching and learning. Direct student support activities includes working with students as holistic beings with personal, emotional, and academic concerns that require guidance and support. It also encompasses developing a sense of belonging through community and connecting to a campus entity through relationships with staff, faculty, a peer mentor, and/or other employees.

Based on the planning process, the project team offers the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATIONS	COMMENTS AND SUGGESTED STRATEGIES
<b>Focus on welcoming disproportionately impacted communities at ARC</b>	There is a difference between welcoming marginalized communities to make college space more equitable and the practice of making “everyone” feel comfortable by maintaining the status quo so mainstream groups feel comfortable and remain unchallenged. The latter continues to marginalize and oppress underserved populations.
<b>Conduct a climate study and a corresponding climate audit that utilizes an equity lens</b>	<p>The climate study and corresponding climate audit would be a regular practice that includes all employees and all students and is planned every 3-5 years. The study would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ apply the equity frame and equity lens to assess all areas of American River College;</li> <li>▪ include marginalized/disproportionately impacted populations at the center of the study design, implementation, and assessment;</li> <li>▪ define and explore safety from marginalized populations’ perspectives;</li> <li>▪ define inclusion from marginalized populations’ perspectives;</li> <li>▪ be clear in the climate audit about the implicit and explicit practices that are gatekeeping components of our institutional culture.</li> </ul>
<b>Build institutional capacity in cultural awareness and equity consciousness</b>	<p>Some possible strategies might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prioritizing training and professional development</li> <li>▪ Applying an equity lens to all event planning and activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ contemplate whether communities see themselves reflected in the social events on campus</li> <li>○ consider individual events (speaker identities) and patterns of events as well as speakers’ content, perspectives, reference points, and inclusive language</li> <li>○ involve police officers in community with disproportionately impacted populations—out of uniform and without guns; based on consent upon the community</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Creating visibility for marginalized groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Are there spaces to support marginalized groups?</li> <li>○ Are the fliers/murals/spaces on campus composed of representative images?</li> <li>○ Can students and faculty see themselves anywhere on campus?</li> <li>○ Do marginalized community members see themselves represented in leadership positions, as full-time faculty members (teaching in all time slots), and as staff members?</li> <li>○ Are there visible events that include music/art/food created by and reflective of the ARC population? These might include opportunities to have specific cultural foods utilizing businesses/organization that are owned and operated by those in the specific community as well as more community and family inclusive events</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Crafting and implementing inclusive policies for and professional development on religious practices and holidays (e.g., prayers and classrooms; holidays and Christmas)</li> <li>▪ Developing personal leave (including students) for cultural and religious reasons in consultation with labor organizations if appropriate</li> <li>▪ Creating and promoting a “Knowledge Base” of accessible literature in the library (on campus and online) for any students or faculty who need information about social justice issues</li> <li>▪ Launching a “Learning Center for Equity”, a collaborative teaching and learning workspace that faculty and staff can utilize to work together and discuss issues at any given time</li> <li>▪ Schedule more collaborative events (e.g., trainings, educational forums, recreational/social interaction) for administrators, staff, faculty, and students with visible administrator presence</li> </ul>

**For additional information, please see recommendations in the following closely related categories:**

Human Resources  
Instruction and Curriculum  
Physical Spaces  
Student Support

## Related Strategic Goals:

Strategic Goal 1 - Students First  
Strategic Goal 2 - Clear and Effective Paths  
Strategic Goal 3 - Exemplary Teaching, Learning, & Working Environment  
Strategic Goal 4 - Vibrancy & Resiliency



## Organizational Structure

### What ARC Learned: Opportunities Gleaned from Community Input

ARC has the opportunity to establish systems that prioritize equity and commit to inclusive strategic efforts. When gathering community input, many of the suggestions focused on campus leadership and accountability for equity, transparent college processes, and the ways departments and divisions collaborate on equity efforts across the college. Challenges related to organizational structure appeared in the following forms:

- A need for a campus leader/body and campus center/office to hold employees and processes accountable to equity
- Insufficient resources in place to support a campus equity leader and center/office
- A need for campus direction on focusing equity priorities within and between instruction, administration, and student services
- A need for structured ways to embed equity into governance processes, committees, project teams, and other decision-making bodies
- A lack of collaborative efforts between campus divisions.

### Planning Considerations

American River College began our equity planning in 2016 with the ARC Redesign and the acknowledgement that “every system is exquisitely designed to produce the result it gets.” The importance of equity by design is not lost upon our college. These recommendations regarding organizational structure provide opportunity to create systems that prioritize and institutionalize equity and inclusion and to create accountability within these systems.

Based on the planning process, the project team offers the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATIONS	COMMENTS AND SUGGESTED STRATEGIES
<b>Cultivate a clear sense of accountability for making institutional equity a priority</b>	<p>Mechanisms are needed to provide leadership and accountability. For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A chief equity officer position could be created at the cabinet level reporting to the college president. This role could potentially oversee, among other activities:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Equity climate studies and audits</li> <li>○ Equity reporting process for anyone with equity concerns (a non-punitive process focusing on addressing situational needs and informed by campus climate results; would provide closure to student and employee reports)</li> <li>○ Ombudsperson or other transparency mechanisms</li> <li>○ Equity response or consultation team</li> <li>○ Accountability investigations through job descriptions and performance evaluations so that employees expand their understanding and application of equity and social justice; union collaborations and conflicts would need to be considered</li> <li>○ Consistent messaging for moving to a culture of empowerment and inclusion</li> <li>○ Facilitation of the proficient use of the ARC equity framework and lens</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Sufficient resources could be allocated so additional staff can be put in place with the knowledge and awareness to respond to equity issues, cultural sensitivity questions, inclusion practices, and discrimination concerns.</li> <li>▪ An equity caucus could be formed within committees and workgroups to embed equity perspective in the institutional structure. The caucus should have at least three members to actively move forward equity issues. The model could also be used in governing bodies/senates if willing and interested.</li> </ul>
<b>Foster greater collaboration related to equity issues and interests</b>	<p>Some potential options to consider include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create a group such as an equity response team, equity consultation team, or presidential equity advisory committee with sufficient resources to address equity concerns that arise within ARC. This group would be available to the President's Executive Staff (PES), Executive Leadership Team (ELT), and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) for consultation and could work in conjunction with those facilitating professional development. Composition could involve administrators, faculty, classified staff, and students.</li> <li>▪ Work towards engaging more students in all levels of decision making. Prioritize inclusion of students on all committees and increase incentives (i.e., stipends, childcare, books, food, and priority registration) for participation. Strengthen connections between students and administration through inclusion.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that populations affected (as well as data from focus groups and national research) are included in the process of making decisions and designing initiatives.</li> </ul>
<b>Extend transparency</b>	<p>Suggested means to increasing transparency include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Arrange for an officially appointed person/body to conduct equity audits for all college policies and practices including regulations, decision-making/reporting, accountability, and resource allocation.</li> <li>▪ Allocate consistent and transparent resources for equity projects, programs, centers, and other entities that serve disproportionately impacted student populations. Inconsistent funding and support for equity-related projects results in loss of time and momentum whenever new funding and support must be sourced.</li> <li>▪ Simplify administrative processes so that they can be clearly communicated. This will enable all employees to easily learn processes and help guide students.</li> <li>▪ Examine current institutional projects or initiatives from an equity lens. Potential items for review include Pathways (clear student pathways), Achieve at ARC (clear student processes), and Ad Astra implementation (informed and efficient scheduling process).</li> </ul>

**For additional information, please see recommendations in the following closely related categories:**

Campus Climate  
Human Resources  
Communication  
Instruction and Curriculum

**Related Strategic Goals:**



## Human Resources

### What ARC Learned: Opportunities Gleaned from Community Input

ARC opportunities related to human resources include hiring processes, employee retention, employee onboarding, and training and professional development. Human resource challenges showed in some of the following forms:

- A need for universal and coordinated professional development for employees, especially on equity and social justice issues and practices.
  - Classified staff, including operations staff and temporary classified, student staff, and adjunct faculty are often left out of trainings that do exist
- A need for universal onboarding of employees across classifications (full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, classified staff, managers, student workers)
- Extremely limited mechanisms to hold employees accountable to understanding equity and addressing inequities
- Equity in hiring practices with a continued need to diversify pools and improve current trainings to ensure that equitable screening criteria is actually utilized in the hiring process.
- Challenges with retaining people from marginalized populations:
  - Marginalized employees are often tasked with a burden of leading diversity projects, mentoring students, and/or being a spokesperson. This results in burn-out, poor evaluations, and inequitable duties.
  - Lack of processes in place for reporting and managing bias incidents; current discrimination processes are not well communicated.
  - Need for training on how to support people of color and other marginalized identities in order to mediate issues in equitable ways when identity and power is involved.

### Planning Considerations

Current human resource policies and practices should be improved to be more equity-focused and supportive of marginalized groups. As the face and the heart of American River College, employees are our most valuable resources. Employees need to reflect student populations and be culturally competent and responsive to support students' identities.

Ongoing professional development is essential to shifting the institution to an equity-based, student-first focus. Training should equip employees to understand, develop, practice, and become equitable practitioners. Time and space is needed for employees to be trained and engage in professional development as part of their daily work.

RECOMMENDATIONS	COMMENTS AND SUGGESTED STRATEGIES
<b>Offer training and professional development to all employees specific to equity and social justice</b>	<p>Employees would benefit from a universal foundation as well as scaffolded offerings related to equity and social justice. Implementation strategies might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Align professional development efforts with the Institutional Equity Plan.</li> <li>▪ Coordinate across the Center for Teaching &amp; Learning and other units providing professional development to infuse equity and social justice options into offerings particularly where all employees are gathered and/or required. Encourage cooperative efforts to facilitate training for ARC employees to gain proficiency in using the equity frame and lens</li> <li>▪ Develop a visible, accessible, user-friendly, and centralized place for equity-based professional development and employee collaboration</li> <li>▪ Create an in-house Professional Development Facilitation Team with expertise in equity and social justice; allocate consistent funding so that their knowledge base and ability to step in for each other can be developed and strengthened.</li> <li>▪ Design teaching academies that address methods that have proven effective for community colleges (e.g., student-centered learning, equity mindset) to ensure adjunct and full-time faculty have opportunity to receive training on teaching methods that promote equity. Full funding (e.g., faculty course relief and pay) would foster widespread participation.</li> </ul>



- Increase efforts to include and encourage part-time faculty participation in professional development opportunities.
- Guarantee comparable levels of training for classified employees, including operational staff.
- Require training for leadership groups, Classified Senate, Academic Senate, and managers
- Create a culture of professional development including personalized plans for each employee.
- Encourage managers to recommend and provide adequate financial support to target participation in professional development by staff and faculty.
- Be inclusive of adjunct faculty and temporary staff when determining the resources and support they need to help promote equity.
- Publicize resources available for professional development (e.g., post in an accessible location) and utilize a simple, well-supported application process
- Support the use of equity facilitation teams

See also Professional Development Topics in [Appendix A](#).

### Nurture the essential conditions to hire and retain people of color

Hiring and retaining people of color is reflective of the policies and processes of an institution, as well as its cultural climate. It is important to be mindful that diversity in representation does not indicate how people of color experience the campus or whether they will remain. Equitable policies and procedures focus on the hiring, inclusion, retention, and success of employees. Some potential strategies for developing the essential conditions are:

- Specify equity understanding and being culturally competent in all job descriptions
- Provide sufficient training at all levels so employees regularly demonstrate a proficient understanding of equity and cultural competency
- Create collective identity-based mentoring with a team of mentors and mentees for community building
- Hire equity-focused employees, at all levels, who are people of color and/or from marginalized communities
- Hire more culturally competent faculty, part-time and full-time (including allocation to primetime slots), from marginalized communities
- Enhance *Equity Representative* and *Hiring the Best* training to include the proposed equity framework and lens
- Expect all hiring committees to discuss equity and social justice before beginning the hiring process. Instill common understanding among interview committees of what equity is and what it means to be equity minded in the hiring process. Move towards more extensive equity training for all hiring committee members.
- Provide employee orientation and onboarding that includes foundational equity and social justice training. Basic training could then be followed by an equity and professional development plan that is more specific to individual job functions.
- Deliver specialized training for administrators, managers, and others in supervisory roles covering topics of cultural competence, cultural humility, equity, and supervision of people from marginalized communities.
- Enhance institutional support for employees' identity groups perhaps supported through college service or flex.

**For additional information, please see recommendations in the following closely related categories:**

Campus Climate  
Organizational Structure  
Communication

### Related Strategic Goals:

Strategic Goal 1- Students First  
Strategic Goal 2- Clear and Effective Paths  
Strategic Goal 3- Exemplary Teaching, Learning, & Working Environment  
Strategic Goal 4- Vibrancy & Resiliency

## Communication

### What ARC Learned: Opportunities Gleaned from Community Input

Clear and consistent communication is critical for equity to be successful at our institution, both on an interpersonal and an institutional level. Some of the challenges in implementing equitable policies and practices at ARC exist due to unstructured communications mechanisms. ARC can improve communication methods, tools, and structures to ensure the campus community has a better understanding of basic principles and activities around equity. Some of the communication challenges, and related opportunities, surfaced in the following forms:

- Unclear vision, philosophy, framework, and practice of what equity means at ARC
  - Many employees struggle to define equity and social justice and are unaware of what equity and social justice looks like in practice.
- Equity efforts, resources, and events are not broadly and effectively communicated across campus to students, faculty, staff, and administrators
- Lack of ability to access information on finding specific needs and solutions for marginalized student populations
- Limited employee knowledge of resources, policies, and/or support services for marginalized students
- Minimal intentional sharing of business processes or other procedures and informal withholding of information heavily impacts people who are “outsiders,” marginalized employees and students, or are new to the institution. Many people are then uncertain or unable to specify why they are feeling welcome and are not successful in completing tasks.



## Planning Considerations

Clear communication at all levels of the institution and consistent messaging from the leadership about equity is a requirement for a successful institutional cultural shift that is equitable, inclusive, and credible. There is a frequent disconnect between what is written as official college policy and the messages (intended and unintended) that members of the college community receive. Transparent communication about college operations is an important part of an equitable culture. Though many at the college would like to assume that information is accessible to everyone at the institution, providing or withholding information are ways that people are included or pushed out of institutions. For our disproportionately impacted communities, the balance of information, lack of information, and misinformation has historically been used as a tool to oppress. It is important that as an institution, gatekeeping is eliminated and information is clear and accessible so that trust and community can develop at ARC.

RECOMMENDATIONS	COMMENTS AND SUGGESTED STRATEGIES
<b>Operationalize the shared definitions, framework, and lens</b> (see pages 7-10)	Once adopted, publicize the definitions of equity-related terminology, the equity framework, and the equity lens so that these tools become part of everyone's policies, practices, and pedagogy. Ongoing training should be offered to the entire campus on how to develop the equity framework and how to apply the equity lens.
<b>Develop and execute a communication plan focused on equity</b>	Create a communication plan around equity in collaboration with the College Information Officer, Instruction, Student Services, and Administration. Staff and students from disproportionately impacted and marginalized communities should be included in designing the plan. Methods might utilize the web site, newsletter, social media, regular talking points, regular town halls, intranet of resources, and resources for employee on-boarding.
<b>Assess and collaboratively revise college policies and procedures</b>	Collaboratively rewrite college policies and procedures into easily understandable formats and utilize the communication plan to promote the new versions. A starting point for considering policies and procedures might focus on onboarding, registration, financial aid, applying for student jobs, business services, and human resources. Documents and related communication plans should be transparent and readily accessible. Sharing this information will enhance institutional effectiveness, particularly for students and employees from marginalized communities.
<b>Infuse equity communication by leaders throughout the organization</b>	There should be more communication from college, division, department, and unit leaders in support of equity through daily operations and sharing of information.

**For additional information, please see recommendations in the following closely related categories:**

Campus Climate  
Organizational Structure

### Related Strategic Goals:

Strategic Goal 1 - Students First  
Strategic Goal 2 - Clear and Effective Paths  
Strategic Goal 3 - Exemplary Teaching, Learning, & Working Environment  
Strategic Goal 4 - Vibrancy & Resiliency





## Instruction and Curriculum

### What ARC Learned: Opportunities Gleaned from Community Input

Instructional opportunities surfaced from the identification of challenges occurring within classrooms that create a significant impact on marginalized students. The instructional aspects appear in the following forms:

- The curriculum is not inclusive enough of students from marginalized communities and there are minimal efforts to infuse equity into curriculum.
- Lack of support for instructors to increase their ability to teach marginalized populations, promote teaching methods that promote equity, and develop an equity-minded lens.
- Limited offerings of equity-focused courses (e.g. ethnic studies and gender studies), and those that do exist are not promoted adequately.
- Some instructors have limited awareness of the performance of various racial groups in their classrooms.
- Course time and availability inhibit some students' ability to take classes that they need or prefer. This can result in marginalized students taking classes in which they are less likely to succeed.
- Due to large class sizes and large class loads it is difficult for instructors to take the time necessary to adequately support students from marginalized communities.

### Planning Considerations

One of the first areas to move into action and practice is within classrooms, since that is where students spend the majority of their time. The instructional theme can be further defined as opportunities related to inclusive curriculum, data, and learning communities. Further, the foundation of all instructional opportunities is based on ongoing equity-focused professional development for faculty and efforts to increase faculty diversity which were discussed under the previous Human Resources category.

RECOMMENDATIONS	COMMENTS AND SUGGESTED STRATEGIES
<b>Provide faculty with resources to help prioritize curriculum that is inclusive of students from marginalized communities</b>	<p>Because an inclusive curriculum is essential for promoting student success, the college should provide resources for faculty, both adjunct and full-time, to help them prioritize curriculum that is inclusive of students from marginalized communities. Some strategies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Availability of ongoing and graduated trainings, course relief, conferences, pedagogy groups, and other mechanisms to support development of inclusive curriculum</li> <li>▪ Instructors of all disciplines should provide content from various sources; include content and contributions to the field from minoritized communities.</li> <li>▪ Move toward establishing a requirement of the inclusion of contributions of minoritized communities living in the United States as a condition of the curriculum approval process.</li> <li>▪ Increase the number of courses available that focus on marginalized communities in the curriculum/catalog. This will lead to increased understanding about issues faced by marginalized groups including race, racism, ethnicity, culture, ability, and gender and gender identity. Courses should also be offered at times that are widely available to students from marginalized communities.</li> <li>▪ Create opportunities for students to voice their preferences for specific classes, class times, and class content.</li> </ul>
<b>Ensure faculty have access to information (data) necessary for promoting the success of students from marginalized communities</b>	<p>Many faculty may be unaware of the performance of students by racial/ethnic groups and other identities in their courses. It is recommended that the college provide faculty with information necessary for promoting the success of students from marginalized communities. The college could make data widely available and easily accessible regarding student performance by demographic groups by division, department, and by individual course for instructors.</p>
<b>Sustain and support instructional approaches for supporting students of color</b>	<p>The Learning Communities (Umoja Sakhu, Puente, and PRISE) provide a unique and collaborative approach to supporting Black and African American, Latinx, and Asian American and Pacific Islander American students. It is recommended to sustain and support those courses aligned with the Learning Communities and the memorandums of understanding from statewide organizations. The Learning Communities provide positive cultural identity and they are important in fostering student success, creating a greater sense of belonging, and promoting student engagement. ARC's Learning Communities are essential to providing a community and "cultural space" in the classroom through their culturally relevant courses, program activities, and counseling support. Learning Communities should be staffed and resourced to effectively serve the students involved with the programs.</p>

**For additional information, please see recommendations in the following closely related categories:**

Human Resources  
Physical Space  
Student Support

#### **Related Strategic Goals:**

Strategic Goal 1 - Students First  
Strategic Goal 3 - Exemplary Teaching, Learning, & Working Environment



## Physical Spaces

### What ARC Learned: Opportunities Gleaned from Community Input

ARC has opportunities to improve the physical spaces that create barriers to success and inclusion. Barriers emerge in the following ways:

- Some facilities could be improved to better meet the needs of students with disabilities.
  - Buildings, pathways, signs, and infrastructure do not always support people with disabilities.
- Spaces around campus can be unwelcoming and unsafe for transgender and non-binary people.
- Limited amount of space has been dedicated to supporting marginalized students (academic support, community space, group meeting space)
- Classrooms often do not support changing seating configurations and non-lecture teaching styles, which impacts students with disabilities and non-traditional learners.
- Limited availability of child-friendly spaces (Library, Learning Resource Center, study spaces, classrooms, etc.)

### Planning Considerations

The physical space at ARC's campus has a direct impact on students' ability to succeed both in and outside of the classroom. Opportunities focus on assessment and improvements for people with disabilities, ongoing development of facilities for transgender and non-binary people, and evaluation and enhancing spaces for marginalized student communities.



RECOMMENDATIONS	COMMENTS AND SUGGESTED STRATEGIES
<b>Improve physical space to promote success for people with disabilities</b>	<p>Make efforts for ongoing improvement of buildings, pathways, signs, and infrastructure to fully support people with disabilities. Improvements might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More benches around campus for people to rest, more shelters, covered waiting area is being created for para-transit, study abroad programs accessible to students with disabilities, captioning, enhanced ASL interpretation, and improved assistive technology throughout the campus (e.g., voice recognition software, eye-tracking software for computers, library databases)</li> <li>▪ Create a policy that mandates a campus-wide audit on accessibility and universal design. Assign responsibility to a specific position or office so that it can be regularly scheduled. Funds should be made available to realize recommendations.</li> <li>▪ Conduct an ADA evaluation every three-five years involving key staff, such as facilities employees, the ADA officer, and DSPS representatives.</li> </ul>
<b>Expand classrooms with flexible seating configurations</b>	<p>Classrooms that support changing seating configurations and non-lecture teaching styles can improve experiences for students with disabilities and non-traditional learners. When enrolling courses, consider the numbers and impact on students using wheelchairs. Some classes need fewer students. Classroom furniture should allow for moving chairs into different layouts to address different lecture and learning styles.</p>
<b>Foster a more welcoming and safe physical environment for transgender and non-binary people</b>	<p>Spaces around campus need to be improved to be more welcoming and safe for transgender and non-binary people. Suggested strategies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Supporting the Pride Center in assessing buildings across campus.</li> <li>▪ Appointing an administrator (or a designated office or person) to be responsible for managing a building to work with Facilities and the Pride Center to assess their spaces. Each building should have a point person who is monitoring the climate of the building.</li> <li>▪ A policy needs to be in place to ensure there are adequate gender-neutral bathrooms, locker rooms, and any gendered spaces are provided.</li> <li>▪ LGBTQ inclusive and affirming signage needs to be evaluated and put in place.</li> </ul>
<b>Dedicate more space needs to supporting marginalized students</b>	<p>More space needs to be dedicated to supporting marginalized students including academic support, community space, and group meeting space. The current space is limited and cannot fully support the needs of all populations. Ideas for addressing space needs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A facilities evaluation should occur with the Hub, Equity Programs, Learning Communities, and the Native American Resource Center.</li> <li>▪ Student-involved focus groups and data collection should occur to understand holistic student needs including academic, personal, and community building aspects. Spaces should be provided with adequate staffing to create, maintain support and foster holistic development.</li> <li>▪ Audit each existing/new student space and develop plans to ensure that all spaces continue to focus on inclusion.</li> </ul>
<b>Adapt the physical environment to better support student parents</b>	<p>ARC should improve the physical environment to better support student parents. A task force/working group could be assembled to address needs of student parents. They could look into more resources for childcare; audit campus spaces on child friendliness, with a specific focus on academic study areas that are child-friendly; and create tips, actions, and recommendations on making offices more child-friendly.</p>

**For additional information, please see recommendations in the following closely related categories:**

n/a

#### Related Strategic Goals:

Strategic Goal 1- Students First

Strategic Goal 2- Clear and Effective Paths

Strategic Goal 3- Exemplary Teaching, Learning, & Working Environment

Strategic Goal 4- Institutional Effectiveness

## Student Support

### What ARC Learned: Opportunities Gleaned from Community Input

Overall, students coming from marginalized backgrounds face additional challenges both inside and outside of the classroom. Moreover, ARC has limited or non-existent resources to support these students which affects well-being, sense of belonging, and eventually a lack of academic success and retention. Student support opportunities surfaced in some of the following forms:

- Students feeling unsafe, especially during the night (women, undocumented, LGBTQ+, people of color, Muslim women, religiously minoritized identities, and others)
- Marginalized communities feeling targeted and/or discriminated against
- Limited mental health services, specifically those catering to marginalized students
  - Concerns that upcoming mental health services will be inclusive of marginalized groups
  - No comprehensive resource guide to mental health services
- Limited focus on financial issues and basic needs such as housing and food insecurity; little support for the unemployed/underemployed
- Challenges with students affording textbooks
- Minimal formal onboarding for marginalized students
- Academic support services can sometimes be unwelcoming and not inclusive for marginalized groups (e.g., Black and Native American students feeling unsupported)
- Lack of identified support systems for specific students such as refugee students, limited-speaking English students, religious minorities, homeless, UndocuScholar, and others
- Not enough designated support staff that are consistent throughout the student's academic career

### Planning Considerations

As marginalized students face obstacles related to institutional and societal injustices and inequities, intentional student support services need to be provided. Cultural and systemic barriers affect success, persistence, and retention. It is recommended that the current level of support be increased. When planning methods to support marginalized students, the following standards from Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) may be used as a model:

#### CAS Standards & Guidelines on Supporting Students in Multicultural Programs

- Assess the needs of students set priorities among those needs, and respond to the extent that the number of students, facilities, and resources permit.
- Orient marginalized students to the college.
- Assist marginalized students to determine and assess their educational goals and academic skills.
- Provide support services to help marginalized students to achieve educational goals and attain or refine academic skills necessary to perform adequately in the classroom.
- Promote the intellectual, career, social, and moral development of the students.
- Promote and deepen each marginalized students' understanding of their own culture, identity, and heritage.
- Provide training in leadership skills for marginalized students and those seeking to assist them.
- Offer or identify appropriate mentors and role models.

Focused needs of ARC marginalized students:

- Developing community, sense of belonging, and connections to a campus entity
- Connection to a staff, faculty, and peer mentors
- Academic guidance
- Academic support
- Personal and emotional support



Based on the planning process, the project team offers the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATIONS	COMMENTS AND SUGGESTED STRATEGIES
<b>Increase planning and training related to hate and bias incidents</b>	A comprehensive process, response plan, and communication plan should be created to enhance safety and address hate/bias incidents and crimes. Comprehensive training should occur with LRCCPD to ensure they have an understanding of the needs and experiences of marginalized communities.
<b>Promote collaborative planning at the department/unit-level</b>	More intentional collaboration focused on meeting needs of marginalized populations would be beneficial. Departments/units such as the Learning Resource Center, Library, Los Rios Police, Counseling, Health and Wellness, and others should develop specific plans of action on meeting disproportionately impacted student needs. All employees should have regular training on equity and working with marginalized students. Plans should be regular, collaborative, and well-communicated.
<b>Expand mental health services focused on marginalized students</b>	Increase mental health services and there should be an intentional focus on more vulnerable populations such as students of color, LGBTQ+, and UndocuScholars. Thorough training should occur for providers and intentional collaborations should be created.
<b>Plan to strategically and comprehensively meet basic needs for students</b>	Students need intentional and coordinated education on managing finances, accessing community, state, and campus financial resources. An entity (person, office, or committee) should be charged with guiding, educating, and leading efforts to address basic needs (i.e., food, housing, healthcare, employment, and childcare) and promote financial literacy. This entity should foster collaboration across campus and the community as well as communicating information regularly across campus. Aspects to consider include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Exploration and institutionalization of sustained hunger resources</li> <li>▪ Caseworker model to refer students to campus and community resources</li> <li>▪ Financial literacy courses for incoming students to understand how to navigate financial insecurity, utilize state and local resources, and manage financial resources</li> <li>▪ Contemplate Amarillo College methods as an example of success, which includes food insecurity, housing insecurity, and unemployment</li> </ul>
<b>Enhance and increase onboarding efforts for marginalized students</b>	Ensure new student programs (Get Connected) are focused on marginalized populations. Suggested strategies include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creating a bridge program intentionally focused on disproportionately impacted groups. The program should focus on academic goals, career exploration, and holistic student support.</li> <li>▪ Ensure onboarding processes connect marginalized students to a community (student success team or home-bases).</li> <li>▪ Provide intentional connections to learning communities, student success teams, categorical programs, TRIO programs, student clubs, equity-focused programs, counseling and instructional faculty, peer mentors, and administrators.</li> </ul>
<b>Allocate regular staffing in physical spaces designed for marginalized communities</b>	As space is developed for marginalized communities, permanent staffing should be allocated in order to build trust, relationships, knowledge and skills, and consistency. Specific groups (refugee, religious minorities/interfaith, English Language Learners; specific racial and ethnic groups) need identified contacts (people, committees, office, etc.) and that should be communicated effectively beginning in the outreach phase. Regular tutoring and writing support should be provided in the space (including drop-in and extended final exam hours). The space and staffing model should be designed to meet the holistic (academic, psycho-social, emotional, financial, spiritual, physical, mental) needs of students.

**For additional information, please see recommendations in the following closely related categories:**

Campus Climate  
Human Resources  
Physical Space

#### **Related Strategic Goals:**

Strategic Goal 1- Students First

## ANTICIPATED NEXT STEPS

The Institutional Equity Plan aims to improve campus climate, equity-focused efforts, and the ability to support, retain, and graduate students coming from disproportionately impacted and marginalized backgrounds. The document will be submitted through established governance channels for consideration and potential adoption.

### Limitations

While this plan does suggest general resources that might address identified needs, the narrative intentionally avoids delineating specific resources or detailed outcomes that would be used to measure plan success. Given the philosophical scope of the plan, project timeline, and other institutional processes, it is believed that those involved in implementing the plan will be better situated to identify the exact resource needs and finesse the data required to measure success. Based on the suggested strategies, the institution might anticipate the following types of resource requests:

- New or reallocated staffing
- Training materials and communication tools
- Professional development activities and offerings
- Facility reconfiguration and equipment
- Participation incentives and/or reassign time
- Expertise to conduct various studies and audits
- Increased funding for equity-related projects, programs, and activities
- Research support
- Other items to be determined

The general expectation is that serving disproportionately impacted populations and marginalized groups in the ways outlined in this plan will result in increased success rates, as measured by the Student Equity and Achievement (SEA) indicators and by creating similar success rates between student populations. The aspiration is to move beyond SEA reporting groups and create an inclusive institution for marginalized populations.

### Implementation

The project team that created the Institutional Equity Plan has provided actionable recommendations, but will not necessarily be the implementing team. College leadership will determine the actual implementation methods, timing, and allocation of resources. As noted previously, the project team recommends a phased approach that concludes with institutionalization of the plan. Once adopted through the governance process, the plan would ideally be housed in a specific unit or position that is charged with ensuring that it is being actively implemented. Institutionalization should include these factors:

- Accountability: Responsible units are held accountable for implementation and progress.
- Systems for measuring outcomes: Initiatives and efforts are evaluated and outcomes measured to ensure progress is occurring. Adjustments should be made regularly to continuously improve and respond to changing needs.
- Transparency and communication: Regular communication occurs to the campus community about progress of the Institutional Equity Plan. This should come in the form of annual reports and annual or semi-annual town halls.

### Future Planning

The Institutional Equity Plan is a dynamic and living document, and groups implementing it should be involved in any adjustments and evolution. The version developed in 2018-2019 aimed at offering recommendations for a three-to-five year period. By year three of this plan, campus leadership should evaluate the need to convene a group to assess the current plan and participate in the next planning cycle (scheduled for 2023-24 per the ARC Integrated Planning Guide).



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## APPENDIX A: Professional Development Topics

The following requests and suggestions emerged from the college community during town halls and listening sessions.

### Specific Training for Administration:

- Use of pronouns and gender identity
- Using terms related to equity
- How can mid-level managers advocate for equity with different constituencies up and down the chain?
- How do you talk about race sensitively?

### Trainings needed for all employees:

- Having difficult conversations, conflict resolution, non-Violent communication, and interpersonal Communication
- Addressing/speaking to controversial issues; equity & social justice
- Cultural competence and cultural humility
- Microaggressions
- How students can be triggered and how to work with that in the classroom
- Complex identities and intersectionalities
- Accessibility and accommodations
- Learning Styles and modalities
- Implicit bias
- Consequences of treating students like they are second class citizens from a structural perspective
- Stereotype threat
- Gender identity and pronouns
- Issues and resources for UndocuScholars
- Demographics and identities of ARC students
- Faculty training for how to support ALL students particularly disproportionately impacted and marginalized students—adjunct and full time faculty
- Streamlined onboarding training and customer service training so classified staff clearly know how to help students
- Strength based rather than deficit model perspectives on students
- Transparent and simple document training and processes
- Holistic student and holistic practitioner
- Privilege, power, and social justice theory
- Racial Consciousness including a clearly articulated spectrum of racial consciousness
- Academic freedom parameters—what are they?
- Guidelines to Student Privacy Rights
- How to help students w/out crossing privacy lines
- How to engage students who have limited time on campus
- Free speech versus hate speech and how to address it
- Better equity training for hiring
- How to Supervise
- Social justice, inclusivity, and equity
- Training for able-bodied people not to use disabled restroom stalls
- The effects of W/I/F on student's experiences
- Allyship training
- Whiteness and racial Consciousness
- Interfaith Dialogues
- You Tube Series "Out of Context"
- Training to move us from a culture of gatekeeping to a culture of empowerment
- Best practices for working with marginalized students, such as the importance of demonstrating **authentic care** as well as the following research informed practices: providing proactive academic progress monitoring, publicly praising students, having high expectations for them, expressing belief in their ability to succeed, and avoiding the cultural deficit perspective where students are blamed for their lack of success (Wood, Harris, & White).
- Teaching academies for adjuncts and full-time faculty that address effective methods for community colleges

## APPENDIX B: Town Hall Facilitation Guide



### Equity Plan Town Hall Facilitation Guide

- *Round 1 (60 minutes)*
- Welcome everyone to your table
- Have each person sign in (sheet provided)
- Introduce yourself and note taker and pronouns you use.
- Have each member introduce themselves, pronouns, and why they came today.
- Share we will be taking notes, but not using anyone's names.
- Ensure each person has the handout with questions and definitions on it.
- Read through terms and concepts: Take turns reading each bullet as a group.
- Share community guidelines and agreements:
  - Balancing listening and speaking out.
    - Share airtime.
    - Aim to understand first before being understood.
  - Challenge ideas not the person.
  - Understand how your identity and privileges you hold impacts the group dynamics.
  - Are there other guidelines you would like to add?
- Questions
  - What do you need for ARC to be an equitable campus?
    - What do you need to be successful at ARC?
  - What does an equitable campus look like? Feel like?
  - What are challenges you have observed or experienced at ARC?
    - What could change to make ARC more welcoming and inclusive?
  - When it comes to equity and inclusion, what is working well right now at ARC?
  - What tools or resources do you need to be equipped to create a campus that is equitable?
- Thank people for their participation, for sharing their experiences, opinions, and recommendations.
- Have them take their belongings when they leave for break since we will be going to separate tables.
- *Break*
- *Round 2: Table topics (60 minutes)*
  - Share: this discussion is focused on a specific topic and how many communities who are historically oppressed and underserved fit within that topic.
  - Our broad question we want to discuss is: What does our specific area (e.g. human resource, student support, etc.) a). need to start doing, b). need to change, and c). need to keep doing in order to make ARC an equitable campus?
  - At 45-minutes in to the discussion, have the note taker summarize some of the themes and actions from the discussion.
  - Ask the table, are there other items not discussed that should be included?
  - Thank people for their participation, for sharing their experiences, opinions, and recommendations.
  - Remain seated as we move to wrap-up.

## APPENDIX C: Listening Session Stakeholder Groups

Informal focus groups were held during the Fall 2018 semester with the goal of better understanding the experiences of members of the stakeholder groups in order to discern how ARC could become a more welcoming and just campus. Each session was approximately one hour in length with all session (except the faculty/staff of color) open to faculty, staff, administrators, and students who are a part of these communities or their position directly serves them.

### Stakeholders

- African-American/Black [session hosted with Umoja Saku]
- Multiracial and biracial people
- Asian American and Pacifica Islander American [session hosted with API Student Connection and PRISE]
- Native American, First Nations and American Indian
- LGBTQ+ Community
- People with disabilities [session hosted by DSPS]
- Religious and spiritual minorities (Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Sikh, as well as other religious and spiritual identities) [hosted with the Muslim Student Association]
- Refugee and Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) communities
- Women-identified [hosted with Feminist United]
- Faculty, staff, and administrators of color
- Undocumented, DACA, and mixed-family status [hosted with UndocuScholar Resource Connection and CUSA]
- International students [hosted by ISP]
- Latina/o/x
- Non-native English speakers, hosted by the ESL department
- First-generation college students, hosted by TRIO SSS
- Current and former foster youth
- Veterans, hosted by the VRC



## APPENDIX D: Current ARC Equity-Focused Programs

The following programs were active at American River College at the time that this plan was written:

- Equity Action Institute
- Native American Resource Center
- Umoja Sakhu Learning Community
- PRISE (API) Learning Community
- Puente Learning Community
- API Student Connection
- Unite: Community Diversity Center (focused on students of color)
- Pride LGBTQ+ Center
- UndocuScholar Resource Center
- Beaver Food Pantry
- Disability Support Programs for Students
- EOP&S/CARE/NextUp
- CalWorks
- Veterans Resource Center
- TRIO SSS: Journey, STEM, and Veterans
- English as a Second Language (ESL)

For additional equity-focused efforts, please see the ARC Student Equity and Achievement plan.