

ARC Equitable Decision Making Tool¹

American River College is committed to equity and social justice as outlined in our Mission and Vision. Thus, when making decisions that have impacts for our campus community, equity and social justice must be taken into consideration to prevent or reduce disproportionate impact for those communities made vulnerable by systems of inequity.

PURPOSE²:

Using our ARC Institutional Equity Plan and other foundational documents as support, the purpose of this document is to assist departments and individuals in:

- Assessing the equity impacts of major decisions for potential burdens or benefits for marginalized, underrepresented, and/or disproportionately impacted populations.
- Ensuring that decisions are made to help eliminate and/or mitigate disparities.

EQUITY DEFINED³:

Providing educational opportunities and support that meet the needs of the community, especially those who are historically underserved, marginalized, or disproportionately impacted.

ABBREVIATED ASSESSMENT

If an individual, department, or division is unable to explore all questions in the Full Assessment below, consider the following Abbreviated Assessment:

DO THESE DECISIONS ADVANCE EQUITABLE OUTCOMES FOR IMPACTED COMMUNITIES?

- What is being done to ensure that all students (or employee groups); particularly students (or employees) of color and other marginalized groups, have equitable opportunities and access to resources (e.g. curriculum, instructional practices, services, academic supports, processes, policies) that are designed to enable their success? If nothing, what **will** be done?

WHAT ARE THE (DISPROPORTIONATE) BURDENS AND/OR BENEFITS TO IMPACTED COMMUNITIES?

- If disproportionate outcomes are identified, what will be done to eliminate and/or mitigate the disproportionate impact?
- When will the decision be reassessed to further reduce or eliminate disproportionate impact?
- What will be done to repair the harm (i.e. restore trust) experienced by those most impacted by the decision?⁴

HOW WILL WE ENSURE COMMUNICATION IS CONSTANT, CLEAR, AND CONCISE?

- What is the communication plan for this decision, and how will it convey the equity considerations and planned restorative measures?

WHO DO WE NEED TO INCLUDE?

- Do I/we need to reach out to our Vice-President, the Office of Equity & Inclusion or an appropriate designee to discuss our considerations and identify gaps?

¹ This document is considered a living document. All input and feedback is welcome. Contact Nick Daily, dailyn@arc.losrios.edu

² This document is adapted from the ARC Institutional Equity Plan, Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative Racial Equity Toolkit, and The City of San Antonio Budget Equity Tool.

³ For additional definitions, see ARC Definitions below.

⁴ Consider repairing trust for those who leave as a result of the decision(s) made, those who remain, as well as those who we seek to recruit.

FULL ASSESSMENT

PERSONAL CONSIDERATIONS: Before considering the practice, or methodology, ask yourself:

- What is driving this decision? Is it a decision based on scarcity (actual or imagined), a sense of urgency (actual or imagined) or fear? Or is it a decision rooted in opportunity, creativity, and transformation?⁵ If fear, scarcity, or urgency *is* the driving factor in this decision, how can I take a moment to invite creativity, opportunity, and transformation?
- How/Does race and power impact these decisions broadly?
- Where are the gaps in my awareness of: self-knowledge (knowing one’s self); empathy; race and racism; and structural inequities and power?

ARC EQUITY LENS: Thinking about a specific process, practice, or teaching methodology (pedagogy/andragogy);

How does this 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?

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?

How have stakeholders who are also members of the communities affected been intentionally involved?

What are the support systems for advancing equitable outcomes?

What are the barriers to advancing equitable outcomes?

Who is accountable for the outcomes?

What is the communication plan for the outcomes?

Which strategic goal or goals will it advance?

Do I/we need to reach out to our Vice-President, the Office of Equity & Inclusion or an appropriate designee to discuss our considerations and identify gaps?

<u>Pros</u> Arguments supporting the decision in light of equity impact	<u>Cons</u> Arguments against the decision in light of equity impact

⁵ Decisions based on scarcity, urgency, and fear can lead to sacrificing values related to equity and justice including, power sharing; open communication; and inviting creative thinking about complex issues (Okun, 2007).

FAQS:

- **How do I make equitable decisions while navigating collective bargaining units?**
 - Bring them to the table! As stated above, if there are key stakeholders needed to be at the decision-making table, bring them in early, and make the case for equity.
- **How does equitable decision-making with budgets differ based on funding streams (e.g. categorical funds vs operational funds)?**
 - The short answer is: it doesn't. Even when looking at various budget streams, there are questions of equity that can be applied. *Does the decision affect employees in disproportionately impacted communities more? Does the decision exacerbate already present divisions of labor? Are there ways that we can mitigate or eliminate those effects and impacts?*
- **I don't have the time to do this, what's the answer? What do I need to do?**
 - This question is an understandable one, particularly during times of high stress and instability. Unfortunately, equitable processes and practices take time and attention in order to manifest. We must be diligent about equity which means we have to be willing to do the work to put it into practice every day.
- **If you really valued equity, why did you make a decision that has these inequitable outcomes?**
 - It is important to remember and understand that inequities exist beyond the scope of what ARC controls. This means that some decisions, some budget realities, some contract decisions *will have* disproportionate impacts *even as* we take action to eliminate or mitigate those outcomes.
- **This document is going to be weaponized to argue against any decision that has disproportionate impacts. How do we avoid that?**
 - It should be said first that language and rhetoric is frequently used to argue for decisions that increase inequities for centuries (e.g. Race was "weaponized" to provide education to some and prevent others from accessing it). The idea that encouraging reflection (and action) about disproportionate impacts is "weaponizing" equity should be reframed to reflect this reality. We should approach decision-making and the following responses through the lens of "Critique with Care and Critique is Care". Those who offer critiques should do so in a way that is acknowledging of the difficult decision making processes that occurred and, those who are receiving the feedback should take that as a form of community care and ensuring we are meeting our stated mission, vision, and values. We must contend with the question(s) raised by those who don't care for the decisions. We must ensure that we have used the above tool to consider the benefits and burdens *before* the decision is made and we must identify a plan for when these decisions will be revisited to address the burdens *after* the decision is made. Addressing these two portions in the communication of the decision can increase trust, build/sustain relationships, and show that the decision makers are aware of the impacts and interested in eliminating or mitigating them as soon as possible.

RESOURCES

ARC Definitions:

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.

Disproportionate Impact (DI) 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*].

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.

Additional Resources:

- [ARC Institutional Equity Plan \(example Equity Lens application on p. 11\)](#)
- [San Antonio Budget Equity Tool](#)
- [Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative - Racial Equity Tool](#)