

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This LGBTQIA+ Disproportionate Impact Report is a notable milestone in the history of American River College. The report seeks to educate the reader about LGBTQIA+ terminology, history, and theory to move the college from tolerance of LGBTQIA+ students and culture to true support of these students and their educational experiences.

The report begins with Definitions and Terms so that any reader, regardless of their knowledge or ignorance of LGBTQIA+ issues and experiences, can familiarize themselves with the current terminology. This section also includes definitions of common phobias and prejudices inflicted upon LGBTQIA+ people.

The report then lays out a comprehensive history of LGBTQIA+ people from pre-colonial times to the present. This section of the report also describes in detail how the intersectionality of race and LGBTQIA+ identities has made the lives of LGBTQIA+ people of color even worse than their white LGBTQIA+ counterparts for centuries because of the mitigating effects of white privilege. While the early gay rights activism was started by white gay and lesbian groups in the 1950s, real progress in LGBTQIA+ rights was slow until LGBTQIA+ people of color became involved and organized on their own. An example is the Stonewall rights of June 1969 which, although it began in response to police harassment, is still celebrated by Gay Pride events in June each year as the start of the LGBTQIA+ rights movement.

Following this primer on LGBTQIA+ history, the report lays out the three important theories that serve as the foundation to the report and its recommendations: Critical Race Theory, Intersectionality and Trickle Up Theory. Critical Race Theory (CRT) provides both a framework for identifying and describing the structures, policies, and practices that advantage dominant populations and marginalize and disadvantage subordinate populations, and a call to action to transform those structures, policies, and practices to promote social justice. Intersectionality is the theory that true understanding and support of a population requires consideration of all the identities that intersect such as race, culture, gender, sexuality, etc. Through an intersectional lens, we can better understand the complex ways in which social identities are intertwined. Finally, Trickle Up Theory contends that focusing on the most marginalized students when approaching policy development not only creates a more equitable experience for those students, but also for various marginalized groups and the college community as a whole. An example of this theory in practice at ARC is the focus on black male students to address disproportionate impacts in student success for the college as a whole.

The report then focuses on American River College and its complex LGBTQIA+ history. While tremendous progress has been made since the infamy of ARC's student support of Proposition 8, the internet and student reviews of our campus still hold records of ARC being unwelcoming to LGBTQIA+ students. This section of the report also highlights the sweeping and commendable work of the ARC Pride Center since its opening in January 2018. Since that time, district-level changes in our information technology systems have been made to support affirmed names and gender pronouns -- changes that were initiated by the ARC Pride Center and its employees.

In the Student Experience section, the report explores the available data on LGBTQIA+ students as well as its limiting factors. For example, about one-third of our LGBTQIA+ students seek to conceal their identities from faculty and fellow students because of the anti-LGBTQ+ stigma that still persists on our campus and in society. For the most part, this report relied on the college's recent Institutional Campus Climate Survey (1075 students) as well as the ARC Pride Center Campus Climate Study of 2018 (1201 students). Also included in this section are themes and quotations from ARC students and recent alumni who contributed to our Student Resource Panel and associated Listening Sessions that highlight their experiences and challenges at the college.

Finally, the report concludes with ten recommendations for action to address LGBTQIA+ disproportionate impact at the college:

- Improve data collection regarding LGBTQIA+ status.
- Adopt a trickle up approach that expects those in positions of power to shift thinking around policy making.
- Engage and/or assign a culturally competent mental health professional and basic needs programming to assist LGBTQIA+ students.
- Create an inclusive classroom environment and curriculum for LGBTQIA+ students.
- Strengthen the organizational structure to better coordinate efforts.
- Increase counseling support through the Pride Center.
- Increase accountability related to hate and bias incidents.
- Commit to training specific to gender identity and intersectional identities.
- Work intentionally to reduce process barriers that inhibit employee efforts.
- Address restroom, locker room, and showering facilities on our campus to ensure equitable access and safety for all our students.

The LGBTQIA+ DI Report Team is grateful for the opportunity to document the experiences of our LGBTQIA+ students at American River College and to make recommendations to improve their lives and educational experiences during their time with our campus community.