

# EQUITY STRATEGIC PLAN

*\*is this a 3-year plan? 5-year? What's the general timeline?*

**WORKING DRAFT**

**September 11, 2020**

## PART ONE

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** *To be added. This will be a 2-3 page summary of the whole document.*

### **EQUITY AT FOOTHILL COLLEGE, TODAY AND TOMORROW**

Foothill College has a history of providing transformative educational experiences that meet the goals for its students and produces outcomes that have served to lessen disparities among our most vulnerable populations. Individuals and areas of our campus have long sought to achieve student equity, whether on their own or in response to state-mandated equity plan requirements. While these state-mandated plans helped to fund equity activities on our campus and set goals to help move the work forward, those efforts have been relatively siloed, often intermittent, and sometimes were not interconnected with all areas of the campus to produce systemic impact on equity disparities. This Strategic Equity Plan is an effort to provide a sustainable, and systemic vision for achieving equity through eliminating demographically-predictable disparities at Foothill College. With a strong foundational vision, the college can then be guided toward action, collaboratively and within individual departments and areas. The

Strategic Equity Plan will also serve as a partnering document to Foothill College's Master Plan 2030, Facility Master Plan, and others.

## **Philosophy and Values**

In conversations with the campus, several things surfaced in regard to what our college community valued about equity. Our campus prides itself on being proactive versus reactive when addressing challenges. We appreciate spaces on campus that embody team, family, and community spirit. We recognize our students are continuously improving and developing. Perhaps most importantly, our college value and acknowledge individuals as whole people and see their potential.

While our college is strong in the statement of our values, they are not lived because we are still an institution existing within a social structure that is oppressive. The system of education itself has a long history of upholding an oppressive premise about who gets access to quality education, and what that looks like. But people have always found ways to persist in challenging and changing the oppressive structure of education because we still believe in the value of education.

What is different about the California Community College (CCC) system is that a vision was laid out to provide high quality, post-secondary education to all who want it, regardless of personal circumstances. As employees of this system, we are in a unique and exciting position in that we get to live out such a revolutionary concept! Having the thought to develop a world class, open access, educational system was revolutionary, but having the thought is not enough. Truly living out the intent of the CCC's original mission requires constant disruption of systemic

oppression. Equity is the responsibility of the entire Foothill campus, a commitment to our students and colleagues.

*[Revisit this last section considering what was learned through Minding the Obligation Gap/BMM. Also consider that CA is not the only state with community colleges, is the concept revolutionary just here? At all? Request to reference CA Education Master plan here, speaks to access but not completion.]*

## **SCOPE OF EQUITY WORK**

As mentioned in the previous section, one striking observation was that Foothill community members do not yet share a definition of equity. This makes it challenging to 1) discern which groups of students are benefitting from our “equity work”; 2) help each member of the Foothill community conceptualize how they contribute to equity efforts, and; 3) demonstrate whether our myriad equity actions have local impact within a program and/or systemic impact across many areas of the college. The process to develop such a definition brought together college feedback, a common industry understanding of equity as described in educational code, and scholarship on race and equity.

Student feedback highlighted the need for better academic resources and social support, the college talked about the need to institutionalize entities to help manage implementation and follow up of the equity efforts campus, and how to better connect the work across departments and offices. These are asks for systemic change. Changing systems locally means acknowledging the larger educational systems and structures that influence our college. Historical systems that are oppressive by design and that have long called for change. Our campus talked about community, and spaces that embody team, family, and community spirit. Scholarship states that

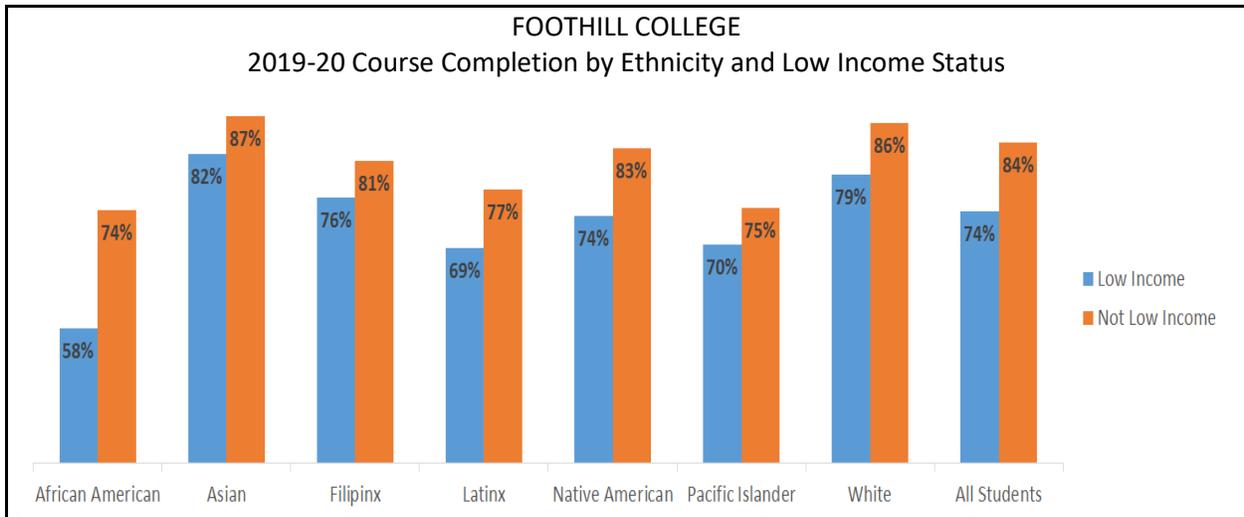
students of color in particular benefit from creating community and sense of belonging in college.

### **Why Center Race?**

At Foothill, when we talk about equity, we are intentional in our choice to center race. Since its inception, the system of education in the United States was never intended to serve all demographic groups and that many continue to be marginalized, including but not limited to persons of color, women, LGBTQ, veterans, disabled persons, and the economically disadvantaged. And, like most other institutions, despite our ongoing efforts over the years, Foothill continues to have demographically predictable disparities in student success.

We are mindful, though, that when we disaggregate our educational outcomes data by demographic group, we see *racial* disparity within all groups. For example, course completions is one indicator instructors and our college uses to assess students' progress in the classroom as well as on their educational journey. In 2019-20, our college's course completion rate is 81%. Our low-income students' course completion (74%) is lower than non-low-income students (84%). One may assert that students with less financial means have fewer resources. With this assertion and assumption, then the results from disaggregating our college's course completion by ethnicity is unsurprising—across all ethnic groups, students from low-income households complete their courses at a lower rate than compared to those who are not from low-income households.

**FIGURE 1:**

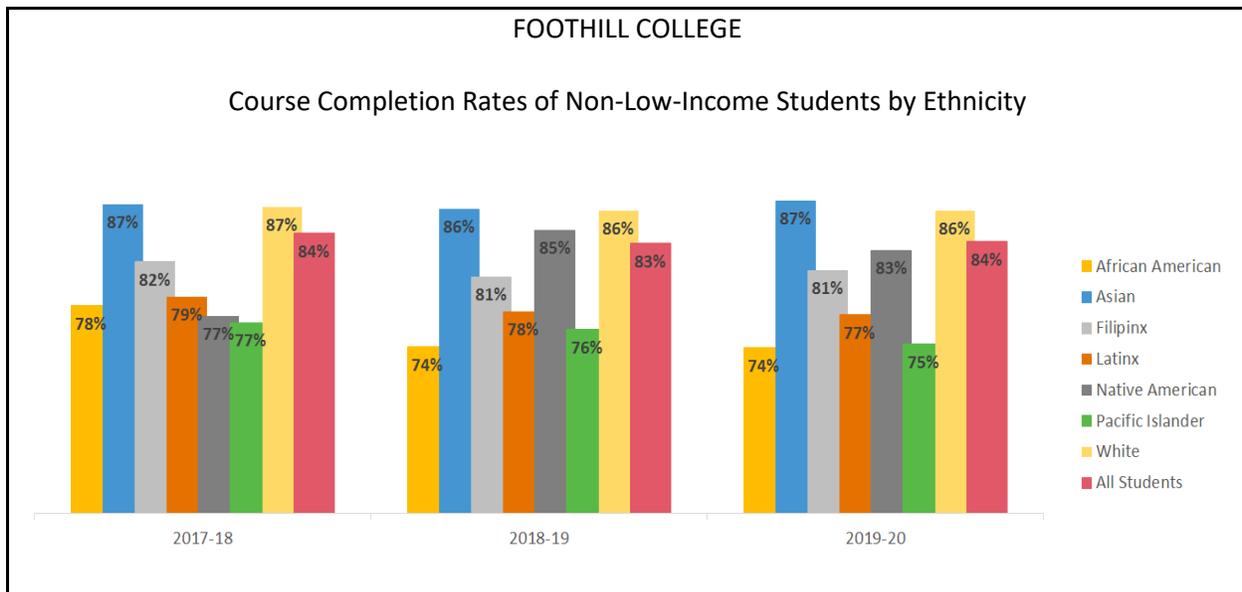


Source: FH IRP, Credit Enrollment

Low-income students are those whose household income is less than \$25,000.

And further disheartening (and predictable) is that even when we observe our non-low-income students, and holding the assertion that they therefore are likely to have more resources, we see that not all students experience course success at the same rate (Figure 2). By “predictable”, we are not making a claim about our students’ intelligence or ability to complete. Instead, what *is* predictable is our college’s course completion data and how it continues to reflect what we have achieved and fall short in achieving. If we view course completion as an indicator of *our college’s collective progress* to help students on their educational journey, which ethnic student groups do we do a better job at serving? Conversely, which student groups are we not serving as well?

**FIGURE 2:**



Source: FH IRP, Credit Enrollment

Non-low-income students are those whose household income is \$25,000 or more.

Our answers to the aforementioned questions are predictable; and when course completion is replaced with course retention, continuous term enrollments (persistence term-to-term), graduation or transfer, would our results differ? No. And that is why our performance data is predictable and we need to reset our current way of operating. What we have been doing, while it is not in vain, it is not enough. We know this because we hear from instructors the desire to have all students complete the class. We hear from student services and administrators the desire to retain all students and not have students drop off and stop out of our college. Yet our college performance data tells us otherwise.

We do not suggest to ignore disparities for women, disabled students, and all other marginalized groups. Instead, we suggest that as we attend to disparities for other groups we consistently and intentionally address students of color within those groups. We must center race in our work and discussions even as we act to mitigate other group disparities.

We realize the topic of race is the most difficult and uncomfortable to discuss. As humans who have been socialized to avoid the topic of race, we recognize our strong predisposition to (unconsciously) quickly shift focus away from race in our dialogs and planning efforts. However, if we are to dismantle systemic barriers at Foothill College, we must talk about race. Centering race is an attempt to focus rather than to exclude. By consistently centering race in our plan, even as we seek to eliminate inequity for all groups, we are holding ourselves unwaveringly accountable to our most historically underserved of groups. This college Strategic Equity Plan is one step along the path of that purpose and vision for the Foothill College community. Thus, the following definition of equity was proposed at College Opening Day 2019:

***The work of equity at Foothill College is dismantling historic oppressive structures that are the basis of our educational systems and have led to disproportionate outcomes for students, particularly along racial lines. Our goal is to create a college where success is not predictable by race.***

At a retreat in January 2020, Foothill community members discussed the proposed definition and offered suggested changes, resulting in the following recommended defined scope of work:

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

## **PROCESS OF PLAN CONSTRUCTION**

### **Historical Context**

The work of equity and diversity is not new to the Foothill community. [\[Link here to addendum which highlights previous work.\]](#)

The development of this Strategic Equity Plan began as an evaluation of equity efforts named in the 2015-16 plan. Charged to the Equity and Education governance council, those activities were to be evaluated annually, with the desired goals to be achieved by the 2019-20 academic year. Due to its large and operational undertaking, Equity and Education tasked the Office of Equity to complete the evaluation and share its findings with the council.

Through this process, some general observations surfaced. Our college lacked an entity overseeing the implementation and annual evaluation, and did not have a strategy to institutionalize this process. Furthermore, years of conversations in venues such as shared governance committees, program review, and professional development activities demonstrated a need for a shared vision of equity, anchored by a common definition. While the metrics in the state-mandated plan meant to indicate progress of student outcomes, they ultimately were not sufficient in addressing the cultural and systemic change our college was asking for.

Consequently, this Strategic Equity Plan is meant to be different. Where previous state plans led with a particular set of metrics, this plan has set goals that organically rose from the issues surfaced by the campus community. This plan is not compliance. Our college is not being reactionary. No one is waiting for this plan. We are on our own timeline and will take the time necessary to engage students, staff, and faculty; meeting folks where they are and working toward the point when the campus community sees themselves and takes ownership of the plan. This Strategic Equity Plan is meant to be a living document.

**A Well-Informed Plan** *[Consider a different header? Doesn't necessarily accurately describe what's in this section.]*

As the elements of the plan come together, there is a recognition of alignment across three areas aimed to inform the vision for equity at Foothill: campus feedback, scholarship on race and equity, and California state initiatives. Organically, these three areas revealed consistency in thought and focus, providing a common foundation from which to build.

**State Legislation and Equity Initiatives**

As public institutions of higher education, our college shares in the goals designed to provide educational opportunity and success to the broadest possible range of our state's population. California education code (EDC 66010.2) speaks to providing access to education and the opportunity for educational success for all qualified Californians. It leads with the idea that efforts should be made with regard to those who are historically and currently underrepresented, and affirms a commitment to academic excellence through quality teaching and programs. It goes on to address an aim to provide educational equity, not only through a "diverse and representative body and faculty, but also through educational environments in which each person, regardless of race, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, or economic circumstances, has a reasonable chance to fully develop his or her potential." This definition focuses on concepts of fairness and inclusion, offering opportunities for all groups and ensuring social, institutional, and/or personal circumstances don't prevent students from reaching academic goals.

The state has taken large strides to set forth systemic initiatives for local implementation, with a particular focus on institutionalizing campus equity efforts through mandated Student Equity Plans. The most recent 2019-2022 Student Equity Plan was drafted largely by the Office

of Equity in collaboration with and guidance from the Equity and Education governance council. Data analysis and calculations were provided by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning. The plan was shared across campus for discussion and feedback to the following groups: Academic Senate, Classified Senate, President's Cabinet, as well as the remaining three governance councils (College Advisory Council, Community & Communication, and Revenue & Resources). The plan was approved by both Academic Senate and the Equity & Education council, as well as the District Board of Trustees in June 2019.

Part of the state's larger efforts to achieve equity are through initiatives intended to transform the experience of students at the community college and remove barriers to progress in their educational journey. Two of the most recent initiatives are Guided Pathways and AB705. The Guided Pathways framework creates a highly structured approach to student success that provides all students with a set of clear course-taking patterns to promote better enrollment decisions and prepare students for future success. At Foothill, we are approaching that effort through four teams: meta majors, onboarding, communication, and tech and data; ensuring that each team is representative and comprised of staff, faculty, and administrators. AB705 is a bill that took effect in January 2018 and requires community colleges to maximize the probability that a student will enter and complete transfer-level coursework in English and math within a one-year timeframe and use multiple measures in the placement of students into English and math courses.

*Wrap up paragraph – include initiatives like Vision for Success and how reporting on these informs our efforts on campus. Include more transition to next area.*

## **Scholarship on Race and Equity**

The Office of Equity explored a number of seminal theories to inform the equity framework, paying particular attention to a few that are valued at Foothill College. Implicit bias and the practice of recognizing when and how bias comes up can inform our equity practices greatly. The success of our students is impacted by the attitudes of faculty, staff, and administrators, towards students and one another, as is the association of stereotypes with certain individuals or groups without conscious knowledge. It has been proven that implementing exercises to actively lower bias and directly challenge stereotypes are successful strategies within the research and are areas that the campus can explore.

As we proactively seek to be of service to the most disenfranchised populations in our community, it is critical that we are well-informed on how to appropriately approach, engage, care for, and validate our students. This includes development of not only people but spaces.

Foothill College hosted two very important researchers for campus events that authored relevant equity-related theories: Claude Steele and Laura Rendon. Dr. Steele is known for his work on stereotype threat, which he describes as being in a situation or doing something that puts an individual at risk of conforming to stereotypes about their culture or social group. Dr. Steele's visit to Foothill prompted great energy and excitement, resulting in the work of many faculty examining their classroom practices to mitigate this threat.

Dr. Rendon developed her theory of validation in 1994, referring to the "intentional, proactive affirmation of students using both in- and out-of-class agents with the intent to: 1) validate students as creators of knowledge and as valuable members of the college learning community and 2) foster personal development and social adjustment." Dr. Rendon's lecture to the campus included strategies and recommendations for promoting an ethic of care, or *cariño*,

for our students. Something as simple as learning a student's name and pronouncing it correctly, shifting curriculum to reflect students' backgrounds, or even engaging them in how the course develops over the term, can completely change the dynamic of a classroom. With these efforts a student now knows they are seen and heard, and they can also then see themselves and their lived experiences in the learning.

Colleges up and down the state have racial disparities across multiple metrics. Foothill is no different in that no matter the metric or population of study, racial inequities are present. Over time, they continue to exist. This persistent disproportionality points to a systemic issue. To focus on racial equity, we engaged Critical Race Theory<sup>1</sup>, which uses the examination of race and racism across dominant culture as an approach to understanding structural racism to find justice-based solutions. If Foothill desires to be an equitable institution for higher education, it must be willing to upend its practices for vigorous examination of inequitable policy. In the development of this plan and the equity framework, many of the Critical Race Theory tenets felt especially relevant; the ubiquity of racism and how it undergirds many of our assumptions of how things operate within the status quo (Permanence of Racism), and the importance of elevating the voices and experiences of those most marginalized in our system (Counter Narratives). The incorporation of scholarly theory aids us in raising questions about things we may not have considered. It can also provide context to system and human behavior in this

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<sup>1</sup>Critical race theory (CRT) is an intellectual movement that seeks to understand how white supremacy as a legal, cultural, and political condition is reproduced and maintained, primarily in the US context. While CRT is part of a much longer research tradition investigating race and racism, which includes such key figures as W. E. B. DuBois, Frantz Fanon, Angela Davis, Audre Lorde, Gloria Anzaldúa, Cherríe Moraga, and many more, CRT distinguishes itself as an approach that originated within legal studies (in part building from and responding to critical legal studies); aims to be a vehicle for social and political change; has been adopted interdisciplinarily across many fields, including perhaps most notably education; and, in certain contexts, has come to be the umbrella term for studies of race and racism generally." De La Garza, Antonio & Ono, Kent. (2016). Critical Race Theory. 10.1002/9781118766804.wbiect260.

process, explaining how it can be that Foothill staff and faculty share similar values around the desire for equity, but work in an institution that has equity gaps. All the same, we understood that we could not rely solely on state mandates and scholarly theory if we wanted to actively engage the Foothill community in our equity initiatives.

### **Campus Feedback**

One of the vital foundational elements of our Strategic Equity Plan stemmed from the campus community. The vision, structure, and goals came organically through inquiry and discussion with the college. The first step was to evaluate previous plans to identify challenges and successes; highlighting areas where effective work could continue and assessing other areas that may be promising but that could use more support and resources. Many things were technically implemented, but people did not feel the campus culture change nor that their equity work and efforts moved the mark. Changes occurred in pockets but the changes were not systemic. As our college moves forward from the evaluation of previous plans, this Strategic Equity Plan is also an effort to close the loop on them and acknowledge where we fell short as a campus in reaching previous goals or addressing concerns and how that may have affected the morale of our community. There is a strong intentionality to leverage this Strategic Equity Plan to repair and build trust across campus.

In crafting an updated plan, the Office of Equity intentionally engaged students, staff, faculty, and administrators in a variety of spaces. The team led Opening Day workshops, a workshop around professional development, held town halls, visited divisions and departments (on invitation), engaged governance committees, conducted an online survey, held an equity retreat, and most importantly, listened to students.

Students in particular identified the need for academic resources and social support. Issues of transportation and housing rose to the top as major concerns. Students also spoke at length about their desire for space and community. Studies have shown that the culture of an institution, as well as the student's frequency and types of interactions within the institution contribute to the complexity of a student's fit and connection to the college. It has been concluded that students who feel more emotionally engaged with the campus environment perceive a greater sense of support from faculty and peers, and are more motivated to succeed academically. This can be seen, especially with students of color, by incorporating a culturally familiar way of organizing time and space. Students become interested in each other's lives and begin to support each other academically and personally, establishing community. These theories are realized in current community spaces on campus, like the Umoja and Puente Village space, but students were clear in their desire for the addition of similar spaces in other areas of campus, especially for other marginalized groups. Communication was also a theme that emerged for the campus, forcing the college to think differently about how it reaches out to students while keeping them engaged and connected to campus support and resources.

However, as the world around us quickly changed and we adjusted to life in a pandemic, it became necessary to address issues of access and learning in regards to online education. Transitioning to a virtual campus in March 2020 required quick-thinking, extensive yet urgent training, and the implementation of critical services and support. Further, it amplified a number of inequities in our system and forced the campus to take note of potentially overlooked concerns experienced by Foothill students in online learning. Then, just as Foothill began to settle into a routine of our new normal, we received a glaring reminder that we live in a racist world. The tragic murder of George Floyd set the world afire and we saw communities come together

through pain, from struggle, and in protest. And in that spirit, the voice of our students also rose to challenge the college to take action. In their open letter to Academic Senate and administration, a collective group of students representing the Black Student Union (BSU), Puente, and the Associated Students of Foothill College (ASFC) outlined what they needed to feel seen and validated as members of this college community.

While a review of relevant literature and contemporary frameworks helped to ground the plan in research and bring together the operational and theoretical elements, it is the voice of the campus community that breathes life and purpose into the plan. Most importantly, the voice of the students is key in driving the campus toward its goal of racial equity. Not surprisingly, much of what we heard as campus concerns with equity are echoed in the literature as long-standing challenges in higher education, and are part of larger areas of concern being addressed through state initiatives, revealing an organic connection and alignment of state initiatives, relevant scholarship, and campus feedback.

## **A SYSTEMIC CHANGE FRAMEWORK FOR RACIAL EQUITY**

One result of surveying our institution's equity efforts was that it surfaced the many strategies and interventions already in play at Foothill, and highlighted areas on our campus and within our organizational structure that weren't being addressed. For instance, in conversations with faculty, staff and students about equity, people clearly connected Foothill's ability to offer resources and improve student outcomes as the institution's means and ways toward eliminating inequity. Yet, there wasn't as much discussion about actions taken to change structural policies. Furthermore, reflections on how the culture of our campus embodies an equity-mindset indicated an area of focus requiring more support and action. The Office of Equity quickly recognized the need for an overarching framework to provide direction on how and where to move forward with

our college's efforts. The Office of Equity also believe that a framework can increase collaboration between people and areas on campus doing equity work for greater reach and impact on our student population. A strategic framework allows the college to move away from individual and/or localized "random acts of equity" to the systemic approach required in addressing systemic issues.

The framework presented in this Strategic Equity Plan is inspired by the Equity-Driven Systems Change model developed by [California Tomorrow](#)<sup>2</sup>, a public organization formed around creating in-roads to equity and inclusion in a number of sectors across the state, including education. While in existence, it worked extensively with community colleges to design a model for equity-based organizational change germane to the specific needs of the community college system. The Office of Equity found the Equity-Driven Systems Change model's "dimensions of change" a fitting explanation for how the Foothill community identified and located the equity work they were doing. The notion of "levels of impact", referred to within this plan document as areas of impact, helped us to conceptualize a more holistic approach to our college's equity efforts; one that avoided concentrating strategies in particular areas, like student outcomes. The Office of Equity heard feedback around the community's frustration with an over-reliance on student outcome metrics as the only way to eradicate inequity, and we agree with the idea of employing comprehensive equity strategies to guide our work. The framework outlined in the section sets the stage for strategic implementation of equitable, organizational change.

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<sup>2</sup> Gazmuri, S., Petty, S., Porter, E. (2010, December). The Equity-Driven Systems Change (ESC) Model: A Toolkit for Improving Institutional Practice and Student Outcomes. Retrieved from <https://skylinecollege.edu/seed/assets/resources/ESC-Toolkit.pdf>

## **Dimensions of Change and Areas of Impact**

In order to employ a shift toward racial equity, there are **three dimensions of change** our college must engage: **structural, cultural, and individual**. **Structural** change speaks to the type of change that (minimally) seeks to remove the college-wide barriers that uphold the disenfranchisement of poor ethno-racially minoritized students of color). **Structure** speaks to the thorough investigation of Foothill's policies, procedures, roles and responsibilities that govern how our college runs. The Equity-Driven Systems Change model explains that the dimension of **cultural** change uncovers and confronts the reasoning behind the inequities in our institution. What attitudes and beliefs do we employ as staff, faculty, and administrators in our interactions with students and one another? Creating a culture of equity may be the most difficult area of change to enact as it requires the campus to come together under a common philosophy and desired vision around how we embody a culturally responsive, appreciative and equity-centered institution. While it will be the community-wide effort that will create the change we want to see, that won't occur without individual responsibility. This leads to the third type of change: **individual**. Though the Equity-Driven Systems Change model does not identify this as a dimension of change, the Office of Equity felt it was important to acknowledge the opportunity to affect positive change in those areas within the realm of our college's control, but also as a reminder that we all own the responsibility to do so. The act of ongoing, recursive self-reflection is imperative in our equity efforts.

The Office of Equity posits that our college's equity efforts must **impact four areas: 1) Access, Supports and Opportunities; 2) Organizational Policies and Practices; 3) Campus Climate; and, 4) Student Outcomes**. **Access, supports and opportunities** references how we bring students onto our campus, set them up with the resources they need to be successful, and

continue to look out for them by connecting them to opportunities that encourage their educational growth. The impact area of **organizational policies and practices** is concerned with looking at substructures within the college organization as well as overarching policy. Leadership and governance, budget and resource allocation, instructional policies and human resources would be topics of consideration within this area. **Campus climate** references the values, norms and history of our college, how we communicate within the college and how we work to prioritize and engage students. Finally, **student outcomes** refers to positive and equitable change in metrics like course completion, degree attainment, transfer rates, etc. From a philosophical perspective, the Office of Equity believes our best approach to resolving issues of equity is to frame them around these four areas as they represent a new approach to eliminating disparities that is intentionally comprehensive and does not ignore the systemic structures at play.

This Strategic Equity Plan lays out the aforementioned framework in an ordered, sequential manner. In praxis, the framework does not adhere to the neatly confined categories of three dimensions of change, or the four areas of impact. Some of our equity strategies will intermesh with more than one dimension of change; that is, some interventions will require individual, cultural and structural change. Some equity strategies will cross more than one area of impact. These realizations only amplify the interconnectedness of our institution, serving as a reminder that we are more dependent on one another than we think. Where areas of ambiguity may arise around who or what entity should be responsible for certain equity strategies, the Office of Equity would like to offer those uncertainties as an opportunity to engage conversation with other people and areas on campus to team up and get the work done! Those collaborative

efforts produce the most effective change. We offer that the Office of Equity can help facilitate those conversations.

### **A Tool for Facilitating Discussion and Processing Change**

The Office of Equity recognizes that our call for wide-sweeping assessment on how our college operates down to the very values we hold individually is a monumental ask. The process will be uncomfortable at times, and is likely to surface a lot of feelings for all of us as we engage in this work. As we identify the need for a framework to provide direction, we also felt that our campus community could benefit from having tools to help process the change our institution is undergoing and to help keep difficult dialogues moving ahead in a productive way. Since 2014, Foothill has partnered with the Pacific Educational Group to provide racial literacy seminars, which have included training on the “Courageous Conversation About Race,<sup>©</sup>” protocol. The Courageous Conversation About Race protocol prompts users to be conscious of their own mindset as they enter the work, outlines<sup>3</sup> to be used during discussions, and offers six<sup>4</sup> to help individuals engage, sustain, and deepen conversation. Our efforts to train colleagues in using the Courageous Conversation About Race protocol are intended to help individuals enter conversations with shared understanding of common terminology and norms. At the same time, the Office of Equity fully acknowledges there may be other robust strategies to have effective dialogues about racial equity. What is most important to us is that individuals are able to engage in racial equity conversations in a sustained and productive way. As a community we must understand that while the framework may help provide direction on where our change efforts

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<sup>3</sup> Stay engaged, speak your truth, experience discomfort, and expect/accept non-closure

<sup>4</sup> Focus on personal, local, and immediate; isolate race; ensure multiple perspectives; use CCAR protocol with intentionality; establish a working definition of race; surface the presence and role of Whiteness

should be focused and how to pursue them, it will ultimately fail if we cannot engage and sustain difficult conversations and do the affective work that is intertwined with the equity work.

### **Accountability Statement** *(Needs to be fleshed out into narrative with input from campus)*

- Should the accountability statement be more about accountability to our values, accountability to our personal growth or accountability to results?
- Make it clear that everyone has a role in implementing equity plan.
  - We propose that the role of the Office of Equity is to act as consultants to the campus. It will be our responsibility to check-in, assess progress of action/implementation and support/resources needed.
- Work is ongoing and evolving. As times change, so will our reflections on our work; thus, evaluation will be ongoing
- This work doesn't always manifest in immediate, large-scale, statistical observable change. Must allow time to manifest
- We need accountability for implementing actions; and later with accountability of results
- Central question/standard: Is it student centered?
- Communication/transparency (i.e. are we closing the loop with communicating to people about the work that is occurring and its results?); Engagement (WHO are we engaging and how? How to ensure people feel heard and not shut out)
- Quality of conversation: increasing over time; can't keep starting over ONLY having the same types of discussions (i.e. always centering the discussions around the least knowledgeable; "preaching to the choir")
- Listening with empathy
- Rejection of scarcity of resources myth/approach; but if/when it occurs expectation that a set of guiding principles are engaged in having discussions about what gets prioritized.

## **PART TWO: ISSUES AND GOALS**

### **Introduction**

The Office of Equity heard and reviewed campus feedback on what challenges are faced by students and approaches to be considered in the construction of a Strategic Equity Plan. *[Add note about how ideas from previous Foothill equity plans were taken into account.]* That feedback was consolidated with the asks from the various state initiatives, the facilities master plan, and the Educational Master Plan to help determine what strategy to prioritize moving

forward. Many of the suggested ideas fell along a continuum of point of entry through continued enrollment, which follows a similar methodology employed by the California Community College Chancellor's Office Guided Pathways Initiative. Moreover, conversations about how the college models its equity values and practices with its own employees elicited ideas that could be categorized similarly.

Talk more about how this section is organized. There are demonstrated issues, visionary goals, vision that we hope to attain and will empower campus to determine their own actions that align with that vision rather than actions coming from the top down.

To keep with that continuum, the issues and associated goals suggested in this Strategic Equity Plan are organized in a comparable fashion, using the [Loss/Momentum framework](#) of Guided Pathways, focusing on Connection, Entry, Progress, and Completion.

**Connection: The time from a student completes their college application through to course enrollment**

A little over half (52%) of all students who have an interest in Foothill College, and even apply, do not end up enrolling in our classes<sup>5</sup>. What happens to these students in these initial stages and what can we do as a campus to address some of the barriers that students may face in this process?

Demographics of our county are changing, requiring the need for us as a college to adjust our approach in how we attract and meet the demand of our potential student base. Our enrollment data suggests a pertinent and sustained disproportionate impact on African American,

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<sup>5</sup> Source: FH IRP. All applicants tracked to each primary term enrollment (fall, winter and spring/second spring) in 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20. Enrollments are end of term and include credit and non-credit.

Filipinx and Pacific Islander students. Compared to their peers, student applicants <sup>6</sup>[OBJ]. Additionally, our course retention data indicates African American, Latinx, Native American and Pacific Islander students are less likely than their peers to remain in their class(es) <sup>7</sup>[OBJ]. Between 11% to 14% of these students withdraw from their courses, representing nearly 4,000 enrollments our college loses each year. The community identified challenges that affect access to Foothill. Many of these challenges included financing college, as well as possessing a living wage to meet basic needs like stable housing and food sources. The application and enrollment process has consistently been noted for being complex and tedious; issues that can cause confusion in the process. Additionally, if Foothill College wants to position itself as a school of choice for Latinx and African-American students, it will need to be more strategic in its marketing and recruitment efforts, particularly building partnerships in communities in which those students reside and demonstrating an understanding of the community's needs and connecting their educational goals to future jobs/career attainment.

Below are issues that surfaced in campus conversations around Connection, the time from a student's interest in college enrollment through completion of application, along with potential goals for the College to consider.

**African American students are disproportionately impacted by the onboarding process.** The experience of a student looking to attend Foothill College has been described as

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<sup>6</sup> Source: FH IRP. All applicants tracked to each primary term enrollment (fall, winter and spring/second spring) in 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20. Enrollments are end of term and include credit and non-credit. Percentage point gap with margin of error was used to determine disproportionate impact. Three-year enrollment rates: African American = 2,545/5,438 (47%), Filipinx = 2,596/5,237 (50%), Pacific Islander = 590/1,218, All Students = 52,652/101,851 (52%).

<sup>7</sup> Source: FH IRP. 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 end-of-term credit enrollments. Retention reflect grades A, B, C, D, F, FW, I, P, NP and RD. Enrollments reflect all letter grades, including EW, MW and W. Percentage point gap with margin of error was used to determine disproportionate impact. Three-year retention rates: African American = 13,353/15,444 (86%), Latinx = 73,141/82,062 (89%), Native American = 1,326/1,504 (88%), Pacific Islander = 3,211/3,707 (87%), All Students = 292,317/320,305 (91%).

difficult and complicated. From first interest to enrollment, a student could potentially interact with one or more of the following services: outreach, admissions, financial aid, orientation, counseling, assessment, at different points in the enrollment process. Within this process, students encounter barriers and inconsistencies that are described as complex and tedious, and that can discourage them from ultimately enrolling. In addition, there are lapses in time between onboarding steps where students are in a holding pattern waiting for the next steps in the process. This can happen at points such as between priority registration, counseling, and when classes begin, leaving students with gaps in time where circumstances can change. In assessing what happens from the moment of interest and awareness, all the way to application and enrollment, it is clear the onboarding process<sup>4</sup> is not a simple process and can be lengthy for students. And in fact, according to the CCC Student Success Metrics dashboard, our African American students are not enrolling in courses after applying at a disproportionate rate. Overall, 60% of students who apply to Foothill College ultimately enroll in courses, while only 53% of African American students enroll after applying. An overall evaluation of the application to course registration pipeline, as well as support services and their relevance to communities of color, is important to shed light on where challenges are prominent for students and where improvements can be made or gaps could be filled.

**Goal 1:** Improve the application to registration pipeline for students, identifying those areas in the process where the College loses students, keeping a particular eye on data for African American students, and implementing appropriate interventions.

**Goal 2:** Develop practices that lead students through the onboarding process and include 1-on-1 support when a student encounters an unexpected hurdle.

**Goal 3:** Explore the potential for a districtwide FHDA application.

**Goal 4:** Evaluate, potentially redesign, and implement online orientation with consideration for how students of color experience the service.

**Goal 5:** Pilot a case management model within counseling to provide consistent support, exploring models proven to be successful with African American students.

**Goal 6:** Work with the office of online learning, Committee of Online Learning (COOL), and other stakeholders to identify additional barriers in our enrollment and registration processes that may arise when prospective students are not accessing the physical campus. Where are the areas where there is a reliance on in-person services (transcript assessment)?

While our hypothesis that the onboarding process is complex and tedious is based on input from the campus, we do not know that to be the only reason that students do not enroll after applying to the campus, and in particular why our African American students are disproportionately impacted. This needs to be explored by individual departments/divisions in order to surface the various reasons that may be contributing to the problem. It will be important to disaggregate data by race and consider the student experience from the lens of our vulnerable student populations.

As the first line of contact with the college, the onboarding and enrollment process is critical to the student experience and one that should be evaluated on a consistent basis in order to adjust to contemporary issues and unexpected challenges.

**There are large numbers of students of color who are aren't accessing, are ineligible, or fall out of eligibility for available financial aid programming.** Paying for college is a significant barrier to educational attainment. The cost to attend Foothill College

varies depending on our students' individual circumstances. Factors such as unit load and residency come into play and the tuition range for 2019-20 academic year was \$4,776 to \$23,864. Inherent in the cost of attendance is the increasing expense of living in the Bay Area. College feedback frequently mentioned the competing demand students have juggling both school and work, often having to make a choice between the two.

Financial programs both federal and state funded have helped students in the financing of their education, yet all students are not eligible for assistance due to specific program requirements. Foothill's Promise Grant provides two years of free tuition, fees, books and course materials. The grant is available to eligible first-time new, in-state/AB540 and full-time students; and while participation grew from one year to the next, Fall to Spring retention remained 50%. Many students fell out eligibility, with only a small portion of the student population being eligible for College Promise and accessing funds in the first place. In the 2019-2020 academic year, it was 1,109 students, with 10% identifying as African American and 39% as Latinx. While College Promise serves comparable or higher numbers of students of color in relation to general college enrollment, a majority of students did not apply or are ineligible. Although, the College Promise program casts a wider net, allowing even more students in need to obtain free tuition and books, the parameters of the program did not include continuing students, part-time students and non-resident students. Students who cannot complete or provide the necessary financial documents required for the program are also shut out, though they may have qualified otherwise.

Students, especially, noted that the stress of financing their education is compounded by the costs of textbooks and fees to use the printing stations (an essential resource) on campus. Financial holds and drops for non-payment affect a student's ability to persist in their education quarter to quarter, creating an additional obstacle to educational goal attainment. It would be

worthwhile to examine these additional costs to determine if the college can do something differently to alleviate some of those burdens, and at the same time evaluate our campus policies around printing, textbooks, and financial drops and holds.

The trend in community college education suggests a move toward a tuition free model as evidenced by the state legislature's \$42.6 million allocation to the community college system for College Promise. Even though tuition-free education at Foothill is an aspirational goal, there may not be a better time than now to act on it.

**Goal 1:** Administrative advocacy at the state level to explore elimination of tuition costs for all students across the system.

**Goal 2:** Increase student awareness and improve communications about financial assistance programs.

**Goal 3:** Students have few or no incidental costs associated with being a student, including but not limited to textbooks, printing, parking costs, as well as a review of financial hold and drop for non-payment policies.

*[Follow up with Financial Aid to explore: Look into data to determine if there is a connection between lack or loss of financial eligibility and retention? Disaggregate by race and determine if there is disproportional impact. Also disaggregate data on who is receiving financial holds or being dropped for non-payment. Are programs that strictly offer awards in need of additional programming? Are students of color disproportionately impacted by these financial policies?]*

As financial challenges continue to increase for our students, it will be important to consistently explore and expand opportunities for financial relief, especially for our low income and students of color.

**More recent focused outreach with a specific intent to increase access and enrollment of Latinx and African American students should connect back to a larger strategy to support and retain these populations.** *[Continue to review/edit this issue. Follow up with Outreach team for insight.]* The 2015-16 equity plan highlighted the need to tailor marketing efforts so that they were inclusive of the diverse population Foothill serves. Activities aligned with these efforts included developing brochures and other advertisements highlighting college programs for underserved populations. The activities also included multilingual translation in printed marketing materials for students and families where English is a second language. Foothill should continue its efforts to diversify its marketing approach. Nevertheless, years of the college operating without an outreach program during an enrollment decline resulted in more in-direct marketing efforts without a real end goal in mind. That end goal of where and how to focus outreach efforts is typically informed by a strategic enrollment plan, which the college is currently lacking. Particularly, the college has missed an opportunity to address the declining trend in African-American student enrollment.

Dual enrollment (specifically, Foothill College classes taught at a high school) has been proposed as a strategy to address racial equity gaps. In the 2019-20 academic year, Foothill College's Equity and Education Council discussed this topic at length across multiple meetings. It was recommended that the college should continue to build dual enrollment partnerships with area high schools, prioritizing those serving predominantly racially disproportionately impacted student groups. Both the college and the student benefit from translating work completed in high school for college credit into future enrollment at Foothill. The College needs to work to develop

pipelines within these partnerships that seamlessly connect those students to degree, certificate and transfer opportunities at Foothill.

Current partnerships were created as a result of Foothill staff doing the work of moving beyond the Foothill campus and venturing out into surrounding communities and seeking innovative ways to offer a college education to those that may not be able to access the opportunity otherwise. Whether it is through a non-credit course, dual enrollment, summer academy, or CTE pathways developed in concert with local non-profits, Foothill should work to not only understand the career and educational demands of those communities but demonstrate its ability to successfully meet those demands.

**Goal 1:** Develop a strategic enrollment management plan that outlines touch points from outreach through to enrollment to connect the dots in a way that takes us beyond diversity in access to support and adequate service for these populations.

**Goal 2:** Solidify strategic pipelines from high school to Foothill College for dual enrollment partnerships predominantly serving Latinx, African American, Pacific Islander, Filipinx and low-income students [AB 288/CCAP].

**Goal 3:** Create a vision for Foothill College to expand community-based partnerships in low-income and historically underrepresented communities.

**Goal 4:** Explore partnership and outreach models for replication or expansion.

Family Engagement Institute has long fostered successful partnerships in the community to service some of the most vulnerable populations of students at Foothill College. It is worth exploring their approach to the work and their model of service in providing exceptional support to underrepresented groups in the community.

**ENTRY: Enrollment to completion of 1<sup>st</sup> college level course**

**Lack of basic needs infrastructure at the college (Psych services, Food Pantry, Transportation, Homeless Referrals) prohibitive to student access to transportation, basic needs, psychological services.** *[Continue to review/edit this issue. Follow up with Student*

*Services for review and insight.]* The need for social services is not new at Foothill. In fact, recent activities are responding to meet the basic needs of our students. The food pantry was initially created [by EOPS (verify)] in [term/year] with non-perishable food items and expanded in winter 2018 to include fresh food items. A feasibility study for student housing was proposed in the Facilities Master Plan 2019-20 Update as well as institutionalizing a director of EOPS/CARE/Foster Youth/Housing Student Program<sup>3</sup> to help provide housing insecure and homeless students with affordable housing.

Foothill basic needs survey was administered spring 2018 to assess student experience with housing, food and transportation, and where applicable, compared Foothill results to other community colleges in the western region (California, Washington, Oregon, Arizona, New Mexico, Montana and Idaho) as well nationwide. Nearly 800 Foothill students responded and results indicate our students are more likely to report high/marginal affirmation with food insecurity (62%) than compared to their community college counterparts in the region (41%) or nation (44%). Our student respondents shared they could not afford to eat balanced meals (40%) and had to portion their meals or skip meals altogether because there was not enough money for food (33%). While it is not the majority, we have students who had to resort to staying in a vehicle or abandoned building not intended for housing and/or do not know where they were going to sleep even for one night. Over one-third (40%) of our students experience housing

insecurity, i.e., frequent moves, crowded living space, poor housing quality or the inability to afford rent or bills, compared to a little over half of the region and nation. One in 10 of our students (11%) experience homelessness, compared to 14% to 15% of the region and nation. When it comes to transportation, our students shared they spend two more hours per day commuting to and from Foothill (23%), miss class because of an issue with public transportation such as it ran late or they missed their connection (19%) and having to decide between using money for gas or public transportation to get to work versus to class (16%).

**Goal 1:** Develop and implement a social services plan that includes the consolidation of these resources, marketing and outreach to appropriate communities, etc.

**Goal 2:** Investigate long- and short-term housing solutions

**Goal 3:** Uncover the specific concerns around transportation; determine what is actionable, what may need to be revisited, and what actions are out of the College's control.

**Goal 4:** Address the need for more psychological services, looking into creative solutions to expanding this service to students.

*[Add sentence or two to close Issue.]*

**Lack of sense of belonging and space allocation for students of color at Foothill (Cultural center, dream center, LGBTQ center).** This plan is being written at a time when our nation is in upheaval tipped by the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota. As a country, we are openly talking about our criminal justice systems and how they continue to disproportionately disadvantage people of color. Over time, Foothill students and employees have reported feeling threatened or profiled by campus police officers, propelling students to request additional resources for mental health and trauma support around police interactions.

As our nation examines its policies and procedures for law enforcement officer training and relationship-building between law enforcement officers and their local communities, it's imperative for us to engage in this work on our campus as well. This includes a review of student conduct reporting and protocols, especially those that require looping in campus safety.

As the campus revisits and revises its facility master plan and looks to understand how space and environment impacts the student experience, it will be vitally important to learn from and include students in each step of the process. Sense of belonging and shared community have shown to positively impact the academic progress of community college students, particularly students of color.

Research highlights multicultural spaces and student-centered places for student to gather as strategies to build community and connection to campus. Foothill learning community students emphasized the need for a Multicultural Center distinct from the Village Space, but that is similar in the aim of creating community with a feeling of home.

With new California legislation in place in the form of AB 1645, the state is requiring the designation of Dreamer Resource Liaisons and is encouraging the creation of Dream Resource Centers at all public institutions of higher education, with the intent to increase enrollment and graduation rates among Undocumented students. While the state does not provide additional funding for this new legislation, it seems to be a timely opportunity to explore ways to meet the spirit and intent of the law as a whole, whether required or encouraged. The creation of a Dream Resource Center will be important to consider as part of the facility master plan and in connection with Foothill's recent selection by the Chancellor's Office to house a legal service provider on campus. \*Will add data on historical service to undocumented students here.

Student feedback also indicated a desire for clarity on the policy for the allocation of space, and engagement in decision-making and planning around student space and design. Testimonies of previous experience in requesting space mentioned delays and arduous processes, or creation of spaces/centers without student input or knowledge. Emphasis in understanding how spaces serve students of color, where students of color congregate on campus, and where services that the students need are primarily located.

Last but certainly not least, equity-minded curriculum and instruction are integral to student's sense of belonging and classroom community. Classroom environments should be welcoming and safe for students, particularly students of color, in order to foster learning and growth.

**Goal 1:** Campus safety is re-envisioned where police interact with students in a racially and culturally affirming manner, and regularly examine their practices and policies for racial impact.

**Goal 2:** Disaggregation of student conduct data by race to explore trends in reporting and sanctions, noting any disproportionate rates of reports to any particular racial group.

**Goal 3:** Increase mental health support for students of color, especially around trauma related to police interactions. [Hire a mental health professional who is of color.]

**Goal 4:** Existing classroom and campus (physical) spaces encourage student engagement and reflect an appreciation of multicultural and multi-ethnic backgrounds.

**Goal 5:** Create a multicultural/LGBTQ, and Dream centers

**Goal 6:** Space allocation processes ensure the design and usage of the space is student-led and student informed.

**Goal 7:** Curriculum and instruction norm multi-cultural and multi-ethnic perspectives.

*[Add sentence or two to close Issue.]*

**PROGRESS: Entry into program of study to near completion (75%)<sup>8</sup> of requirements**

**Many disciplines perpetuate the myth that knowledge is objective and race-neutral.** This leaves students ill-prepared to understand how systemic racism is upheld by this perceived objectivity and be leaders in disrupting it. Student opportunities to explore and understand systemic racism are siloed within particular disciplines that focus on social and human behavior, [Understanding how racism shows up in your discipline, recognizing what that looks like. How does racism impact industry and are we preparing students to be leaders in that work?]

“Educators need to address topics such as systemic racism, social activism, and service leadership in classrooms. We believe these discussions can take place across disciplines and should be addressed not only in classes with a more obvious association to racial inequity, but even in disciplines such as STEM. The students in these courses, who will eventually go into health and STEM careers, need to be prepared to address equity and be anti-racist in their fields.”

Path for ppl to examine/reimagine, keeping in mind the original intent of CCCs was not to serve minoritized students. Problem for faculty who want to do the work but feel constrained, Problem for college – need to be racially conscious to maintain competitiveness

**Goal 1:** Pedagogy and curriculum is race conscious.

A - Faculty are knowledgeable about the epistemology of their disciplines, especially of the contributions of racially diverse “scholars,” and curriculum includes this epistemology.

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<sup>8</sup>Need to clarify what “near completion” means. Reference Loss/Momentum Framework.

B - Faculty are knowledgeable about historical and contemporary racial equity issues in their disciplines and include in their course curricula

C- faculty are aware of approaches for using their discipline to prepare students to be social justice leaders

**Goal 2:** Faculty feel supported in their efforts to continually learn about the origins of their disciplines and iteratively refine their teaching.

**Goal 3:** The Academic Senate and the Faculty Association supports practitioner efforts to achieve goals 1 and 2 by removing structural barriers embedded in areas: What role can the organization play? Where instead of how? Hiring/tenure/curriculum committees. What are their objectives and how do we embed equity in their objectives? Include example of perspectives on purpose of tenure review process. Support or interrogation/weeding out? CCC ensures policies and procedures do not perpetuate racial inequity.

A-Tenure processes are reviewed and reimaged in a way that supports probationary faculty, tenure review committee members, and mentors in normalizing the practice of being race conscious while being supportive of continuous learning around this issue.

B-Faculty evaluations are seen as an opportunity to continuously build on the quality of our teaching, replacing the aim of perfectionism built into the process for one that values growth and improvement.

C- <sup>9</sup> Academic Senate, with the college's Curriculum Committee, reviews and reimagines curriculum policies and processes to ensure they are race-conscious.

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<sup>9</sup> Need collaboration and input with academic senate/CCC on this goal, as well as with FA. May need change at the district-level

Where disproportionate impact is the outcome of policy implementation or compliance, the college takes local action to mitigate it and when necessary, works in conjunction with administration to advocate for change at the board and/or state level.

*[Add sentence or two to close Issue.]*

**Microaggressions and unconscious bias negatively affect experience and learning for students of color.** *[Continue to review/edit this issue. Follow up with student leaders for*

*insight.]* As written in the open letter from student leaders in June 2020, “We also must ensure that the faculty and staff of Foothill are adequately trained and educated in regards to implicit/unconscious bias, systemic racism, white supremacy, white privilege, and social activism. We are asking that all faculty and staff are educated on these topics in a mandatory training session. The training sessions should be a 2 hour mandated event for two days. There should also be a panelist of students speaking to faculty in regard to their experiences in the classroom and on campus.”<sup>10</sup>

**Goal 1:** Campus spaces are free from racial microaggressions.

**Goal 2:** Campus culture supports explicit checking of unconscious bias.

*[Add sentence or two to close Issue.]*

**Lack of college-wide retention plan for students of color to progress through their academic career at Foothill.** *[Continue to review/edit this issue.]* Foothill’s 2015-16 Equity Plan suggested the need for a retention team to oversee the implementation and progress of the

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<sup>10</sup> Open Letter to Foothill College’s Academic Senate, student presented June 12, 2020.

activities listed in that iteration of the plan. The retention team was never formed due to competing demands and scheduling conflicts. However, the idea still holds value and should be brought back to the plan, perhaps with a narrower focus. Like the previous team, it should be composed of members from Instruction and Student Services.

While the college has retention programs for students, those programs are often limited by capacity, funding, and qualifications students must meet to access those services. There are still a significant number of students outside these programs who are not being served where the need still exists. The college needs to develop and implement a plan to address student attrition along the pipeline of a student's educational journey, with intervention strategies to address student drop off from registration to census and census to end of term (withdrawals). Additionally, the college should continue to support its retention programs and existing learning communities, strategizing with the programs about how to expand their reach so that more students can benefit from their program offerings.

**Goal 1:** Re-establish a campus retention team to develop and implement an intervention plan that addresses student attrition.

**Goal 2:** Expand the impact of learning community and retention programs

**Goal 3:** Surface retention challenges that may be unique to students who never access our physical campus space.

*[Add sentence or two to close Issue.]*

**Lack, or underutilization of campus support resources (tutoring, career center, transfer center, etc.)** When discussing resources, conversations tend to center around either the lack of certain resources to be available to students, or the underutilization of existing resources.

Lack of resources tends to circle around budget concerns and restrictions, while underutilization could be due to several reasons including lack of awareness or a perceived lack of need.

It will be important to continue to monitor the groups of students who take advantage of tutoring, what subjects are most requested, and the environment in which tutoring sessions take place. While tutoring has largely moved to a peer-to-peer model, the focus of tutoring content has also shifted more deliberately to align with AB705, increasing availability of support in Math and English in particular. Given the equity lens that is implied with this new legislation, it will be important to disaggregate data by race and monitor how students of color are engaging in this service.

An established career center could provide students with the opportunity to connect careers and majors to their educational plan. Having done some exploration around interest in potential careers can help to inform what major a student may enter, and series of courses to take.

Student feedback indicates a certain level of comfort and encouragement is felt with peer-to-peer interactions.

**Goal 1:** Explore and engage a model of tutoring that enhances access and utilization of the service, with regard to AB 705 academic support, and students of color underserved by the current model(s).

**Goal 2:** Develop a vision for a career center with special focus on early intervention for Latinx, African-American and other marginalized students, while monitoring for disproportionate tracking of low-income and students of color into low-wage programs

**Goal 3:** Investigate peer-to-peer mentoring that emphasizes college navigation, peer connection and social support, and the building of cultural capital

**Goal 4:** Surface issues and challenges of underutilization that may be unique to students who access our campus exclusively online and do not come to our physical campus space.

*[Add sentence or two to close Issue.]*

**Insufficient culturally responsive, relevant and sustaining pedagogy and other asset-based approaches in teaching and serving our students.** There are numerous benefits to hiring and retaining diverse faculty. Minoritized students experience higher rates of success<sup>i</sup>, diversity increases student and employee retention, the likelihood of implicit bias is reduced, and increasing faculty diversity helps all faculty better integrate multicultural and culturally responsive pedagogy.<sup>ii</sup> The recommended actions listed below are based upon those in the 2020 Vision for Success Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force Report.<sup>11</sup>

**Goal 1:** Planning and decision-making is informed by regular review of quantitative and qualitative data.

Strategies: *(these can be moved to an “equity action plan” addendum)*

- Establish a robust system to regularly and transparently analyze the racial demographic makeup of our students and our faculty.
- Normalize the practice of reporting of our employee diversity data to our college and board of trustees in parallel with our enrollment and financial data

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<sup>11</sup> [https://www.cccco.edu/-/media/CCCCO-Website/Reports/CCCCO\\_DEI\\_Report.pdf?la=en&hash=69E11E4DAB1DEBA3181E053BEE89E7BC3A709BEE](https://www.cccco.edu/-/media/CCCCO-Website/Reports/CCCCO_DEI_Report.pdf?la=en&hash=69E11E4DAB1DEBA3181E053BEE89E7BC3A709BEE)

- Clearly establish who is responsible for the implementation, monitoring, and reporting of our efforts to increase diversity in hiring and retention efforts
- Develop a process for exit interviews to assess perspectives on how the prevailing culture impacts diversity, attitudes towards diverse student and employee groups, awareness and success of diversity programs, likelihood of recommending districts to diverse job applicants, impact of current level of diversity on decision to leave.

**Goal 2:** Increase the racial diversity of our faculty, staff, and administrators

**Strategies:** *(these can be moved to an “equity action plan” addendum)*

- Actively track our hiring process decisions and analyze how they impact our goals to increase employee diversity
- Review and revise our job descriptions and vacancy announcements to ensure the language in them is not inadvertently communicating a culture of discrimination (e.g. refrain from using language commonly interpreted as gender-biased, race-biased, class-biased, etc.)
- Develop/adopt explicit standards for EEO reps to analyze what a diverse pool of applicants looks like, and the circumstances under which a search should be delayed for lack of applicant diversity
- Search committee members engage in a review of implicit bias mitigation strategies prior to each committee service
- Reviewing and revising preferred qualifications to include experience and skills pertaining to diversity and cultural competence
- questions around culturally responsive pedagogy in all faculty interviews

- questions around cultural competence in all staff and administrator interviews
- students on all of our hiring committees - Hiring committee members are inclusive of all constituencies including students
- Work with the CCCCCO to Chancellor's Office seek additional funding to support implementation of targeted advertising and recruitment strategies to offset costs of advertising in new places and using differentiated methods to recruit more diverse candidates
- Provide anti-bias training to all employees involved in our processes to determine equivalency
- Create a formal recognition process to reward areas that have made demonstrated progress to diversify

**Goal 3: Retain racially diverse employees**

Strategies: *(these can be moved to an "equity action plan" addendum)*

- Analyze data from exit interviews to inform strategies to improve retention

*[Add sentence or two to close Issue.]*

**Online education and the provision of comparable spaces, resources and services.**

Prior to the campus transition to virtual, Foothill had reached the point where over 50% enrollment was in online courses. We recognized that (a majority) of our students were taking both face-to-face courses AND online classes. However, there were some who took online classes exclusively, and never come to campus, and as a college we still have a long way to go in understanding the needs of this group of students. There have been some important lessons learned in our time as a virtual campus, especially those that demonstrated where we were

unprepared as a college to support students in an online environment. But as we prepare to eventually repopulate campus in the future, we cannot continue to define online students as if it is a characteristic that does not change. It is an enrollment status that is term specific. We need to learn more about the demographics and enrollment patterns of students who take online courses, and what resources they may need to successfully fulfill their educational goals. It will be important to look at the number of units students may be taking, and the purpose that online enrollment serves to that student. Are they a 4-year student taking only one course? Would they prefer taking some face-to-face classes but are forced to take online courses to work around their demanding work/life schedule? Are they a student who may not even live in the Bay Area? Would strictly online resources and tools best suit the needs of these students or would they prefer a combination of in-person and online services? Prior to going virtual, so much more needed to be understood and explored as we grew in online enrollment. But under our current circumstances, we have an opportunity to explore the racial breakdown of different online-identified groups to reveal any nuanced experiences, trends, or gaps experienced in the online realm.

What became abundantly clear in our college's move toward going fully virtual in late winter 2020, is that many of the equity issues present on campus also surface in a fully virtual/online environment. Paramount to creating an equitable learning experience for our students are some core tenets around providing an ethic of care to our students; centering our actions from the perspective of our most vulnerable students—which necessitates that our students not just providing input on how they envision our campus functioning, but that they are empowered to see their feedback to fruition; and with this, an acknowledgement of the variation of faculty, staff and student needs in a virtual environment. As we focus on the challenges

experienced by students when we moved to virtual campus, we also need to address the challenges to faculty and staff. They must be supported if our college is to be student-ready and online teaching and learning-ready

Having to transition fully online exposed a number of ways that our students were mitigating challenges inherent to their educational journey, and even some of the ways that our institution has helped alleviate those challenges, as well as exacerbate them. Technological knowledge and access to that resource became a profound issue, and not just for students. However, issues related to technology were not the only problems to surface during this time, as our college began to learn more about how place and space impact our students' ability to remain present and engaged in their learning.

Our ability to provide an ethic of care is not limited to the face-to-face interactions we have with our students. An ethic of care can be as simple as clear and direct communication with our students. That is, a commitment to follow up and follow through with our students to make sure they have their questions answered and they are getting what they need. It also means empathy from the institution for our students as they seek out answers to questions that, unbeknownst to us, could mean the difference between them remaining enrolled and withdrawing; particularly in a crisis in which we saw many of our students struggle to meet their basic needs of food and shelter. Explicit communication from the college that goes out to all students in all relevant ways, timely responsiveness, and following through to close the loop with our students demonstrates that ethic of care for our students.

Our move to a fully online environment also showcased how easy it is to slip back into a pattern of doing what is easiest or most efficient, or most comfortable in moments of instability and unease. Defaulting to what we know to help manage that stability may only serve to protect

our status quo way of operating. This includes focusing our efforts and attention on how to best serve our most vulnerable students and making sure that ideas on how to do this are generated from the students, themselves. Processes developed to assist our students changed from their initial iteration as our student workers provided insight that countered some of the college's assumptions about the best way to serve them. Bringing students in on the ground floor to help create and design some of our processes is another way of engaging equity. As a college we were able to offer services we never thought could be online.

What was specifically uncovered is that many of our students struggled with some major necessities for online learning including strong and reliable internet connection. Additionally, our college did not have a way to assist our students with their more complex needs around updating operating systems, installing software, and other technology related troubleshooting. Installing the Student Technology Hub was a step in the correct direction, but the fact that it did not exist prior to being fully online says something about the College's assumptions about its online students. Similarly, trying to meet the technology needs of our students without clear understanding of what those needs are can present some equity challenges. One of those most basic needs is training on how to use some of these tools, including things like laptops and Chromebooks. For example, our operating assumption that students understand how to turn these tools on and navigate them meant we were not prepared to adequately answer questions or provide assistance to our students.

All the while, there were a number of challenges to the fully online environment that were not related to technology. Concerns of students having an adequate learning environment arose as students navigated things like 24-7 caregiving for dependents, not having a desk/table for workspace so they sat on floors, not having access to quiet or distraction-free spaces so they

hid in closets, sharing internet bandwidth with others in the household, and the tasking impact (on all, really) of being on a computer for the better part of the day. It also raised debate around synchronous and asynchronous online classes in trying to understand the best way to meet the needs of our most vulnerable students. These issues did not just arise for students. Faculty and staff experienced them as well. What will be important to remember, though, is that once the college is able to offer on-campus instruction again, these issues will continue to remain for those students that will only have online as an option for them. It will be important to remain cognizant that these challenges remain for some, as they become sorted for the rest of us.

**Goal 1:** Explore and disaggregate data to best understand challenges for students who access Foothill exclusively online and never travel to our physical campus space. [Connect to online equity affirmation]

**Goal 2:** Continue assessment of online services and create a system that sustains these services because students will still need them. Maintain capacity of services comparable to level of enrollment.

**Goal 3:** Online classes are engaging for all students. [Connect to online equity affirmation]

**Goal 4:** tech and resources offered mimic/provide comparable or better student experience as f2f [Connect to online equity affirmation]

**Goal 5:** Faculty are fully equipped and prepared to teach effectively in the online/virtual environment

**COMPLETION: Complete program of study to credential with labor market value**

*(Add issues and goals associated with completion)*

*Narratives below still need to be updated and incorporated into Issues and Goals section above. Determine whether each belong to Connection, Entry, Progress, Completion.*

**Program Review.** *(Are there issues and goals related to Program Review that we need to address in the plan? Or is this narrative best served in Part I to speak to work that has been done?)* At the end of the 2017-18 academic year, Foothill College's Instructional Planning & Budget (IP&B) Task Force was charged to redesign the program review process for implementation in 2019-20 ([IP&B Meeting Minutes, July 11, 2019](#)). The function of the new program review remain unchanged from its predecessor in that it continues to be an integral part of institutional effectiveness, offering an opportunity for a program to (1) assess its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and potential challenges; (2) adjust its design and implementation for improvements; and (3) plan and identify resources needed to carry out a short- and long-term plan of action. The program review encompasses a five-year self-study (formerly three-year comprehensive review) and annual progress report. Each instructional and student success program engages in a self-study to examine their performance data and to reflect, analyze, and develop a strategic plan of action for the next five years. The annual progress report serves to track and monitor plan progress and budgetary resources. Resource requests are also made each year through the annual template.

A primary goal of program review is to encourage continuous improvement of instructional, instructional support, and student success programs (source: <https://foothill.edu/programreview/>).

In order to achieve this goal, the new program review is no longer attached to punitive actions such as program elimination; and thereby creates space for programs to authentically

acknowledge areas for improvements and to seek assistance. Some enhancements and additions to the new program review process include the following:

- Performance data questions that prompts for understanding of enrollment and course success trends of each ethnic group: African American, Filipinx, Latinx, Native American, Pacific Islander, White, and Decline to State. For example, “In the data table above, what does the data trend indicate about program student course success for [African American students]?” Response options include increase, decrease, or no change in success rate over the five-year period.
- Reflection questions probe programs to provide rationale for any decreasing trend observed for each ethnic group, whether there are differences in success rates among the ethnic groups, whether the data suggests changes are necessary to improve program course success equality and if so, encourages programs to propose a plan of action to improving course success.
- Creation of a rubric to guide and provide transparency to program review writers and readers/reviewers as to what is being evaluated and how responses will be assessed. Additionally, when addressing rationale or proposed plan of action, the rubric provides suggested topics intended to elicit responses about culturally relevant pedagogy or curriculum, instructional modality, scheduling outreach efforts, hiring practices and where applicable, career labor market data and industry trends.

The redesigned program review template and processes adopted an equity-minded lens when reflecting on how data might inform program improvement and planning. As such, efforts were made to emphasize the following components so program review writers and readers were equitably supported:

- **Access:** The online program review tool (hosted by Precision Campus) was designed to include five years of data, allowing for trend analysis. Additionally, these data were accessible to all employees down to the course level, and could be examined by various student characteristics, including ethnicity, gender, age, educational level, as well as instructional modality and various student populations (e.g. DSPS, EOPS, First-Generation College, Foster Youth, Veterans, etc.). For the program review template, the agreed upon metrics had data tables populated within the web-based form so these data would be easily referenced, minimizing any confusion regarding which data were needed to respond to which prompt.
- **Analysis/Interpretation:** Institutional Research & Planning (IRP)'s role expanded beyond the data provider role to functioning as a data coach. The IRP team provided case management-style support that included group training and one-to-one coaching, allowing for different learning styles and familiarity/comfort with data. IRP worked collaboratively with program review writers and readers to navigate efficiently through the program review template.
- **Feedback:** Program review readers were identified from across campus. In addition to having the program Dean as a reader, a within division faculty representative were also identified. An at-large faculty and classified staff helped broaden the perspective beyond the division and program. These lenses provide both depth and breadth in reflecting on the program's role and presence within the college.

***Topics below need to be flushed out into narratives so that it can be decided if they should be incorporated into the Issues and Goals section of the plan, another area, or at all.***

**Budget Reduction and Planning from an Equity Lens** *(separate issue)*

**Grading/Assessment of Students**

**Anti-Racist Curriculum** *(fold this into curriculum)*

**People of Color representation in Psych Services** *(fold this into faculty hiring)*

**Affinity Groups (By ethnicity, Interest-Based, Parents?)** *(internal project of Equity Office)*

**Academic Senate Resolutions**

- Faculty Anti-racism Leadership at Foothill College
- Creation of Ethnic Studies Department
- Faculty Leadership in Foothill's Equity Strategic Plan
- Faculty Leadership around Foothill Campus Climate

**Re-envisioning the work week, especially for staff, to create opportunities and incentives for staff to participate in “service to the college” (in parallel with expectation that faculty do service to the college)**

**California Community Colleges Call to Action Items**

- Systemwide review of police and first responder training and curriculum
- Campus leaders host open dialogue and address campus climate
- Campuses audit classroom climate and create an action plan to create inclusive classrooms and anti-racism curriculum
- District Boards review and update your Equity Plans with urgency.
- Engage in the Vision Resource Center “Community Colleges for Change.”

**Student Services Black Lives Matter Action Plans**

**Foothill Students' Open Letter to Academic Senate** *(fold this into curriculum)*

- Educators need to address topics such as systemic racism, social activism, and service leadership in classrooms. We believe these discussions can take place across disciplines and should be addressed not only in classes with a more obvious association to racial inequity, but even in disciplines such as STEM. The students in these courses, who will eventually go into health and STEM careers, need to be prepared to address equity and be anti-racist in their fields.
- The Umoja program's curriculum emphasizes African American culture, experience, and history- this curriculum should be present in other English, history, literature, and philosophy classes that are not a part of the program. Hearing diverse perspectives is monumental in shaping our views against anti-racism.
- History classes should accurately address uncomfortable topics such as the unjust slave history that precedes this country, as well as conversations about movements fighting systemic racism such as Black Lives Matter. Racism can only be effectively countered through education- the mission of Foothill College as an institution.
- Our sister school De Anza has a robust intercultural studies program, with course offerings such as: Race, Ethnicity and Inequality , An Introduction to African American Literature , Asian American Experiences Past to Present , The Chicano/a and Latino/a and the Arts , and Native American History . These courses are not offered at Foothill, thus limiting the perspectives of these backgrounds. Students benefit from seeing their culture and ethnic backgrounds represented in the classroom, and studies suggest that the relevant subject matter encourages students to be more engaged in the coursework. We ask that you have a plan to offer similar courses at Foothill for the future and perhaps

eventually create a new Intercultural Studies department, by addressing this in the Equity Plan 2.0.

- The aforementioned Equity Plan 2.0 needs to be revised and put in motion- equity is of utmost importance for our institution, especially being in one of the most diverse areas of the country. To truly cater to all students of diverse backgrounds, this Equity Plan needs to be carried out- words need to become actions.
- We also must ensure that the faculty and staff of Foothill are adequately trained and educated in regards to implicit/ unconscious bias, systemic racism, white supremacy, white privilege, and social activism. We are asking that all faculty and staff are educated on these topics in a mandatory training session. The training sessions should be a 2 hour mandated event for two days. There should also be a panelist of students speaking to faculty in regard to their experiences in the classroom and on campus. (*fold this into training*)

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<sup>i</sup> Fairlie, R.W., Hoffmann, F., & Oreopoulos, P. (2011). A Community College Instructor Like Me: Race and Ethnicity Interactions in the Classroom. NBER Working Paper No. 17381. *National Bureau of Economic Research*.

<sup>ii</sup> [Vision for Success Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force 2020 Report](#)