

 FOOTHILL COLLEGE

# STRATEGIC VISION FOR EQUITY

2021–2025



Executive  
Summary

# Our Scope of Equity

*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.*

## **Believing a well-educated population is essential to sustaining a democratic and just society**

Foothill College has an illustrious history of providing transformative educational experiences. However, we recognize that the educational system in the United States was never intended to serve all students. The purpose of our equity plan is to address this history. We are intentional in our choice to center race in our equity work because institutional racism continues to harm students of color.

## **Create a college community where student success is not predictable by race**

Despite our efforts over the decades, Foothill College continues to have racial disparities which are predictable based on historical trends in student success metrics. The Strategic Vision for Equity identifies barriers to success for students of color and proposes solutions.

The work of equity is not new to the Foothill community. What is new is the college-wide alignment across three areas aimed to inform the vision for equity at Foothill. These areas are campus feedback from faculty, staff, and students, scholarship on race and equity, and California state initiatives (Vision for Success, AB 705, etc.). Organically, these three areas revealed consistency in thought and focus, providing a common foundation from which to build.

## **Dismantle oppressive systems (structural, cultural, and individual)**

There are three dimensions of change our college must engage in to shift toward racial equity. These dimensions (structural, cultural, and individual change) are collectively known as the Equity-Driven Systems Change model.

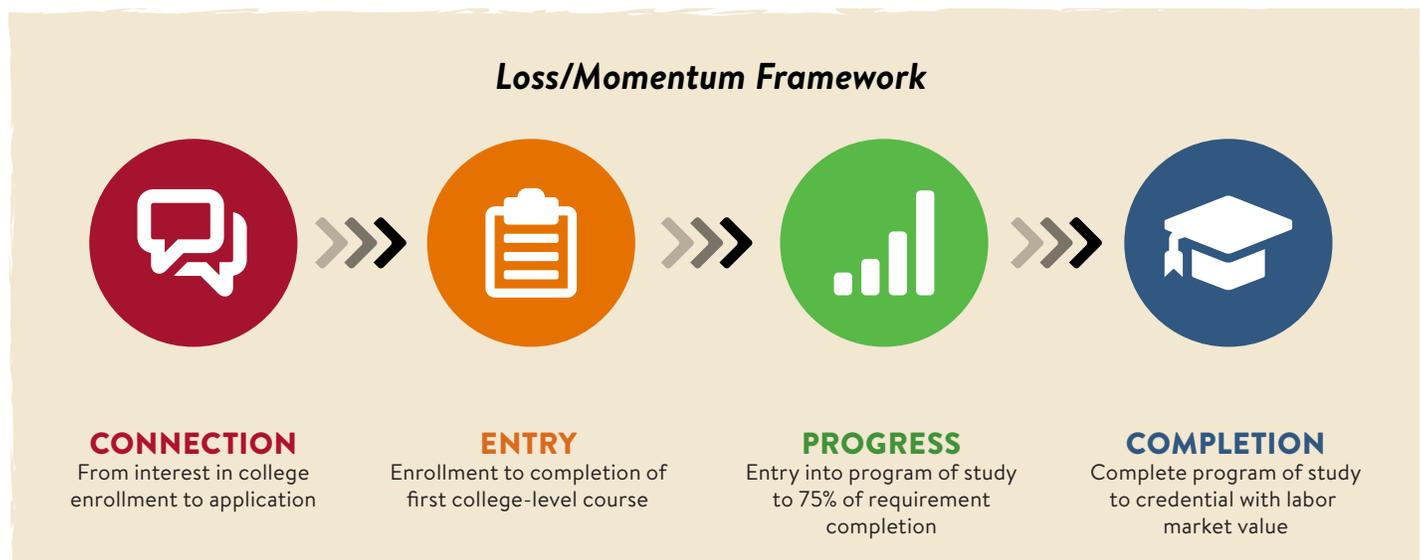
- **Structural:** Structural change seeks to remove the college-wide barriers that disenfranchise students of color and provides a thorough investigation of Foothill's policies, procedures, and employee roles and responsibilities that govern how our college runs.
- **Cultural:** A culture of equity requires our campus to come together under a common philosophy and desired vision. Specifically, how do we become a culturally responsive, appreciative, and equity-centered institution?
- **Individual:** We all own the responsibility to engage in individual change and professional and personal development. The act of ongoing self-reflection is imperative in our equity efforts.

All levels of system-change dimensions can impact and influence one another. By addressing all levels of change at the same time, a more transformative institutional shift can occur.

# Issues in Connection, Entry, Progress, and Completion

The following section summarizes the issues identified by the college based on a culmination of more than two years of analysis and consultation with students, faculty, and staff. Each issue is coupled with a set of goals as described in the plan. The issues and goals serve as visionary framework for further deliberation and action.

These issues and goals are organized within this plan along the Loss/Momentum pathway of Connection, Entry, Progress, and Completion. Our college enrollment data suggests a pertinent and sustained disproportionate impact on African American, Filipinx, Native American and Pacific Islander students during each phase of their journey.



## CONNECTION

This first step in the framework refers to a student's initial interest in college enrollment to the completion of their application. A substantial number of Latinx and African American students who have an interest in college, and even apply, do not make it through the intake process to enroll in classes. The goal in this phase is to support new students to apply in a timely manner, secure financial aid if necessary, begin to develop an educational plan and a career goal, and enroll in coursework appropriate to their level of readiness and goals. Understanding what happens to students in this phase can help us as a college improve outreach, onboarding, and placement.

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.

**Issue 1. The onboarding process disproportionately impacts African American students.**

**Issue 2. There are large numbers of students of color who are not accessing, are ineligible for, or fall out of eligibility for available financial aid programming.**

**Issue 3. More recent focused outreach with a specific intent to increase access and enrollment of Latinx and African American students doesn't readily connect back to a larger strategy to support and retain these populations.**

## ENTRY

This phase represents the period from student enrollment to completion of their first college-level course. The objective here is to help students choose and enter a program of study as early as possible. Many students seeking degrees drop out after only one or two terms, as evidenced by our most recent data.

**Issue 4. The current lack of coordinated infrastructure for basic needs services at the college (psychological services, food pantry, transportation, homeless referrals) can make it prohibitive for students of color to access services.**

**Issue 5. Lack of a sense of belonging, safety, and space allocation for students of color**

## PROGRESS

The progress phase follows the students from entry into their program of study through approximately 75% of requirements, or near completion. During this phase, the aim is to help students get to the point where the end is in sight.

**Issue 6. Many programs perpetuate structural racism by failing to educate students in the history and ongoing racism implicit and explicit in their disciplines.**

**Issue 7. Insufficient culturally responsive, relevant and sustaining pedagogy and other asset-based approaches in teaching and serving our students of color.**

**Issue 8. Microaggressions and unconscious bias negatively affect experience and learning for students of color.**

**Issue 9. Lack of a college-wide retention plan for students of color to progress through their academic career at Foothill.**

**Issue 10. Lack, or underutilization of campus support resources (tutoring, career center, transfer center, etc.).**

**Issue 11. Students accessing our classes and services online are not receiving comparable spaces, resources, and services as students who access them on campus.**



All illustrations  
by Malaya Tuyay



## COMPLETION

In this phase, we monitor students' rates of completion by program, and determine whether our students are able to move successfully to the next level of education, a higher level degree program for certificate recipients, or transferring with junior standing in the desired major field for associate recipients, and advance in the labor market. This information is critical to ensure that our college's programs are aligned with the requirements for success as set out in the plan, and also to meet the state's Vision for Success goals and subset equity goals.

**Issue 12: Program and Service Area assessments did not invoke meaningful discussion and action around equity efforts.**

**Issue 13: Across the California Community College system, all students are not succeeding in comparable rates at reaching their educational goals.**

*“Justice is what love looks like in public.” – Dr. Cornel West*

## CONCLUSION

Our Scope of Equity incorporates our college's mission statement – that already speaks to a well-educated population being critical for a democratic society – and adds that our college's equity work is also to create a “just” society. The work of equity is the work of justice and democracy at Foothill – the effort to actualize our humanity and fulfill our purpose as a community college.

Foothill College's culture of innovation and excellence, along with a genuine commitment to students, will be essential in our college's equity efforts. The college is comprised of people that care deeply about their role as educators. We will continue to lead with our heart and our humanity, and to be courageous in the work of equity. We aim to follow the protocols of Courageous Conversations: speak our truth, stay engaged, expect discomfort, accept non-closure, and seek multiple perspectives.

As we move toward action and our aim of racial equity, we will stumble as we learn, but we will grow both in our mistakes and in our successes – together. The implementation, necessary resource allocation, and continuous assessment of the plan will result in a college-wide effort that is aligned with our Board of Trustees' priorities and the state's equity initiatives. By having a written college plan and taking actions collectively, we are demonstrating our commitment to students and holding ourselves accountable.

