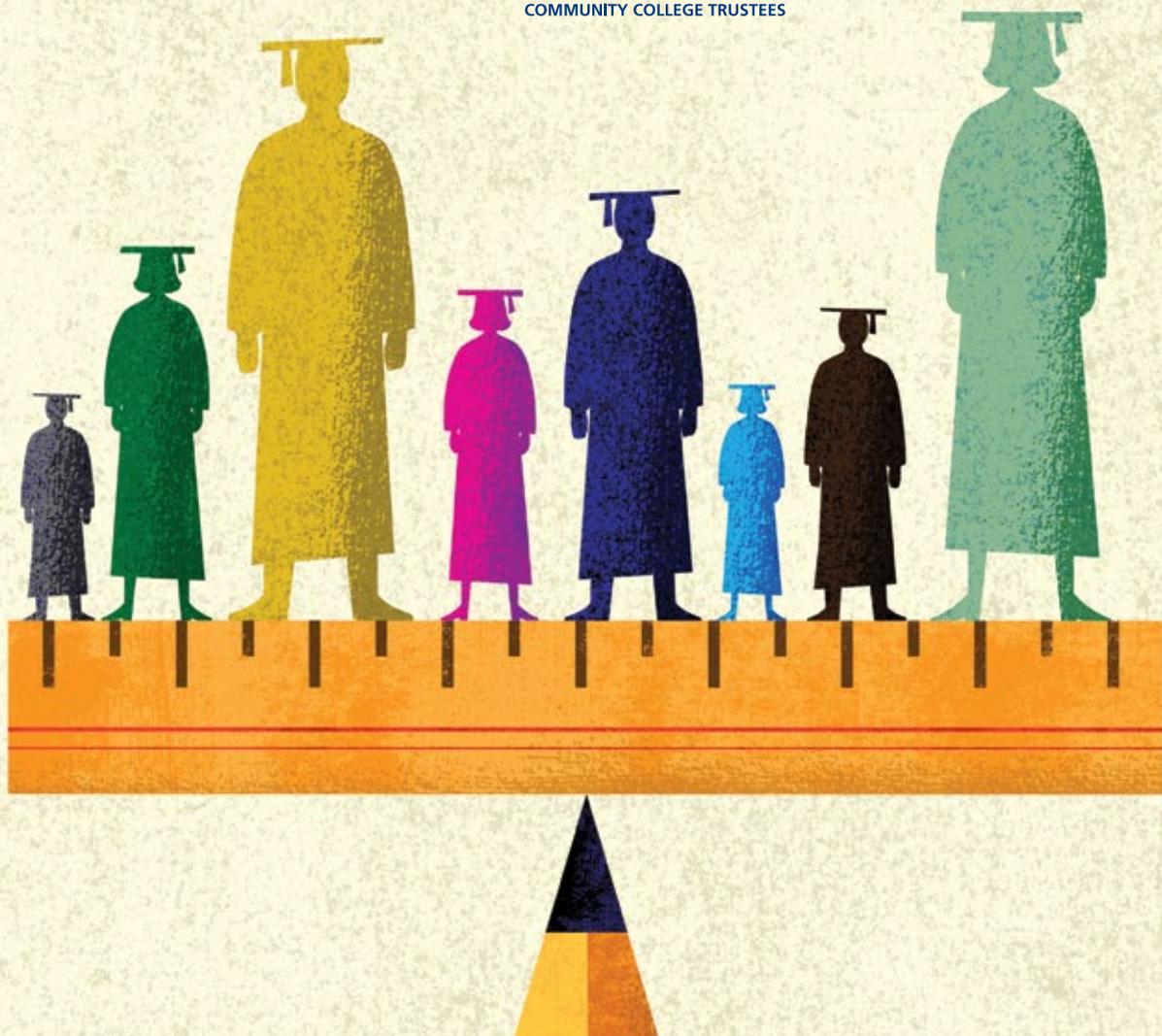


EQUITY ACTION AGENDA

FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE GOVERNANCE

with the endorsement of the
DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE



Overview

ACCT's **Equity Action Agenda for Community College Governance** is a guide based on the responsibilities of community college trustees and the college's leadership to promote policies that support access, affordability, equity and completion for all community college students. College diversity, equity, and inclusivity policies facilitate academic progress and economic and social mobility for all.

Equity in higher education refers to creating opportunities for equal access and success among historically underrepresented student populations to ensure:



Proportional participation occurs at all levels of an institution;



Adequate resources are directed at closing equity gaps (**resource equity**); and



Institutional leadership and willingness to address diversity, equity, and inclusivity issues are prioritized.

Educational equity depends on fairness and inclusion in the educational system and includes equity in various categories: socio-economic, racial, gender, and ability, among others. Institutions of higher education have an imperative to avoid discrimination based on these qualities and to support disadvantaged students whether the issues are income and class, race, gender, ability, or other factors. **Inclusive, equitable, and diverse environments are essential for all students to succeed.**

Purpose

This guide is intended to assist community and technical college boards and CEOs to:

- Engage in meaningful and productive discussions around equity and the role of the college in ensuring access and opportunity for **all** campus and community members;
- Embrace and reinforce a culture that values and promotes equity, diversity, and inclusion;
- Understand the board's role in shaping and supporting goals, policies, practices, and procedures that promote equitable experiences and outcomes;
- Identify and examine appropriate metrics and indicators of equity success (e.g., access, use of specialized student support services such as writing and speaking labs, tutors, specialized academic advisors, etc., course completion, English as a Second Language enrollment, degree and certificate completion, transfer, etc.), as well as diversity of staff, faculty, and students;
- Provide leadership, support, and assistance (where appropriate) in developing next steps for designing and implementing equitable institutional policies, practices, and processes;
- Establish appropriate reporting and accountability measures to monitor progress toward achieving equity goals and outcomes.

The Trustee Role

As leaders, policy makers, and advocates, trustees play a vital role in ensuring that equity, diversity, inclusion, access, and economic opportunity are priorities for their institutions and the communities they serve.

Trustee Leadership

- The president/CEO search process should be inclusive; outreach should be targeted to broad and diverse publications and outlets. The job description should reflect the college's commitment to equity.
- The college mission statement should reflect the institution's commitment to equity.
- Resources should be devoted to programs and services with demonstrated effectiveness in meeting student, community, and/or workforce needs and promoting equitable opportunities. For example, adequate resources should be allocated toward initiatives aimed at improving opportunities and outcomes for underserved or disadvantaged populations such as those from lower income brackets, men of color, or students with disabilities.
- The board should be visibly unified in its commitment to promoting access, success, and equity and to assuring the best hiring practices for addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the college or district.

Key Questions for Trustees

- Do the governing board and college leadership reflect the diversity of the community?
- Does the board have a fair and consistent policy for CEO selection and evaluation? Does it include clear and specific goals related to equity?
- Does the board have a policy that assures best hiring practices districtwide that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion?
- How does the board's policy provide for the regular review of the mission statement to ensure relevance to the college's equity goals?

- To what extent do fiscal policies and allocation of resources align with the institution's equity goals?
- Do board practices promote an environment for open, frank, and confidential dialogue where all voices are welcomed?

Policy Development

- Integrate an equity agenda into institutional plans and clearly outline roles, responsibilities, and implementation timelines for initiatives designed to promote accountability, including the college's strategic plan, and departmental plans (HR, academic and student affairs/services, facilities/procurement, diverse contractors/suppliers).
- Ensure that plans are distributed broadly and often among all staff and administrators.
- Conduct an independent assessment of institutional practices in relation to equity across all departments and divisions.
- Identify effective programs/practices such as remediation, guided pathways, and alternative schedules that improve educational outcomes for all students. Monitor effectiveness and adjust as needed.
- Assess the diversity and equity of college leadership (including the governing board).
- Develop a plan that addresses CEO and board leadership transitions.

Key Questions for Trustees

- What college policies and procedures are needed to keep tuition affordable while ensuring the institution's financial health?
- Are existing policies examined regularly to identify those that may be barriers to equity, access, and success?
- Are adequate financial resources being allocated to achieve equity, diversity, and inclusion goals?
- Are human-resource policies fair, equitable, and inclusive? Do position descriptions include equity criteria?

Accountability and Continuous Improvement

- Monitor the progress being made on the institution's strategic priorities, including diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Regularly review disaggregated data (e.g., gender, ethnicity, income) on enrollment, retention, persistence, completion, and other indicators of student success, equity, and institutional effectiveness.
- Develop accountability measures and monitor and assess progress toward strategic priorities and goals of the college.

Key Questions for Trustees

- Is there a policy for regular review and assessment of student services?
- Is there a policy for regular review and assessment of recruitment and hiring practices?
- Are policy decisions informed by student success data and considerations of equity?

Community Engagement

- Conduct regular periodic reviews of labor-market data and other economic indicators to identify workforce needs such as growing/shrinking industries in the area, skill gaps, and opportunities.
- Assess current and projected demographic characteristics of the community (e.g., compare the college's demographics to the K-12 student population as well as the local and regional community). Determine if they are aligned and what gaps exist, if any.

- Engage with federal, state, and local labor departments and other agencies to advocate support for the college's equity goals.
- Partner with local funders and business and industry leaders to tap sources of support that can support the college's equity goals.
- Incorporate diverse student, faculty, and community voices in public statements, media and advertisements.

Key Questions for Trustees

- What policies are in place to facilitate effective and efficient sharing of data with other systems, such as K-12 sector and four-year institutions?
- Does the college have an equity plan or equity policies in place?

Next Steps

- Boards and all college staff should undertake professional development specifically related to equity training.
- Develop data systems to support equity and collect data on equity indicators to make positive change toward eliminating disparities.
- Develop accountability goals and measures of progress around equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Continually assess equity gaps and goals.
- The college should target resources, develop private-public partnerships, and proactively reach out to the community.
- Equity goals, plans, and activities should be advertised and celebrated throughout the college and the community to ensure a welcoming campus climate.

