

# EQUITY STRATEGIC PLAN

2020 - 2025

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 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 produce outcomes that have served to lessen disparities among our most vulnerable populations. We appreciate spaces that embody team, family, and community spirit. We recognize our students are continuously improving and developing. Perhaps most importantly, our college values and acknowledges individuals as whole people and sees their potential.

We have a scope of equity work that states: *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.*

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 many continue to be marginalized. Despite our ongoing efforts over the years, Foothill continues to have demographically predictable disparities in student success. By shifting from a deficit lens, which focuses on which students may be deemed not college ready, to one that questions how we may be creating barriers with our current approach to serving students, and *who* is harmed by those barriers, the responsibility is then on us as a college to instead be student ready.

The work of equity and diversity is not new to the Foothill community. 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. 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. However, the voice of the students has been the strongest impetus to move the campus toward its goal of racial equity.

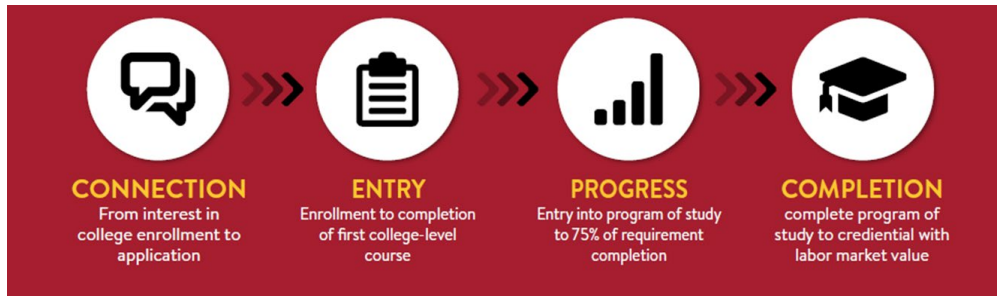
In order to employ a shift toward racial equity, there are three dimensions of change our college must engage: structural, cultural, and individual, known as the Equity-Driven Systems of Change model. Structural change speaks to the type of change that seeks to remove the college-wide barriers that uphold the disenfranchisement of low-income students of color, and speaks to the thorough investigation of Foothill's policies, procedures, roles and responsibilities that govern how our college runs. The dimension of cultural change uncovers and confronts the reasoning behind the inequities in our institution. Creating a culture of equity may be the most difficult area of change to enact, as it requires our campus to come together under a common philosophy and desired vision, specifically around how we embody a culturally responsive, appreciative and equity-centered institution. Leading us to the third type of change: individual. 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. It is also important to note that all levels of change can impact and influence one another. Both individual and structural change will influence the culture of a campus. Individuals can enact structural change. Cultural change can

inspire individual change. Structural change impacts individual efforts. So in addressing all levels, a more transformative change can occur.

With the tremendous efforts that must occur to provide more equitable student experiences, accountability becomes an important element in that process toward change. The Foothill community will establish their role in the plan toward equity by defining what actions they can take to address issues laid out in the plan – individually, culturally, and structurally. The Office of Equity will partner to brainstorm and refine ideas, bring in additional stakeholders who have power to concretize those ideas and ensure the college remains focused on students and continues to center race. The Office of Equity will be responsible for checking-in with the campus community to help them assess their implementation efforts, and provide support with further consultation and advocacy for resources needed. As implementation, assessment, and sharing of lessons learned occurs, so will opportunities for synergy and coordination of efforts. This plan provides a unique opportunity to hold ourselves accountable to our scope of equity work, demonstrated in our commitment and accountability to our values, our personal growth, and to results.

## **ISSUES AND GOALS**

This section will lay out demonstrated issues and visionary goals, empowering campus community members to determine their own actions that align with that vision, rather than as directives coming from the top down. These issues and goals are organized within this plan along the Loss/Momentum pathway of Connection, Entry, Progress, and Completion.



## CONNECTION

This first step in the framework refers to a student's initial interest in college enrollment to completion of their application.

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

Goal 1: The application to registration pipeline is transparent and intuitive to students.

Foothill retains students through the onboarding process, particularly those disproportionately impacted in the process (African American students).

Goal 2: Explore further districtwide FHDA collaboration and the potential for a shared application.

Goal 3: The onboarding process will be inclusive and take into account new students who seek to enroll in hybrid and exclusively online courses; and therefore, may not yet have an inherent need to physically be on campus.

Goal 4: Orientation is accessible to all new students prior to their first day of instruction.

Orientation content is specific to Foothill's onboarding process, providing guidance on how to navigate instructional and student support services to help students become familiar with the campus and its offerings.

Goal 5: African American students are consistently supported throughout the Connection phase, perhaps via a case management model shown to be successful at the college.

Goal 6: There are no barriers in our enrollment and registration processes. Work with the Office of Online Learning, Committee of Online Learning (COOL), and other

**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.**

Goal 1: Eliminate tuition costs for all students across the CCC system. Increase administrative advocacy at the state level.

Goal 2: Students are knowledgeable about the different financial aid programs and services available to them, and successfully apply for that assistance.

Goal 3: There are few to no incidental costs associated with being a student, including but not limited to textbooks, printing, and parking costs.

Goal 4: There is no demographically predictable disproportionate impact among students with financial holds and/or drops for non-payment.

**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.**

Goal 1: Foothill has a documented strategic enrollment plan that expands access to college programs for underrepresented student populations, outlining touch points from outreach through registration to provide support for potential and incoming students.

Goal 2: Foothill's CCAP dual enrollment partnerships have established pipelines from high school to Foothill College programs. Dual enrollment partnerships focus on

expanding college access in the high schools for underrepresented student populations.

Goal 3: Foothill College has community-based partnerships in low-income and historically underrepresented communities, reflective of diverse and culturally relevant outreach models.

## **ENTRY**

This phase represents the period from student enrollment to completion of their first college-level course.

**Issue 4. 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.**

Goal 1: Foothill students seeking basic needs resources experience a streamlined referral process, providing coordinated assistance for all aid they are eligible for.

Goal 2: Students' housing needs are met. Long- and short-term housing solutions will be explored, including homelessness initiatives in the county and transitional housing programs and student housing.

Goal 3: Students' transportation needs are met. 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: Students' psychological needs are met. Creative solutions on how to expand racial trauma-informed psychological services for students will be investigated and employed.

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

Goal 1: Police interact with students in a racially and culturally affirming manner.

Goal 2: There is no disproportionate impact in student conduct data such as reporting or sanctions.

Goal 3: Students of color have broad access to diverse mental health professionals, especially around trauma related to police interactions.

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

Goal 5: Students have access to multicultural, LGBTQ, and Dream centers

Goal 6: Space allocation processes ensure that design and usage of space is student informed.

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

**PROGRESS**

The progress phase follows the students from entry into their program of study through approximately 75% of requirements, or near completion.

**Issue 6. Many disciplines perpetuate the myth that they are objective and race-neutral.**

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.

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

C- Faculty are aware of approaches for using their discipline to prepare students to be racially conscious, community, and global leaders through opportunities such as service leadership.

D- Faculty use culturally responsive pedagogy and engage in ongoing professional development around their teaching practices

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

Goal 3: Administration collaborates with Academic Senate and the Faculty Association to support practitioner efforts to achieve goals 1 and 2, by removing structural barriers embedded in tenure and evaluation processes.

A-Tenure processes support tenure-track 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 current aim of perfectionism, assimilation, and weeding-out, for one that values growth and improvement.

C-Curriculum policies and processes are race conscious. 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.

Goal 4: Faculty workload realistically positions faculty to implement culturally responsive pedagogy effectively.



**Issue 7. Microaggressions and unconscious bias negatively affect experience and learning for students of color.**

Goal 1: Foothill will reduce or decrease the climate of racial microaggressions.

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

Goal 3: Professional development opportunities informed by or in partnership with students will be available to employees.

**Issue 8. Lack of a college-wide retention plan for students of color to progress through their academic career at Foothill.**

Goal 1: The college has a coordinated plan with a set of successful, culturally relevant interventions in play that retains students through three important milestones in a term: 1) course registration through to census, 2) from census through the end of the quarter with successful course completion, and 3) successful enrollment in the subsequent term. Specifically, this plan would consist of strategies that not only are proven effective for Foothill's most vulnerable student populations (in this case, African-American and Latinx women), but can be inclusive and encompassing of other populations' needs.

Goal 2: The promising practices of existing retention programs and learning communities are incorporated into the rest of the campus.

Goal 3: The college addresses the retention challenges that arise when students, staff and faculty do not have access to the physical campus and cannot meet with students in a traditional face-to-face environment. Challenges include privacy for confidential conversations, dedicated studying spaces with easy access to academic materials,

resources and employee support, and connection to a college community that counteracts student isolation in higher education.

**Issue 9. Lack, or underutilization of campus support resources (tutoring, career center, transfer center, etc.).**

Goal 1: Tutoring models lead with equity to enhance access and utilization of their services.

Ample support is provided to ensure the success of AB705 implementation.

Goal 2: Career exploration support is offered at the onset of students' educational journey with special focus on early intervention for Latinx and African-American students, careful to avoid implicit bias of channeling low-income and students of color into lower wage programs.

Goal 3: Service leadership activities promote peer-to-peer connections, emphasize college navigation, social support, and the building of cultural capital.

Goal 4: The college is able to identify and address the challenges in accessing resources and support that are unique to students who engage with our campus exclusively online.

**Issue 10. Insufficient culturally responsive, relevant and sustaining pedagogy and other asset-based approaches in teaching and serving our students of color.**

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

Goal 2: Foothill College faculty, staff, and administrators are racially diverse.

Goal 3: Retain racially diverse employees.

Goal 4: Faculty are supported in their efforts to iteratively self-evaluate their proficiency with culturally responsive pedagogy.

Goal 5: Ensure content and pedagogy are inclusive of and created with communities of color in mind.

Goal 6: Collaboration across faculty, staff, administrators, and students to support the request and explore the plausibility of an Ethnic Studies division, and hiring of appropriate faculty.

**Issue 11. Online education and the provision of comparable spaces, resources and services.**

Goal 1: The college understands the challenges students who access Foothill exclusively online face.

Goal 2: Assessment of online services is sustained by the college because there will always be online students. The college will maintain capacity of services comparable to level of enrollment.

Goal 3: All online classes are using the Online Equity Affirmation as a foundational lens for online course design.

Goal 4: Technology and resources offered, at minimum, provide a comparable student experience as face-to-face.

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

## **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.

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

Goal 1: Equity is central to the program review process. Practitioners are well supported with quantitative and qualitative information (data) and resources to analyze their equity trends and efforts.

Goal 2: The college identifies equity trends in programs and service areas and seeks to meaningfully engage others in college-wide discussions about what to do.

**Issue 13: Making sure students from all backgrounds succeed in reaching their goals and improving their families and communities, eliminating equity gaps.** Although the Vision for Success goals are formulated differently than the goals in this document, the Office of Equity felt it was important to highlight and incorporate them as part of our overall Strategic Equity Plan.

Goal 1: Completion

A – Increase all students who earned an associate degree (including ADTs) by 20%.

B – Increase all students who earned a Chancellor's Office approved certificate by 50%.

C – Increase all students who attained one or more of the following: Chancellor's Office approved certificate, associate degree, and/or CCC baccalaureate degree, by 25%.

Goal 2: Transfer

A – Increase all students who earned an associate degree for transfer by 20%.

B – Increase all students who transferred to a CSU or UC institution by 25%

1. Increase transfer of African American students to a CSU or UC by 51%
2. Increase transfer of Latinx students to a CSU or UC by 50%
3. Increase transfer of Pacific Islander to CSU or UC by 83%

#### Goal 3: Unit Accumulation

A – Decrease average number of units accumulated by all associate degree earners by 10%.

#### Goal 4: Workforce

A – Increase median annual earnings of all students by 9%.

B – Increase all students who attained the living wage by 9%

1. Increase African American students who attained the living wage by 27%
2. Increase Latinx students who attained the living wage by 23%
3. Increase Pacific Islander students who attained the living wage by 38%

C – Increase all student with a job closely related to their field of study by 2%

The Chancellor’s Vision for Success goals are no doubt ambitious. Setting metrics locally gave the Foothill an opportunity to think about how individual colleges can enact change that will ultimately make impacts statewide. Similarly, setting individual and department goals can help us collectively achieve equity as a college.

*“Justice is what love looks like in public.”* Dr. Cornel West visited the Foothill College campus in January 2020 and we walked away thinking of his famous quote. Nearly a year later, we find ourselves grappling with how to express that level of love, that justice for ourselves and our students. We must start by respecting one another as whole and worthy human beings and caring for one another as family.

As educators, we often come to the table inspired by students and the potential to make change in this world. We look to our leaders to guide us in our work and perhaps to motivate us in times of struggle. 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.

Foothill College is comprised of people that care deeply about their role as educators. We have a huge heart. Let us learn to lead with our heart and our humanity, and to be brave in the work of equity. Foothill family, we can do this.