
Policy on Social Justice

June 2024

Commission Commitment to Social Justice

The Commission recognizes the moral necessity of promoting equity and diversity through its policies and practices and creating a climate of inclusion and anti-racism among its membership. While issues of diversity encompass many historically marginalized groups, the pressing nature of racial inequity in higher education demands immediate attention. Therefore, the Commission's current commitment to promote equity, diversity, and foster inclusionary practices is rooted in its understanding of historical and systemic institutional racist structures and policies that exist in society, stemming from prejudice, discrimination, and implicit biases, which have benefited white people and disadvantaged people of color.

Consistent with its mission to advance educational quality and student learning and achievement, the Commission is committed to applying its leadership, advocacy efforts, and position of influence to dismantle historical and institutional racism and eradicate educational inequities. To this end, the Commission engaged in anti-racist work by taking an equity minded approach to its Standards and the revision process leading to the adoption of the 2024 Accreditation Standards. In addition, the Commission will continue to recruit more colleagues of color for peer review teams; recruit more colleagues of color to be Commissioners; and infuse anti-racism discussions into ACCJC's professional development programs through conferences, symposiums, and webinars for member colleges and for ACCJC staff and Commissioners.

Commission Expectations for Representatives of the Commission

The Commission expects that all individuals associated with the Commission, whether as Commissioners, peer review team members, consultants, administrative staff or other agency representatives, will embrace and carry forward this commitment to social justice, in all interactions. This includes working effectively with people from diverse backgrounds and professional levels and respecting multiple perspectives to support the advancement of educational quality in the region represented by ACCJC's public and private institutions that are dispersed in wide-ranging geographical locations across the United States and the Pacific region.

Commission Expectations for Member Institutions

The Commission is committed to a mission-based higher education model that assures equity, educational opportunity, and success for all students by upholding standards that require member institutions to address historical inequities. Accordingly, the 2024 Accreditation Standards thread together the following principles and requirements for institutions to strengthen their ongoing culture of continuous quality improvement and to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion:

- The institution establishes meaningful and ambitious goals for institutional improvement, innovation, and equitable student outcomes. (Standard 1)

- Academic and learning support programs promote equitable student success, and the institution evaluates student learning and achievement data to inform improvements and advance equitable outcomes. (Standard 2)
- The institution organizes its staffing and allocates its physical, technological, and financial resources to improve its overall effectiveness and promote equitable student success. (Standard 3)
- Governance roles and responsibilities are delineated in widely distributed policies, and institutional decision-making processes provide opportunities for meaningful participation and inclusion of relevant stakeholders. (Standard 4)

The Commission is deeply committed to embracing the diversity of its member institutions in the context of their unique mission. It therefore requires member institutions to use data and evidence to inform practices to improve equity. The Commission expects that institutional policies and practices will foster a sense of inclusion and belonging among its diverse stakeholders. While each institution will address in their own way the opportunities to improve educational equity, support diversity, and create a campus culture of inclusion, the Commission is dedicated to supporting institutions in their pursuit of educational excellence.

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