

CoFO

COUNCIL OF FACULTY ORGANIZATIONS

February 16, 2021

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commitment

Context: The Need for a Systemwide Investment in Faculty

The Council of Faculty Organizations (CoFO), representing all 58,000 faculty in the California Community Colleges, stands with our students and system partners in opposing all forms of racism and condemning the violence and prejudice that continue to harm and undermine our communities. We hold firmly to the California Community Colleges' principles of open access and equitable opportunities for all students, which is why we continue to advocate for investments and policies that support systemwide diversity and inclusion. To close equity gaps and improve the quality of educational experiences for all students, we particularly need to diversify the faculty, expand the number of full-time faculty, and better support part-time faculty throughout the system.

Research shows conclusively that student access to faculty is the most critical college-controlled factor that ensures student success.¹ Research is equally clear in demonstrating that a diverse faculty leads to increased rates of success for all student populations.² To promote both academic quality and student success, funding for more full-time faculty positions and part-time faculty support should be a budget priority. Faculty are responsible for developing, delivering, and implementing any systemwide or institutional initiative that will benefit students, whether locally developed or mandated by legislation. Faculty work directly with students daily through instruction, counseling, and other support services. Any changes involving curriculum development or delivery, student access, or student success depend on a properly qualified faculty body sufficient in size and available for regular and ongoing interaction with students. In short, to fight systemic and institutional racism; to review and update curriculum; to expand access and close equity gaps; and to create inclusive, effective colleges, we need a renewed systemwide commitment to invest in faculty.

The Council of Faculty Organizations supports the ongoing progress within the California Community Colleges toward the diversification of faculty, administrators, and staff as well as the incorporation of diversity, equity, and

¹ See Faculty Association of California Community Colleges (2018), for research and an annotated bibliography on the critical role of faculty in serving all student populations in the California Community Colleges.

² See Cherng, S., & Davis, L. (2017) and Cherng, S., & Halpin, P. (2016), for research on the importance of faculty diversity in serving all student populations.



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inclusion into relevant college processes and campus activities. Diversification of faculty can only succeed if colleges are sufficiently funded for additional full-time faculty positions that ensure an attractive and viable career option for a diverse pool of talented and dedicated faculty. The Council of Faculty Organizations recommends that this goal be pursued through a systemwide commitment to make progress toward the legislature's long-standing goal of having 75 percent of instruction taught by full-time faculty. At a minimum, any plan to increase the number of full-time faculty must include updating district hiring baselines to reflect current levels of full-time positions as a starting point, rather than perpetuating benchmark data from 1988 upon which current faculty obligation numbers are based.³

At present, 70 percent of the faculty body is hired to work as part-time faculty. On many campuses, part-time faculty are not even compensated for holding office hours, let alone other essential work like writing recommendation letters and revising curriculum. This chronic weakness in the system inhibits our ability to serve and support students fully. Professional development, recruitment, more full-time positions, and a clear pathway from part-time to full-time faculty positions are necessary to attract ethnically and racially diverse faculty to the profession. Part-time faculty are often excluded from professional development opportunities. Professional development for all faculty is necessary to improve outcomes and meaningfully address the needs of students.

Our commitment to diversity requires that we strive to eliminate barriers to equity and that we act intentionally to create a safe and inclusive environment in which individual and group differences are valued and seen as essential for our growth and understanding as an educational community. In our work and advocacy, faculty remain focused on ensuring that California community colleges deliver high-quality, transformative, accessible, and anti-racist education. We look forward to working with our system partners to address the key needs of the California Community Colleges as we create the systemic changes required to foster an anti-racist environment that offers equitable opportunity for all students.

³ See Bruno J., Carroll, C., Dowd. B., Duncan, W., Hansen, R., Mahler, J., Morse, D., Nyaggah, L., & Serrano, S. (2016), for a workgroup proposal detailing how to revise the 50% Law and the FON given the changing needs of students and the instructional environment since these policies were enacted.

Guiding Principles: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

1. Open access and equitable opportunities must be available to all students. To this end, investments and policies must support systemwide diversity and inclusion.
2. Students benefit from a diverse faculty, staff, and administration.
3. Attracting diverse faculty applicants requires improvements, including additional professional development, enhanced recruitment outreach, and clear pathways from part-time to full-time employment.
4. A commitment to DEI requires that we eliminate barriers to equity and that we create a safe and inclusive environment in which individual and group differences are valued.
5. Faculty are a key partner in incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion into the California Community Colleges.

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