

APPENDIX 3: STUDENT EQUITY: REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES

OVERVIEW

This document sets forth regulations related to student equity which were adopted by the Board of Governors at its November 14, 1996 meeting and technically revised on May 14, 1997. Accompanying each regulation (where applicable) is a guideline developed by Chancellor's Office staff that explains and clarifies the implementation of the associated regulation. These guidelines are not part of the regulations and, therefore, do not have the force and effect of law. They represent the Chancellor's interpretation of the regulations and respond to questions raised during the consultation process and the public comment period. They can and will be revised by the Chancellor as deemed necessary.

51026. STUDENT EQUITY

In accordance with the provisions of Section 54220, the governing board of a community college district shall adopt a student equity plan.

GUIDELINES FOR SECTION 51026

This section sets forth the adoption of a student equity plan as a minimum standard for the governing board of a community college district and must be met as a condition for receiving state aid.

54220. STUDENT EQUITY

- (a) In order to promote student success for all students, the governing board of each community college district shall adopt, by July 1, 1993, a student equity plan which includes, for each college in the district:
 - (1) Campus-based research as to the extent of student equity in the five areas described in paragraph (2) and the determination of what activities are most likely to be effective;
 - (2) Goals for access, retention, degree and certificate completion, ESL and basic skills completion, and transfer for the overall student population and for each population group of students, as appropriate. Where significant underrepresentation is found to exist in accordance with standards adopted by the Board of Governors, the plan shall include race-neutral measures for addressing the disparity, and, when legally appropriate race-conscious measures for addressing the disparity;
 - (3) Implementation activities designed to attain the goals, including a means of coordinating existing student equity related programs;
 - (4) Sources of funds for the activities in the plan;

- (5) Schedule and process for evaluation; and
 - (6) An executive summary that includes, at a minimum, the groups for whom goals have been set, the goals, the initiatives that the college or district will undertake to achieve these goals, the resources that have been budgeted for that purpose, and the district official to contact for further information.
- (b) These plans should be developed with the active involvement of all groups on campus as required by law, and with the involvement of appropriate people from the community.
 - (c) The Board-adopted plan shall be submitted to the Office of the Chancellor, which shall publish all executive summaries, sending copies to every college and district, the chair of each consultation group that so requests, and such additional individuals and organizations as deemed appropriate.
 - (d) For the purposes of this section, “each population group of students” means American Indians or Alaskan natives, Asians or Pacific Islanders, Blacks, Hispanics, Whites, men, women, and persons with disabilities. A person shall be included in the group with which he or she identifies as his or her group.

GUIDELINES FOR SECTION 54220

This provision generally requires community college districts to adopt a student equity plan and submit a copy of the plan to the Office of the Chancellor.

It is recommended that the district establish a success/equity advisory committee, including representation from all groups on campus and appropriate representatives from the community, to assist in development of the student equity plan. This advisory body is intended to be actively involved in college district planning at the highest governance levels to ensure the most effective means of implementing identified success strategies. This regulation requires the identification of an official contact person and the inclusion of an ongoing evaluation process. This reflects the intent of the Board of Governors that the planning process be an ongoing effort designed to incorporate the results of institutional self study to promote continuous improvement of the college or district.

Student success and especially the success of students from underrepresented groups should become the standard way districts and CEOs measure and advertise their achievements during the next decade.

The regulation further describes the component parts each student equity plan shall contain. Subsection (a)(1) requires a student equity plan to include basic research to determine the extent to which equity issues are revealed. This may include but is not limited to an assessment of success indicators, campus climate studies, or other effective means of identifying areas in which historically underrepresented groups may or may not be best served through the community college. By conducting a study of the problem, it is expected that a college or district will be able to detect things about the way the college is organized, the quality of its instruction, or the availability of services which create obstacles to student success.

The Board of Governors has identified five measurable success indicators it feels are key in determining the success various population groups are achieving access, course completion, degree/certificate completion, ESL/Basic Skills completion, and Transfer. Data in these areas should be periodically reviewed and efforts should be made to address any problems that should be identified.

Subsection (a)(2) allows community colleges and districts to set goals to ensure student equity when underrepresentation is noted within any success indicator area for any student population group. Goals are usually written expressions formulated to achieve a desired outcome.

When goals are adopted, they should include specific measures for determining progress toward achieving the desired outcomes. Such measures should identify the baseline data findings from the basic research that forms the bases for noting an equity issue, as well as the amount and direction of change expected to reflect the desired outcome or amount of progress to be achieved.

Goals are typically accompanied by target dates and/or timetables to establish a time frame for assessing the effectiveness in achieving expected educational outcomes.

Colleges may establish goals and target dates to eliminate noted underrepresentation whenever it is found, as long as its methods are limited to race/gender neutral considerations. Non-discriminatory and equal opportunity practices are intended to protect the rights of everyone and consequently are expected to be race/gender neutral.

Although the Board supports the use of race-neutral methods to promote student success/equity, it recognizes that under certain conditions, colleges may have a legal obligation under federal law to do more.

Corrective action, however, is an affirmative measure that must be taken in accordance with this regulation when there is significant underrepresentation (below the 70% level of expected representation). When such evidence is found community colleges must go beyond complying with the nondiscrimination laws and take active steps to promote student equity. Corrective action measures may include race/gender neutral as well as methods, which take race and gender into account.

WHEN A DISTRICT DETERMINES THAT SIGNIFICANT UNDERREPRESENTATION EXISTS IT SHALL:

- (1) review its practices and procedures and identify and implement any additional measures which might reasonably be expected to address the needs of significantly underrepresented groups in the success indicator areas in question;
- (2) consider various other means of reducing the underrepresentation, which do not involve taking underrepresented group status into account, and implement any such techniques which are determined to be feasible and potentially effective;
- (3) establish target dates for achieving expected outcomes.

It should be noted, however, that race/gender conscious methods may not be used until the district has tried race/gender neutral approaches for the reasonable period of time and found that the significant under representation persists. The Chancellor's Office recommends that race/gender neutral methods be tried for at least 3 years before consideration is given to mechanisms that take race or gender into account.

Subsection (a)(3) calls for the identification of implementation strategies to be undertaken to address student equity goals. California community colleges currently offers a variety of programs and services which, although race neutral, provide support and meet the needs of a variety of underrepresented groups. Many of these as well as others may be considered for inclusion in the student equity plan when these activities are determined to be feasible and potentially effective in the elimination of significant underrepresentation.

WHEN ESTABLISHING GOALS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Districts may concurrently utilize disability conscious measures without waiting to prove that disability neutral measures do not or will not work.

Nothing in this regulation shall be construed to prohibit a district from taking any other steps it concludes are necessary to ensure student equity, provided that such actions are consistent with the requirements of federal and state constitutional and statutory nondiscrimination law.

Subsection (a)(4) calls for the identification of resources budgeted to carry out the plan. Student equity is an institution-wide mode of operation, its funding is implicit in the use of all institutional funds which may include but is not limited to federal and/or state resources, general fund revenue, private grants, or in kind services.

Because an institution-wide response to student equity is appropriate, all institutional funds can be viewed as resources for student equity. There are already substantial categorical monies that could be coordinated more effectively with all parts of the campus such as:

- ▶ Equal Opportunity Programs and Services
- ▶ Cooperative Agencies Resource Education
- ▶ Disabled Students Programs and Services
- ▶ Matriculation
- ▶ Financial Aid

For vocational education and employment training, the Vocational and Technical Education Act and the Job Training Partnership Act both include major provision for the support of underrepresented and economically challenged students.

Within the Chancellor's Office Education Standards and Evaluation program area, several ongoing programs working towards student equity goals are available:

- ▶ California Academic Partnership Program
- ▶ MESA/MEP - Mathematics, Engineering and Science achievement/Minority Engineering Program

Other specific statewide system funds may be utilized to support the student equity effort include:

- ▶ Faculty and Staff Development fund
- ▶ Fund for Instructional Improvement
- ▶ Underrepresented Student Special Projects Fund
- ▶ Student Success Project Fund

Local student equity planners are encouraged to devise new ways to better coordinate these programs to support student equity efforts. There may be ways to save money by using new, more effective teaching strategies or technology. Improved advising and counseling may help student make better decisions on course selection. Effective implementation of probation and dismissal policies may also permit more effective use of the colleges' limited resources.

Subsection (a)(5) requires each district to establish a schedule and process for its evaluation. It is intended that the data collection component of any student equity plan be an on going effort and each community college district is expected to annually survey its student population to gather ethnicity, gender and disability data for use in evaluating its progress in implementing the goals set forth in its plan.

The schedule should be very specific about who is doing what and when they should be doing it. The schedule should also include how often the plan itself will be evaluated.

Each district is further required by subsection (a)(6) to develop an executive summary which identifies the groups for whom goals have been set; the goals and initiatives to be undertaken by the college or district; the resources budgeted for this purpose; and the official contact person responsible for this effort. It is intended that the designated contact be responsible for the monitoring, review, and evaluation of student success for all students as well as guiding the planning and development process to promote student success. He/she should therefore compile the results of the periodic review process to determine effective success strategies and annually report these findings to the success/equity advisory committee for consideration in their planning to promote continuous improvement of the college or district. A copy of this report along with any resulting committee or board action should also be submitted to the Office of the Chancellor.