



LOWER COLUMBIA COLLEGE

DIVERSITY & EQUITY  
INSTITUTIONAL PLAN

2019-23

## Mission

Lower Columbia College celebrates and embraces diversity of all kinds, including differing beliefs, cultures, people, and experiences. We commit to institutional and individual changes that recognize, understand, and challenge patterns of social inequity and systemic disparities within our ever-changing world. As part of this commitment, we strive to strengthen practices involving student success, cultural enrichment, diversity education, curricular design, and employee development. We are dedicated to promoting an accessible, inclusive, and safe environment that fosters [cultural competency](#), educational equity, and [social justice](#) for all students, staff, faculty, and our local and global communities.

## Diversity and Equity Goals

**Goal One:** Hire and retain a workforce that reflects the diversity of our student body

**Goal Two:** Support a self-reflective institutional culture that fosters a welcoming, safe, and inclusive campus climate

**Goal Three:** Continue to develop a culturally competent campus workforce

**Goal Four:** Design and provide culturally responsive and inclusive academic programs and curricula

**Goal Five:** Support, retain, and recruit a diverse student population

## Definition of Equity

As part of Lower Columbia College's commitment to [diversity](#) and a culture of [inclusion](#) that welcomes, respects, and values all individuals, our campus aims to promote equity in all aspects of the institution.

[Equity](#) seeks to provide fair treatment and a level playing field so that each individual can reach their full potential. However, equity is not the same as [equality](#) or equal consideration, and instead recognizes the barriers and historical disadvantages experienced by [marginalized](#) and underrepresented groups. As such, equity work is deeply rooted in changing systems of [oppression](#) and the institutional policies, procedures, and practices that provide disparate levels of access and opportunity.

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## **Transformative Culture Change**

Transformative change shifts the balance of power to be more inclusive of those historically at the margins, without privilege or power. Historically, LCC as an institution has been an agent of change for the communities we serve and has created strategies and programs to address inequity. However, this work has been done informally and without a holistic, system-wide approach. It is necessary now to create equitable systems that are formally supported, connected, and designed to impact all students, faculty and staff at LCC. The most effective change occurs on every level of the institution. To achieve our strategic goals and transform to a culture of equity, it is essential to invest in ourselves as individuals and as an institution for change, creating a collective responsibility and commitment to equity and inclusion. Thus, the college should invest resources to ensure our student demographics are reflected in our faculty and staff, especially those in positions with decision making authority.

Equity is a process, not an endpoint, and requires an institutional commitment to continual reflection and improvement to achieve transformative change. This change is a process that seeks to understand and overturn deep-rooted systems that have historically barred some students from accessing and succeeding in higher education. It challenges us to look at ourselves with a critical lens and constantly assess and improve our progress, our culture, and our climate. With this as the foundation of our work, LCC strives to achieve the following five diversity and equity goals:

## **Goals and Strategies**

### **Goal One: Hire and retain a workforce that reflects the diversity of our student body**

#### Strategies

1. Expand recruitment efforts to reach underrepresented populations and continually assess hiring practices to ensure an inclusive and equitable process.
2. Include a trained diversity & equity search advocate on each hiring committee and provide regular diversity and equity training for hiring committees.
3. Implement on-campus mentoring and support systems for underrepresented employees by utilizing existing statewide resources.
4. Offer training and support for supervisors to create inclusive departments.

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## **Goal Two: Support a self-reflective institutional culture that cultivates a welcoming, safe, and inclusive campus climate**

### Strategies

1. Conduct campus wide climate assessment to benchmark strengths and opportunities for growth and change.
2. Examine, revise, and develop institutional policies, procedures and practices to address opportunity gaps through a social justice and [critical race theory](#) lens.
3. Continue to proactively and intentionally create and maintain diverse visual images, posters, art, marketing and messaging that represent and celebrate a full array of diverse groups and individuals.
4. Develop and provide a wide variety of [culturally responsive](#) campus events, programming, and celebrations.
5. Build alliances and partnerships through outreach, community engagement, and sponsorships with organizations that are committed to diversity and equity.

## **Goal Three: Continue to develop a culturally competent campus workforce**

### Strategies

1. Provide campus training and support to develop cultural self awareness, knowledge, and skills to foster cross-cultural responsiveness.
2. Establish expectations and accountability measures for employees specific to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
3. Designate adequate and sustainable funding for equity trainings.
4. Create an employee award that recognizes and incentivizes work towards equity at LCC.

## **Goal Four: Design and provide culturally responsive and inclusive academic programs and curricula**

### Strategies

1. Provide resources and support for faculty and staff to gain knowledge, skills, and abilities to advance equity within the instructional environment.

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2. Provide regular training and support for faculty to use data and dashboard tools to track student outcomes and achievement.
  3. Continue to develop a structure of support for a faculty-led exploration of equity outcomes through the instructional assessment process. Continue to review and revise instructional assessment templates to incorporate exploration of equity outcomes in regard to certificate and degree program outcomes.
  4. Identify and develop learning outcomes for students to participate effectively in a global community and a cross-cultural workforce.

### **Goal Five: Support, retain, and recruit a diverse student population**

#### Strategies

1. Invest resources in active outreach and recruitment of a diverse student population.
2. Implement strategies to remove barriers and promote aspiration, access, and completion for historically underrepresented groups.
3. Recognize and support our diverse student population through targeted programming.
4. Mentor, train, and develop a diverse group of student leaders across campus.

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## Appendix-Vocabulary, definition of terms

The purpose of the glossary of terms is to provide definitions of terms used throughout the strategic plan, along with other terminology that may help expand knowledge regarding diversity, equity and inclusion.

**Ally** - acknowledge disadvantage and oppression of groups other than their own, take supportive action on their behalf, commit to reducing their own complicity or collusion in oppression of these groups, and invest in strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression. (Center for Assessment and Policy Development)

**Anti-Oppression** - Recognizing and deconstructing the systemic, institutional and personal forms of disempowerment used by certain groups over others; actively challenging the different forms of oppression. (Center for Anti-Oppressive Education)

**Bias** - a positive or negative inclination towards a person, group, or community; can lead to stereotyping. (Thiederman)

**Bigotry** - intolerant prejudice which glorifies one's own group and denigrates members of other groups. (Dismantling Racism Institute)

**Classism** - biased attitudes and beliefs that result in, and help to justify, unfair treatment of individuals or groups because of their socio-economic grouping. Classism can also be expressed as public policies and institutional practices that prevent people from breaking out of poverty rather than ensuring equal economic, social, and educational opportunity. (The National Multicultural Institute)

**Colorblind** - term used to describe personal, group, and institutional policies or practices that do not consider race or ethnicity as a determining factor. The term "colorblind" de-emphasizes or ignores race and ethnicity as a large part of one's identity. (The National Multicultural Institute)

**Critical Race Theory** - the view that race, instead of being biologically grounded and natural, is socially constructed and that race, as a socially constructed concept, functions as a means to maintain the interests of the white population that constructed it.

**Cultural Competence** - Knowledge, awareness and interpersonal skills that allow individuals to increase their understanding, sensitivity, appreciation, and responsiveness to cultural differences and the interactions resulting from them. The particulars of acquiring cultural competency vary among different groups, and they involve ongoing relational process tending to inclusion and trust-building. (UC Berkeley Initiative for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity)

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**Cultural Responsiveness** - refers to an ability to learn from and respectfully relate to other cultural backgrounds, heritages, and traditions. It comes from acknowledging and understanding one's own culture and values while respecting those of others (Vanderbilt University)

**Denial** - the refusal to acknowledge the societal privileges that are granted or denied based on an individual's identity components. Those who are in a stage of denial tend to believe, "People are people. We are all alike regardless of the color of our skin." In this way, the existence of a hierarchical system of privileges based on ethnicity or race are ignored. (Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change)

**Disability** - physical or mental impairment, the perception of a physical or mental impairment, or a history of having had a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. (The Department of Justice)

**Discrimination** - unfavorable or unfair treatment towards an individual or group based on their race, ethnicity, color, national origin or ancestry, religion, socioeconomic status, education, sex, marital status, parental status, veteran's status, political affiliation, language, age, gender, physical or mental abilities, sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Diversity** - psychological, physical, and social differences that occur among any and all individuals; including but not limited to race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability, and learning styles. A diverse group, community, or organization is one in which a variety of social and cultural characteristics exist. (The National Multicultural Institute)

**Empowerment** - when target group members refuse to accept the dominant ideology and take actions to redistribute social power more equitably. (Adams, Bell and Griffin)

**Equality** - evenly distributed access to resources and opportunity necessary for a safe and healthy life; uniform distribution of access to ensure fairness. (Kranich)

**Equity** - the guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups. (UC Berkeley Initiative for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity).

**Ethnicity** - a social construct which divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, and ancestral geographical base. (Adams, Bell and Griffin)

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**Historically Underserved Students:** the category of types of students not considered when U.S. education systems were originally designed. Examples include students of first-generation immigrants; from low income families; of adult status; of color; of marginalized gender identities; from second-language backgrounds; of undocumented status; with military service; with disabilities; with dependents; in foster care; or with records of incarceration. (Achieving the Dream, 2018).

**Identity Group** - a particular group, culture, or community with which an individual identifies or shares a sense of belonging. Individual agency is crucial for identity development; no person should be pressured to identify with any existing group, but instead the freedom to self-identify on their own terms. (The National Multicultural Institute)

**Inclusive Language** - words or phrases that include all potential audiences from any identity group. Inclusive language does not assume or connote the absence of any group. An example of gender inclusive language is using “police officers” instead of “policemen”. (The National Multicultural Institute)

**Inclusion** - the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people. (UC Berkeley Initiative for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity). Inclusion also refers to the degree to which diverse individuals are able to participate fully in the decision-making processes within an organization or group. While a truly “inclusive” group is necessarily diverse, a “diverse” group may or may not be “inclusive.”

**Individual Racism** - the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism; can occur at both a conscious and unconscious level, and can be active or passive. Examples include telling a racist joke, using a racial epithet, or believing in the inherent superiority of Whites. (Adams, Bell and Griffin)

**Institutional Racism** - refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for Whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as People of Color. An example includes City sanitation department policies that concentrate trash transfer stations and other environmental hazards disproportionately in communities of color. (Potapchuk, Leiderman, Bivens and Major)

**Intent vs. Impact** - this distinction is an integral part of inclusive environments; intent is what a person meant to do and impact is the effect it had on someone else. Regardless of intent, it is imperative to recognize how behaviors, language, actions, etc. affect or influence other people. An examination of what was said or done and how it was received is the focus, not necessarily what was intended. (Workforce Diversity Network)



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**Intersectionality** - the ways in which oppressive institutions (racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, xenophobia, classism, etc.) are interconnected and cannot be examined separately from one another. (African American Policy Forum)

**Marginalization** - the placement of minority groups and cultures outside mainstream society. All that varies from the norm of the dominant culture is devalued and at times perceived as deviant and regressive. (The National Multicultural Institute)

**Microaggression** - the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership. (Wing Sue)

**Multiculturalism** - the practice of acknowledging and respecting the various cultures, religions, races, ethnicities, attitudes, and opinions within an environment. The theory and practice promotes peaceful coexistence of all identities and people. (University of Maryland)

**Norm** - an ideal standard binding upon the members of a group and serving to guide, control, or regulate power and acceptable behavior. (Effective Philanthropy)

**Oppression** - the systemic and pervasive nature of social inequality woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness. Oppression signifies a hierarchical relationship in which dominant or privilege groups benefit, often in unconscious ways, from the disempowerment of subordinated or targeted groups. (Adams, Bell and Griffin)

**People/Person of Color** - is not a term that refers to real biological or scientific distinction between people, but the common experience of being targeted and oppressed by racism. While each oppressed group is affected by racism differently and each group maintains its own unique identity and culture, there is also the recognition that racism has the potential to unite oppressed people in a collective of resistance. For this reason, many individuals who identify as members of racially oppressed groups also claim the political identity of being People of Color. This in no way diminishes their specific cultural or racial identity; rather it is an affirmation of the multiple layers of identity of every individual. This term also refrains from the subordinate connotation of triggering labels like “non-White” and “minority.” (Office of Racial and Ethnic Concerns of Unitarian Universalist Association)

**Prejudice** - a pre-judgment or unjustifiable, and usually negative, attitude of one type of individual or groups toward another group and its members. Such negative attitudes are typically based on unsupported generalizations (or stereotypes) that deny the right of individual members of certain groups to be recognized and treated as individuals with individual characteristics. (Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change)

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**Privilege** - power and advantages benefiting a group derived from the historical oppression and exploitation of other groups. (University of Maryland) See also [White Privilege](#)

**Race** - a social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance, ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the political needs of a society at a given period of time. (Adams, Bell and Griffin)

**Racial and Ethnic Identity** - an individual's awareness and experience of being a member of a racial and ethnic group; the racial and the ethnic categories that an individual chooses to describe him or herself based on such factors as biological heritage, physical appearance, cultural affiliation, early socialization, and personal experience. (Adams, Bell and Griffin)

**Racial Equity** - the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer influenced how one fares. Racial equity is one part of racial justice and must be addressed at the root causes and not just the manifestations. This includes the elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them. (Center for Assessment and Policy Development)

**Racism** - individual and institutional practices and policies based on the belief that a particular race is superior to others. This often results in depriving certain individuals and groups of civil liberties, rights, and other resources, hindering opportunities for social, educational, and political advancement. (The National Multicultural Institute) A system of advantage based on race. A system of oppression based on race. A way of organizing society based on dominance and subordination based on race. Penetrates every aspect of personal, cultural, and institutional life. Includes prejudice against people of color, as well as exclusion, discrimination against, suspicion of, and fear and hate of people of color. Racism = Prejudice + the POWER to implement that prejudice. (Exchange Project of the Peace & Development Fund)

**Social Justice** - a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others and the society as a whole (Adams, Bell and Griffin)

**Tolerance** - acceptance and open-mindedness to different practices, attitudes, and cultures; does not necessarily mean agreement with the differences. (University of Maryland)

**Transformative (change) Leadership** - creating a shared vision and inspiring change by developing authentic and cooperative teams who use open communication, consensus-building, and transparency. Within higher education, transformative leadership advocates for access, equality and inclusion for all students, especially those who have struggled historically to obtain equality in accessing and benefiting from college (Richie & McCambly, 2015)

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**White Privilege** - refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits and choices bestowed on people solely because they are White. White people who experience such privilege may or may not be conscious of it. (McIntosh)



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**Jeanne Clery Statement: Notice of Availability of Annual Security and Fire Safety Report:** In compliance with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Crime Statistics Act of 1998, and as a part of the College's commitment to safety and security on campus, Lower Columbia College reports the mandated information about current campus policies concerning safety and security issues, the required statistics, and other related information for the past three (3) calendar years. Lower Columbia College's **Annual Security and Fire Safety Report** is available online at [lowercolumbia.edu/CleryASFR](http://lowercolumbia.edu/CleryASFR).