



## **JOINT STATEMENT of COMMITMENT to EQUITY, DIVERSITY, and EXCELLENCE in STUDENT SUCCESS and LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACCC) and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) represent more than 1,000 community, junior, and technical colleges throughout the United States. Both AACCC and ACCT are committed to fostering the advancement of community colleges, in part, by applying principles of equity and diversity within their organizations and promoting these values within member colleges.

This responsibility can be achieved best when colleges are governed and led by individuals who are attuned to the fact that programs designed for a multicultural student population can help them overcome an environment where discrimination and poverty can serve as deterrents to social and educational mobility, and economic prosperity.

Community colleges are the most diverse and inclusive segment of higher education in the United States. These colleges serve a larger proportion of women, African Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders, Hispanic/Latino, Native Americans, LGBTQ+ students, and students with disabilities than any other segment of higher education. Therefore, community colleges are positioned uniquely to foster educational environments that are safe, respectful, and responsive, and where students can attain their potential at the highest level possible.

AACCC and ACCT denounce all acts of racism, hate, violence, and injustice. We stand with the individuals who have been marginalized, oppressed, and murdered due to their ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, and sexual behavior. As associations that represent community colleges serving 42% of undergraduates in the United States, we place a premium on equal access to the American Dream for everyone. We condemn rhetoric and actions by individuals and groups that threaten individuals based upon the color of their skin, their ethnic backgrounds, or their identification as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. We stand in solidarity with organizations that seek to end systemic racism, and we strongly encourage our community colleges to place a critical lens on their policies and procedures to ensure that all students engage with higher education on an equal playing field. Further, we support our community college leaders becoming allies to organizations seeking to improve educational and workforce opportunities, as well as other public services to ensure a better America.

As the leading organizations that promote student success, leadership development, and board governance, AACCC and ACCT are dedicated to assisting the community college sector in successfully carrying out this responsibility. AACCC and ACCT remain committed to programs that improve educational outcomes for all students, especially those representing various socioeconomic backgrounds including, but not limited to, race, gender, and age. AACCC and ACCT reaffirm a commitment to promote and support programs and initiatives that develop diverse leaders at the board and CEO levels and in the administrative and faculty ranks. Historically, both organizations have made this a priority.

AACCC and ACCT offer professional development programs for CEOs and staff along with providing board development and conducting presidential searches that identify and prepare more women and individuals of color for these positions. AACCC and ACCT will monitor and update this statement together and, where needed, reframe it to reflect current efforts that promote greater diversity and equity and propose how these efforts can be implemented.

The values of diversity, equity, and inclusion are firmly embedded throughout the history and programs at AACCC and ACCT. However, even with this historic focus and the current joint statement, both associations acknowledge that much work is required to provide programs for diverse students and equip current and future leaders with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in an increasingly diverse and demanding higher education environment. Together, AACCC and ACCT commit to strengthening their collaboration to making this work a continued priority.

Revised June 12, 2020