



Comprehensive Diversity Framework for Realizing Equity and Excellence

Introduction and Brief Overview

Skyline College has a long history of critical consciousness, praxis, and leadership rooted in social justice. Evident throughout the culture and practices at all levels of the institution is a firm belief that diversity, social justice, access, and equity are essential to academic excellence. Ensuring diversity and equity at all levels of the institution promotes Skyline College's mission and strategic priorities, enriches curricular content and pedagogical approaches, deepens critical thinking, enhances cultural fluency, strengthens campus community, and increases student success. The "students first" philosophy that drives Skyline College Mission-Vision-Values Statement (MVV) is grounded in a "strengths framework" that understands diversity as value added rather than something to be "overcome" or "transcended" and as a necessary starting point rather than the entire goal.

About Skyline College

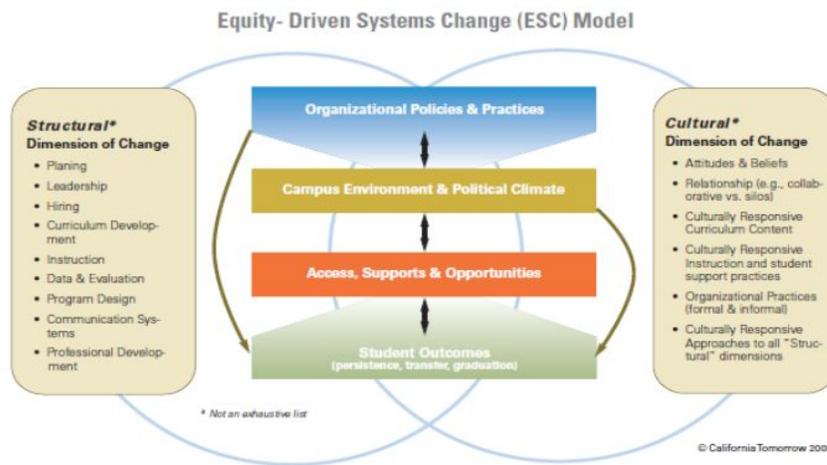
17,000 students annually enroll in a broad range of affordable day, evening, weekend and online courses. Many students complete lower division general education requirements at Skyline College and then transfer to four-year colleges and universities to earn a bachelor's degree. Our Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) program enables Skyline College students to get guaranteed admission to a California State University (CSU) campus. Skyline College currently offers 19 ADTs, with five more approved for Fall 2018 and an additional four pending state approval.

Other Skyline College students graduate and achieve an Associate in Arts (A.A) or Associate in Science (A.S) degree, or complete one or more Certificates that advance their career opportunities. Skyline College offers 41 Associate Degree programs and 58 Certificate programs, nationally acclaimed Career Technical Education (CTE) programs, and a wide range of Learning Communities, such as African American Success Through Excellence and Persistence (ASTEP); Career Advancement Academies (CAAs); Kababayan; First Year Experience; Mathematics, Engineering, & Science Achievement (MESA); Puente; Scholar Athlete; and the Women's Mentoring and Leadership Academy (WMLA). Skyline College has integrated its MVV into one comprehensive MVV Statement that guides the institution's direction and decision making. Both the integrated statement and the seven values reflect the scope, depth, and interwoven nature of diversity and equity at Skyline College.

The Comprehensive Diversity Framework (CDF)

The Comprehensive Diversity Framework (CDF) is a blueprint that centralizes and institutionalizes equity and social justice efforts at Skyline College while ensuring that they remain a shared responsibility. The CDF represents the integration of the *Equity-Driven Systems*

Change (ESC) and the Completion by Design (CBD) models within a Skyline College specific context. The ESC model builds capacity and content knowledge of staff, faculty and administrators across a wide range of access and equity issues in higher education. This model helped address the evaluation of equity systemically, how to connect equity focused work with instruction, student services and administration, how to access and utilize tools for self-reflection, and how to translate these actions to improve student learning outcomes. The CBD model provides the operational structure for ensuring that equity and excellence are being advanced at each key phase of a student’s educational journey.



The CDF is a manifestation of the institutional commitment to go beyond the absence of discrimination to the removal of barriers creating a proactively inclusive, accessible, and embracing educational environment. Skyline College uses a CDF that considers multiple domains beyond the typical context of student deficits. We look at ourselves, our institutional structures, processes and practices to address issues that impact students’ ability to access, enter,



progress through and successfully exit the college. The seven (7) Domains of Focus are Community Connections, Curricular and Pedagogical Approaches to Equity, Communication/Information Dissemination, Hiring Processes, Student Support, Leadership, Admissions and Registration Processes.

1. Community Connections

The connection stage of the educational pathway is crucial particularly for students who are first in their families to attend college, students who come from low-income backgrounds, and students from historically minoritized groups in Higher Education. There are a number of approaches that make a critical difference in enhancing equity at the connection point such as helping middle school and high school students see themselves as “college material”, communicating to students and their families the financial aid and application process, and providing workshops to guide students and their families in application completion.

2. Curricular and Pedagogical Approaches to Equity

This domain examined the cultural dimensions of persistence and progression within the math sequence of the curriculum. Research shows that academic “catch-up” and gatekeeper courses are what prevent many students from completing their degrees or certificate programs.

3. Communication/Information Dissemination

Access to financial and material resources have critical impact on a student’s academic progress and success. This domain examines the culture of how our institution shares information and how students receive information.

4. Hiring Processes

This domain examined how our institution’s hiring processes and practices result in hiring faculty and staff that do not reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of students at Skyline College. The research conducted in this domain found that the overall ethnic composition of the faculty is less representative than the composition of staff, with the greatest rate of underrepresentation among Filipinos and Pacific Islanders.

5. Student Support

Accessing support services on campus such as tutoring, counseling services, and other programs are vital to a student’s academic success. This domain examines the need for structures where students, staff and faculty can inform students about utilizing services that are offered on campus such as tutoring. Additionally, the institution should develop a “this is how college is different” culture and mindset when designing curriculum and pedagogical practices to help students transition from high school level academic rigor to college level work.

6. Leadership

Equity minded-leadership is vital to improving student success outcomes. The institution will develop programs for equity in student leadership and professional development opportunities for staff and faculty to grow in these areas.

7. Admissions and Registration Process

There are a number of complications that arise when enrolling in classes. These complications create barriers to student success. The institution will look at support services that will help students navigate the enrollment process, how to declare a major, and understanding the technology, language and computer interface for CCC apply.

History

In designing the Comprehensive Diversity Framework, Skyline College sought to create an integrated, systemic, and transformative approach that considers the connections between the various levels at which an institution operates, rather than focusing on institutional practices separately from student success challenges. Skyline College has a rich tradition of engaging the campus community in equity and social justice and engaging in a continuous process of creating innovative pedagogical and student support strategies that align with the communities we serve.

From the College's first campus climate survey in 1996 to the establishment of the Equity Training Series in 2016, Skyline has a proven track record of creating and engaging in opportunities to eliminate barriers to student success. The 1996 Climate Survey was executed in response to the anti-affirmative action Proposition 209. Four years later in 2000, Skyline College's Student Access and Success Committee (which would later become the Student Equity Committee) to begin the development of the Student Equity Plan for the College.

The Skyline College Student Equity Plan was completed in 2005 and the first meeting of the Stewardship for Equity, Equal Employment and Diversity (SEED), formerly the Student Equity Plan, took place on November 21. The years 2006-2009 marked an era when Skyline College worked closely with the San Mateo County Community College District (SMCCCD) in the development of its 2008-2013 Strategic Plan and to ensure that the district incorporated a commitment to diversity and equity within the plan.

The SEED Committee and the Student Equity Committees throughout the District began meeting jointly in 2010 and recommended the the advancement of 3 shared goals:

- Develop a holistic diversity framework and create an action agenda. Identify a research agenda that is relevant to the diversity framework
- Develop student success-focused professional development district-wide and conduct analysis of program effectiveness

- Increase dialogue regarding effective teaching and learning

From these meetings also emerged a proposed process and timeline for the Comprehensive Diversity Framework (CDF).

Implications and Recommendations

Findings suggest that high school counselors and teachers play an integral role in providing high school students with accurate and timely information about Skyline College. The implications for increasing our effectiveness is two-fold: (1) Strengthen partnerships with high schools, particularly with counselors and teachers and increase awareness about Skyline's services and programs for high school students. (2) Analyze the impact on specific student groups, and ensure that these efforts are positively impacting the equitable outcomes that we seek.

A Completion by Design lens can help the College to gain greater insights into earlier and more tailored interventions. At the Connection stage, it is critical to understand what students' experiences are prior to enrolling in these courses ; and how these experiences contribute to their success/struggle in the course. At the Entry stage, we can examine whether particular student experiences within the courses are helping some students to be more successful than others.

We need to develop and implement more effective strategies in order to improve our recruitment, hiring, and retention efforts. The Hiring Subcommittee explored additional strategies for improving the inquiry process, and generated sixteen recommendations to increase equity and transparency within the hiring system. Four of these have already been implemented, and the remaining twelve are in various stages of exploration.

Next Steps

There are nine vision elements to guide SEED's work and institutional agenda for the next 3-5 years. These elements are aligned with Skyline College's MVV, Goals and integrated them into the Strategic Plan.

1. Leverage the expertise of the Technology Advisory Committee (TAC) to coordinate technology resources, mentoring, training, assessment, and support for students, staff, and faculty that enhance access and equity.
2. An institution devoted to global learning that draws on the collective resources of humanity and provides robust international and multicultural programs, services, and initiatives.

3. Transparent processes reflecting the values of Skyline College that serve our internal and external communities, promoting equity and cultural fluency for all students, staff, and faculty through a lens of social justice and agency.
4. Comprehensive community outreach and access with the promise of retention and success.
5. A Center for transformational inquiry that conducts, facilitates, and communicates research toward institutional effectiveness.
6. A multiple points of entry online/offline model for students based on a distributed service online/offline model by staff and faculty.
7. Comprehensive and clearly defined educational pathways that bridge students' experiences from connection to completion and beyond.
8. Holistic and seamlessly integrated guidance, planning, outreach, and instruction, designed and informed by the students' perspectives.
9. A fully resourced, staffed, coordinated, and integrated Center for transformative scholarship, teaching, and learning that is both physical and web-based and positively affects student success.

A key component of Skyline College's ability to make these visions a reality is collective implementation. As a College, we all own these data; we each can bring these lenses to our specific areas, apply them in ways that impact student success, continue the inquiry process, and spark ongoing and deeper dialogue. Our efforts and success are interconnected and interdependent. By continuously auditing equity and exercising critical consciousness, we strengthen the institutional fabric to promote the success and excellence of all of our students.

Conclusions

Consistent themes throughout this two year process were embodying the College's "students first" philosophy for all of our students; exercising bold leadership and critical consciousness; making services and supports for students seamless and holistic; and entrusting each member of the campus community with the leadership and accountability for enacting equity in every action. As we move forward in making the aspirational our lived reality, we can draw on the tools from the Equity-Driven Systems Change (ESC) model to ensure that critical inquiry and systems-level action remain core to our work; and on the Completion by Design model to ensure that our strategies are effective in promoting equity and excellence at each of the key stages of students' educational journey.