**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

**Strategy Recommendation**

## DEI Strategy: DEI Focused Screening and Hiring Process

## ACHRO Workgroups: Equity-focused Vacancy Announcements and Application Requirements; Equity-focused Screening Criteria; Equity-minded Interviews

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# Issue Statement

Community colleges retread the American workforce, train displaced workers, and help develop new industries. The 21st-Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges’ Reclaiming the American Dream Report recognizes the challenges facing community colleges. These challenges include ensuring the success of the millions of diverse and often underserved students seeking a high-quality college education. For California Community Colleges, this student success translates into institutional funding via the Student-Centered Funding Formula. To make the educational culture more inclusive and foster equity outcomes, campus faculty [staff] diversity can be laid by search committee processes—processes which not only reflect the larger institutional commitment to diversity, but which also serve as occasions for serious campus reflection on the barriers to recruitment and retention of faculty [staff]of color” (Turner, p..28)

* New Paradigms for Diversifying Faculty and Staff in Higher Education: Uncovering Cultural Biases in the Search and Hiring Process - <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ759654>
* Interrupting the Usual: Successful Strategies for Hiring Diverse Faculty - <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00221546.2004.11778900?journalCode=uhej20>
* Reclaiming the American Dream: A report from the 21st-. Century Commission - <http://www.aacc21stcenturycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/21stCenturyReport.pdf>.

Conventional application, screening, interviewing, and hiring processes were developed in the early 20th century when employment discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, disability status, and other characteristics was legal, socially acceptable, and widely encouraged. Conventional processes have evolved beyond explicit discriminatory barriers, but often retain subjective biases with questionable or no correlation with job performance that favor white, cisgender males. Individuals working within conventional processes my choose to value diversity, equity, and inclusion as minimum and/or preferred qualifications, but the structure of and assumptions embedded in the processes tend to ignore and discourage those individual efforts.

# Strategy Proposal

Redesign application, screening, interviewing, and hiring processes to mitigate structural biases that guide individual decision-making, prioritize DEI-related qualifications as essential predictors of job performance, and require participants to assess candidates based on technical knowledge and DEI-related qualifications on equal terms.

# Current Challenges

* Conventional screening and hiring processes are based on assumptions about the predictive ability of work history, educational attainment, transcripts, letters of recommendation, and similar information to identify candidates who will perform a job well without considering the context of those criteria or the context in which the job will be performed.
* Conventional application requirements tend to provide information conforming to assumptions about work history, education, GPA, references, and similar information founded on the expectations of white, cisgender men as more naturally inclined to professional work, interested in and with an aptitude for technical fields (e.g. STEM), expected to be the primary wage-earners for families, and other related biases.
* Conventional processes tend to ignore how candidates will engage and work with others, especially in the specific context of working with and serving individuals from diverse ethnic, racial, gender, and other backgrounds.
* Conventional processes tend to systematize positive and negative stereotypes about race, ethnicity, gender, and other characteristics, creating barriers to employment for candidates of color, women, non-binary candidates, and other non-white, non-cisgender male candidates.
* Conventional application processes and materials fail to produce information on successful engagement with others in the performance of job duties, especially with diverse communities, and provide inadequate evidence of education, training, and prior performance on DEI-related engagement.
* District administrators, faculty, and classified professionals may strongly oppose changes to conventional processes and information used in current screening processes such as work histories, educational histories, transcripts, cover letters, reference letters, and similar information.
* Screening committee members may lack training on DEI-engagement in job performance, evaluating candidates on technical skills and engagement simultaneously, and incorporating DEI-related performance into current screening criteria and measurements.
* People may perceive DEI-focused application, screening, and selection processes as an attempt to give preference to candidates from specific races, ethnicities, gender identities, or other protected statuses.
* Selection committee members may be reluctant to participate in DEI-focused screening and selection methods out of fear of violating EEO and similar laws and/or policies.
* HR staff may lack training to provide effective guidance to screening committees to perform DEI-focused screening within legal and policy frameworks.

# Strategy Recommendations

*The actions below are collectively designed to address the procedural issues preventing greater diversity in hiring, while being mindful of the challenges identified. Districts are considered to consider adopting the full set of recommendations as provided, but may strategically select and implement specific recommendations based on local factors.*

## Establish a DEI-focused application, screening, and selection process

* Step One: Screening committee is formed (recommend following the strategy recommendations on diversifying selection committee participation and increasing student participation in selection committees) with an emphasis on diverse participation and reviews job descriptions, minimum and preferred qualifications, and performance expectations for the position with an explicit focus on the skills and behaviors needed for successful performance within a diverse working environment and culture, including understanding of the lived experiences of individuals from diverse communities which will impact successful job performance (e.g. serving and/or working with individuals from diverse groups).
* Step Two: Screening committee defines essential attributes and behaviors for successful job performance within a diverse environment and establishes the criteria to be used to evaluate applicants and determine which applicants will be forwarded in the selection process. The Diversity Officer or similar representative reviews and approves the criteria.
* Step Three: Screening committee draft a set of open-ended questions prompts focused on acquisition and successful use of essential knowledge, skills, and abilities with diverse communities, including an understanding of lived experiences of diverse communities. The Diversity Officer or similar representative reviews and approves the question prompts.
  + The number of question prompts is determined by the level and scope of the position and should range from five to 15 questions for most positions.
  + Responses are organized into three sections:
    - state key positive outcomes;
    - state how you achieved the outcomes; and
    - state how you will achieve similar outcomes in this position.
  + Set word limits on each section to prioritize concise responses focused on the most critical information and eliminate philosophical responses which fail to convey specific outcomes and behaviors.
* Step Four: Screening committee drafts behavioral questions following the strategic recommendation for writing DEI-focused behavioral interview questions. The Diversity Officer or similar representative reviews and approves the interview questions.
* Step Five: Job is posted externally in an announcement that describes the District’s mission and values with an emphasis on serving diverse communities equitably and contributing to an inclusive culture, describes the key functions and responsibilities of the job, and provides functional information (salary range, benefits, work schedules, etc.). Candidates are invited to complete a candidate profile (necessary personal information, employment eligibility, and minimum qualifications) and answer the open-ended question prompts developed by the committee.
* Step Six: HR screens for minimum qualifications and invites applicants to apply for equivalency where appropriate.
* Step Seven: Equivalency determination is made and question prompt responses for all qualified applicants are forwarded to the committee for review.
* Step Eight: Screening committee reviews the responses, without seeing any identifying information about the applicant (including name), scores responses using a DEI-focused scoring rubric, and selects applicants to be invited to submit a complete application and/or CV/resume and attend an interview. Applicants are given specific instruction to state successful outcomes serving and/or working with individuals from diverse communities and contributions to organizational DEI culture in their application, CV, and/or resume.
* Step Nine: Committee conducts interviews using behavioral-focused interview questions embedding DEI-focused relational application of technical knowledge, skills, and abilities.
* Step Ten: Committee scores interviews using a DEI-focused scoring rubric and deliberates and selects candidates for 2nd level interviews based on the total information reviewed in the screening and interview processes indicating the candidate possesses the technical qualifications and clear evidence of successful performance with diverse communities and contributions to an inclusive culture.
* Step Elevent: 2nd level interviews are conducted by the CEO and/or designees using behavioral-focused interview questions embedding DEI-focused relational application of technical knowledge, skills, and abilities. CEO includes Diversity Officer or similar representative in every 2nd level interview to clearly demonstrate the importance of and commitment to DEI and antiracism; or, Diversity Officer conducts a separate

## Training on revised application, screening, interviewing, and selection processes

* *Section to be developed after the first recommendation is finalized*

# EEO and Compliance Considerations and Recommendations

* *Section to be developed after the first recommendation is finalized*

# References, Tools, and Resources

* Diversifying Selection Committees Strategy Recommendation
* Increasing Student Participation in Selection Committees Strategy Recommendation
* DEI-Focused Vacancy Announcements Strategy Recommendation
* DEI-Focused Screening Criteria and Scoring Rubric Strategy Recommendations
* DEI-Focused Interviews and Scoring Rubric Strategy Recommendations