

**Compton Community College District
Compton College
Response to California Community Colleges
Chancellor’s “Call to Action”**

A WORKING DOCUMENT

Our Story, Our Commitment

The past 100 years of the City of Compton’s history, and by extension the college’s history, is not only a part of a telling narrative about race, class, and the lasting legacy of exclusion, but also, on the flip side, a story of resilience regardless of how fragile.¹ In September 1927, Compton Junior College began instruction on the Compton Union High School campus. In 1950, voters approved a bond issue separating the college from the Compton Union High School District. Construction of the new college campus was completed on the present site. Classes began on the new campus in fall 1956. During the 1950s and 60s, our institution was considered one of the top community colleges in the nation. Educating the sons and daughters of a sizeable working and middle class, the college operated in a city with a rapidly shifting demographic trend common in suburbs throughout the United States in the ‘50s, ‘60s and ‘70s brought about by Supreme Court decisions ending racial covenants that kept people of color out of predominantly white neighborhoods. Between the 1920s and 1950, the City of Compton was predominantly white at 95 percent. By 1970, the City of Compton was 65 percent African American. Today, Compton’s Black population stands at 25 percent. Our service areas of Willowbrook, North Long Beach, Paramount, Lynwood, Watts, parts of Carson and Athens have followed similar trends. This demographic shift has had a profound impact on the college, how it services the community, and where it sees itself moving forward at this most challenging moment in history.

The 1921 racially restrictive covenants buffered by Sundown laws, vigilantism, and unchecked law enforcement kept African Americans and Mexican Americans from residing in Compton. After the Supreme Court decisions in the 1940s, developers saw opportunity in the 1950s to transform large tracts of empty land into affordable housing for purchase void of racial covenants. Living in Compton made the idea of home ownership in the new Post World War II America a reality for African Americans. Compton was perceived at this point as a bedroom community for the rising Black middle class who were eager to move out of the overcrowded older Black urban enclaves of South Los Angeles. African American men and women were able

¹ Please see Sides, Josh. “Straight into Compton: American Dreams, Urban Nightmares, and the Metamorphosis of a Black Suburb.” *American Quarterly*, vol. 56, no. 3, 2004, pp. 583–605., for an in-depth and invaluable critical analysis of the history of Compton’s Black community as well as the demographic changes and impact of popular culture on the city itself. See also, Feder-Haugabook, Ayala. “Compton, California (1867-).” *Welcome to Blackpast* •, 13 June 2019, www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/compton-california-1867/.

to secure both blue and white-collar job opportunities in the surrounding areas. For Black men, factory, manufacturing, aerospace and related industries provided the economic stability to raise families and purchase homes. This sparked a huge migration from the south (mainly Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas and Mississippi) of African Americans to California and specifically to Los Angeles. By the early 1960s, the city of Compton, now perceived as the measure of middle-class success, had a Black population of 40 percent. The Watts riots of 1965 and its aftermath led to more white flight. The expansion of public housing brought the African American population to 65 percent by 1970. Unfortunately, while the African American community grew, the jobs that sustained the community in the previous decade (automobile, manufacturing, etc.) and the services vital to its existence began to disappear. A decade later, in the 1980s, the crack epidemic and gang violence filled the void as unemployment, disillusionment, and addiction ravaged the community. By 1992, those same families that pursued the middle-class dream and largely succeeded in the 1950s and '60s found themselves fleeing a city they no longer recognized. The economic decline has been catastrophic for those who remain.²

The Struggle Is Real

Compton College has struggled with recruiting and retaining African American students who represent 21 percent of the campus population. The male population of this segment is 32 percent. Hence, as cited in the [2018-2019 Annual Fact Book](#), only one out of every three African American students are male on our campus. This disproportionately low number is not reflected in the Compton College service area. In fact, the three largest feeder school districts to Compton College (i.e., Compton Unified, Lynwood Unified, and Paramount Unified) not only show a sizeable African American population but a male population that is slightly larger than the number of females enrolled in local districts. (See Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1: Count and percentage of Black or African American K-12 students by gender in Compton College feeder districts in 2019-2020

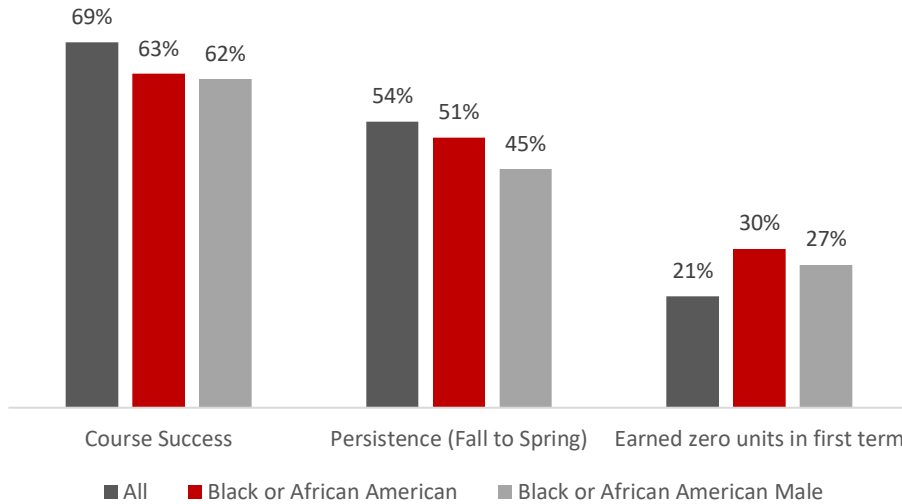
	Compton Unified	Lynwood Unified	Paramount Unified
Male	12,108 52%	6,780 51%	7,268 51%
Female	11,086 48%	6,465 49%	7,073 49%
Total	23,194	13,245	14,341

Compton College uses successful enrollment (i.e., the number of students who enroll at Compton College out of all the students who applied) to measure recruitment. Black/African American

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males in the community are not applying to Compton College compared to other groups. Furthermore, the Black/African American male students who do enroll persist at lower rates. While 54 percent of students overall persist from fall to spring term, only 51 percent of all black or African American students persist and 45 percent of black or African American male students persist. (See Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2: Percentage of all, Black or African American, and Black or African American male students by course success, persistence, and earned zero units in the first term



African American student success rates also fall behind those of our general population (see Exhibit 2). In the 2018-2019 year, 63 percent of African American students had successful course completion, compared to 69 percent for the general population. Four percent of the African American students successfully completed transfer-level math in the first year, compared to 6 percent for the general population. Ten percent of African American students successfully completed transfer-level English in the first year, compared to 15 percent of the general population. Fifty-two percent of the African American students persisted from fall to spring, compared to 57 percent of the general population. Finally, 30 percent of African American students and 27 percent of African American male students earned zero units in the first term, compared to 21 percent of the general population (see Exhibit 2). This is of great concern. Compton College must focus on this population to ensure that they obtain their degrees and/or certificates from our institution. The recent events of this past spring echoed in Black Lives Matter have highlighted the need to address the ongoing disparities that exist in the community. These disparities have a long history rooted in racism, neglect, and lack of opportunity. Engineered by design, they reflect the institutional racism that is still with us today. Compton College must be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

Compton College must be **bold** and **innovative** in addressing the issues our students face, and how we implement programs and services that support all students and in particular, African American men, through our [Guided Pathway Divisions](#) and our Tartar Success Teams. Utilizing

the “Call to Action” recommendations from our constituents, support from the Compton Community College District Board of Trustees, and with support from Achieving the Dream, below is Compton College response to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office “Call to Action.”

Introduction - A Formal Response to the Call to Action

As an institution, Compton College exists within a community hit hard by recent events centered on police brutality, COVID-19, and growing economic and political instability. Compton College and the Compton Community College District is committed, now more than ever, to addressing these systemic issues around race and racism through communitywide dialogue, proper planning, and direct action.

In June 2020, California Community Colleges Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley issued the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office “[Call to Action](#)” to actively strategize and implement concrete actions against structural racism, poverty, and social injustice. Specifically, the Chancellor’s Office “Call” asks for systemwide mobilization around six key areas. Here is our interpretation of those areas:

1. Review of campus and communitywide law enforcement, and expand first responder training and curriculum.
2. Initiate honest and open dialogue among faculty, staff, and administration that addresses issues surrounding campus climate.
3. Assess classroom climate and create an action plan with a focus on building a campuswide anti-racism curriculum and a more inclusive classroom space.
4. Review and update our equity plans with immediate speed.
5. Shorten the timeline for the full implementation of our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Integration Plan.
6. Join and engage in the Vision Resource Center’s “Community Colleges for Change.”

While these items are clearly stated in the Chancellor’s Office “Call to Action,” Compton College is uniquely situated to address and expand on these items. The items require considerable reflection and engagement. As an institution, we have operated in the eye of the storm around equity, inclusion, and diversity for many years; however, the current situation requires all stakeholders to act with due diligence and expediency.

Action 1: Law Enforcement and First Responder

The Chancellor called for a systemwide review of law enforcement officers and first responder training and curriculum on community college campuses. Compton College shall and will support innovative public safety efforts that can serve as a model for what community policing could be. This reimagining will require engagement from all stakeholders supporting collaborative community oversight of policing on campus and the surrounding areas. As an institution of learning, the larger question of how to build this trust and understanding can be addressed at the curricular level. Training and professional development opportunities must be

ongoing and should include topics such as unconscious/implicit bias, de-escalation training, and community-oriented/de-militarized approaches.

We are also reviewing our current administration of justice program to determine how we can infuse equity into community policing discussion and perhaps encourage students to look at community safety and civil rights in a new progressive and empowering light. Since homelessness, unemployment risk, and food insecurity disproportionately affect students of color, this is an opportunity for Compton College to identify new ways to approach public safety, apart from the topic of policing.

Inspired by the work of Black Lives Matter, in November 2020, Compton College will establish the *Compton College Task Force for an Equitable Approach to Community Safety and Health*, which will include our current peace officers, faculty, classified staff, administrators, and the broader Compton community whose tax dollars support our institution. The task force will review all Compton College Police Department policies, procedures, and staffing plans, with the primary goal of removing and/or amending any policies, practices, recommendations, or other instruction or direction that correlate with the inequitable application of justice or stand contrary to Compton College's imperative to create an equity-minded and safe environment for all. The task force is expected to provide recommendations to the President/CEO on reimagining public safety at Compton College by May 1, 2021.

Action 2: Dialogue to Address Campus Climate

Discussions about campus climate should also reach beyond what is happening on campus. Recent events have made this apparent. Compton College comprises a diverse community of stakeholders who live in our service areas, the broader Los Angeles community, and beyond. They bring their optimism, knowledge, and concerns to the campus each day. The transient nature of commuter colleges makes it more challenging to foster dialogue and a sense of community. Yet, these discussions are needed to guide students, staff, faculty, and administrators who have expectations that they will learn and work in a community that fosters equity, inclusion, understanding, and collaboration.

As an immediate step in this call to action, Compton College has partnered with the [USC Race and Equity Center](#) and joined the [California Community College Equity Leadership Alliance](#). Membership in the Alliance will enable our institution to offer faculty, staff, and administrators opportunities to participate in monthly four-hour, e-convening professional learning workshops that will focus specifically on race and equity in the classroom and in hiring practices. Participants of the e-convenings are expected to report on the key takeaways and lessons learned to facilitate change on campus to serve our students better and enhance improved communications among all constituents. Thus, participants will virtually discuss in a facilitated and recorded dialogue about what they have learned and how it can be applied to the campus and the surrounding community. Compton College will create a digital equity library hosted on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion [website](#), which will serve as a repository for all the recordings

that can be accessed by any member of the Compton College community and the public for further dialogue and action.

Compton College will also host trainings for campus administrators in the art of holding open and honest conversations within their departments about how we come together as an educational community to build inclusive and safe learning and working environments. For students, the college will continue the “Race Matters” student development workshop series every month hosted by the Office of Student Development. Previous topics have included “Race and Mental Health: Coping and Wellness Strategies,” and “Healing Space: Uplifting the Community After Tragic Loss.” Compton College will encourage and provide financial support for attendance at the [African American Male Education Network & Development's \(A2MEND\)](#) meetings and conferences for employees and students.

In spring 2021, in collaboration with the University of Southern California (USC) Race and Equity Center, Compton College will administer the National Assessment of Collegiate Campus Climate (NACCC) survey. The NACCC is a rigorous, expert-validated quantitative survey that measures belonging and inclusion, the frequency and depth of cross-cultural interactions, students’ appraisals of institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion, and other related topics. While the first year will measure student responses, the USC Race and Equity Center is also developing a pair of workplace climate surveys: one for staff at all levels, and another for faculty (including adjunct instructors). These two surveys will focus on topics such as employees’ perceptions of equitable opportunities for promotion and advancement; a sense of belonging and how different groups of employees differently experience the workplace environment; employees’ encounters with sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, and other “isms” at work; employee satisfaction with the college’s responses to reports of abuse, unfair treatment, and climate problems; and appraisals of the college’s commitment to equity. The staff and faculty surveys will be administered in 2022 and 2023, respectively.

Compton College will develop an action plan to identify clear steps toward meeting the reports’ recommendations based on survey results. While these have been some of our more immediate responses toward addressing campus climate, we understand that change does not happen overnight. Thus, Compton College will continue to support ongoing open conversations, careful planning, and thoughtful implementation of ideas and action items to improve campus climate.

Action 3: Inclusive Classrooms and Anti-Racism Curriculum

The Compton College Academic Senate has authored “A Resolution to Declare that Equity and Black Lives Matter” in response to recent events, the Chancellor’s Office “Call to Action,” and to be in solidarity with the initiatives of Black Lives Matter. The resolution states three key points:

1. The Compton College Academic Senate is committed to improving the cultural education and cultural intelligence of all of its constituent groups, and to fostering attitudes of unity, solidarity, and togetherness;

2. The Compton College Academic Senate pledges to treat all campus members with dignity and respect and to be an ally to Black Lives Matter; and
3. The Compton College Academic Senate will urge all faculty members to create a culturally relevant and inclusive curriculum to highlight the injustices of this country and to the unfair treatment of historically underrepresented groups in many aspects of our society; to include the voices of historically underrepresented groups in course material selection; and to increase awareness of implicit bias, stereotypes, discrimination, individual and systemic racism, and genocides.

In fall 2021, Compton College will add a culture, diversity, and equity requirement for all students who plan to graduate with a degree from Compton College, in compliance with Compton Community College District Administrative Regulation 4025 - Philosophy and Criteria for Associate Degree and General Education. A certificate in the subject area is also in the works as faculty begin to collaborate on expanding the curriculum in each program area. This would include not just Social Sciences and Humanities, where these curriculum discussions often take place around race and identity, but in all five Guided Pathways Divisions: Business and Industrial Studies; Fine Arts, Communications, and Humanities; Health and Public Services; Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM); and Social Sciences. To this end, the Academic Senate has called for the creation of the *Call to Action Curriculum Task Force*, made up of full-time and adjunct faculty who currently incorporate issues of social justice, public policy, health, environmental justice, and ethnic identity as part of their pedagogy and methodology on a local, global, and international level.

The requirement will allow students to analyze a wide range of past and contemporary issues among historically racialized populations while holistically developing a critical and intersectional understanding of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and power in American society. Students will learn how systemic racism works, how it is embedded in all of our institutions, and how to advocate for change and challenge racism at the personal and structural level. The major prepares students for both transfer and graduate studies and careers that serve communities of color, such as public and business administration, human and health services, marketing and communications, research and education, politics and government, fine and performing arts, and multicultural affairs. Compton College is committed to hiring up to three full-time faculty over the two years to assist with teaching courses associated with the new culture, diversity, and equity degree requirement.

Over the next two years, the *Call to Action Curriculum Task Force* will review all Compton College courses to examine anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion, in our curriculum. The college is also working diligently on an Ethnic Studies Degree for Transfer to the CSU's. A Collaboration with the UC Chancellor's Office is also being explored in an effort to build opportunities with our premier research institutions in the UC system. Finally, in the next year, in collaboration with the University of California Office of the President, Compton College will explore efforts to build opportunities with the University of California for our students, faculty, and their graduate students to implement activities associated with inclusive classrooms and anti-racism curriculum.

Action 4: Board Reviews and Updates Equity Plans with Urgency

The “Call to Action” requires colleges to look at their Equity Plans with fresh eyes and answer the question of whether they are designed for compliance or outcomes. The Chancellor’s Office calls on colleges to pull together a cross-campus team, including research, human resources, technology, faculty, support services, classified staff, managers/supervisors, and others to focus on naming the barriers, identifying solutions, and then rallying the full campus to engage in meeting the needs.

Recognizing the importance of welcoming and honoring all voices on campus in the equity plan, Compton College will be assembling a team through the [Student Success Committee](#) to review the plan, provide insight, and make updates. The revised equity plan is expected to be presented to the Compton Community College District Board of Trustees at the March 2021 board meeting. Additionally, Compton College understands that equity is embedded in everyone’s work, rather than being encapsulated by a single person or position. Thus, the Director of Student Equity’s title has been changed to the [Director of Basic Needs and Student Success](#). Compton College will also be updating the equity section of its [website](#) to reflect the needs elicited by structural racism and COVID-19.

Action 5: Shorten Time Frame for Full Implementation of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Integration Plan

The [California Community Colleges Chancellor Office's Vision for Success Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force](#) called for full implementation of 68 recommendations over the next five years. In the “Call to Action,” the Chancellor stated that “our system cannot afford to wait five years” and asks campus leaders to mobilize to implement all tier 1 recommendations in the next six to 12 months and to act with urgency to implement tier 2 recommendations. Compton College is on track to meeting this shortened timeframe.

In June 2020, the Compton Community College District Board of Trustees adopted [Resolution #06-16-2020F Affirming Compton Community College District Commitment to Faculty and Staff Diversity](#). A detailed [action plan](#) to implement the resolution was also created. The following month, Compton College applied for assistance from the Chancellor’s Office Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative ([IEPI](#)). The IEPI is committed to advancing the California Community Colleges’ institutional effectiveness and enhancing the system’s impact on serving students, advancing best practices, and avoiding potential pitfalls. Technical assistance teams, called Partnership Resource Teams (PRT), are subject matter experts and help institutions develop improvement strategies and timelines on their area of focus. Compton College’s proposal was approved for assistance from a mini-PRT to strengthen its professional development opportunities in relation to diversity, equity, and inclusion matters. Compton College will receive up to a \$75,000 grant in seed money toward the effort along with technical assistance. The mini-PRT is expected to virtually visit Compton College in the fall of 2020, meet with various constituent groups, provide feedback and advice, and assist with drafting a plan on

how to best design and implement the diversity, equity, and inclusion elements within professional development.

Finally, Compton College launched its new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion [webpage](#), which houses essential resources such as the Equal Employment Opportunity ([EEO](#)) Plan, the [Human Resources Staffing Plan](#), and the USC Center for Urban Education (CUE) [report](#) and [action plan](#). Over the course of the year, the Director of Diversity, Compliance, and Title IX, in consultation with the EEO Advisory Committee, will identify strategies to implement the various recommendations, including consideration of race, poverty, and services for people of color.

Action 6: Vision Resource Center “Community Colleges for Change”

The Chancellor’s Office has created a virtual community in the [Vision Resource Center](#) where content, dialogue, and modules are uploaded. Appreciating that we all need to continue to invest time to learn as an educational community, Compton College’s Professional Development Manager is spearheading the initiative to get our staff involved and invested with the Vision Resource Center. The Professional Development Manager will send monthly updates to employees with new information about the Vision Resource Center, provide sign-up assistance, and forward pertinent resources to the campus community. The goal is to have 100 percent of our employees and the Compton Community College District Board of Trustees participating in the Vision Resource Center by March 1, 2021.

Current Initiatives: Achieving the Dream (ATD)

In spring 2020, Compton College joined the Achieving the Dream (ATD) Network. Participation in ATD provides expertise and networking opportunities for the college to realize change to improve student success. Throughout the partnership and engagement with ATD, the college expects to see improvement in teaching and learning, increased engagement and efficacy of faculty and staff with data and technology, and higher levels of implementation of the Guided Pathways and Completion by Design. Our first virtual kickoff took place July 14-16, 2020. The topics of discussion included: The Community College Reform Movement – What it Means to Be a Part of ATD's Network; Using Data to Identify Your Student Success Priorities – Strengthening Teaching and Learning; and Preparing Faculty to Ensure Students are Learning.

Compton College and the Compton Community College District are committed to student success, evident in the [Compton College 2024, Human Resources Staffing Plan, Technology Plan, Enrollment Management Plan](#), and the [Compton CCD Resolution #06-16-2020A Affirming Our Commitment to Student Success for Black and African American Students](#). In the spring of 2017, Compton College received results from the [Community College Success Measure \(CCSM\) Survey](#) and the [Improving Student Success Outcomes for Men of Color at Compton College - Student Perspectives](#) focus groups that were conducted by the San Diego State University Community College Equity Assessment Laboratory (CCEAL) in spring and fall 2016. As a result of the research from CCEAL, Compton College established the Men of Color Taskforce, which provided several recommendations to the President/CEO in December 2019. Many of those

recommendations were funded in the 2020-2021 year through [Student Equity and Achievement Restricted Funding](#), including the development and implementation of a Men of Color Brotherhood and Mentorship Programs.

Evaluation

The Compton College Office of Institutional Effectiveness, working with the USC Race and Equity Center, will develop and implement an evaluation plan of the activities included in our response to the “Call to Action.” Each year, a report will be provided to the Compton Community College District Board of Trustees to ensure accountability, follow-through, and quality. Compton College recognizes the importance of a continuous feedback loop as priorities, time, and overall the racial climate continue to evolve.

Conclusion

This document describes Compton College’s status by implementing the six key actions from the Chancellor’s “Call to Action.” We will develop an action plan and timeline for each of the six key actions in the coming weeks. This is only the beginning of our work against structural racism. However, we recognize that the work ahead necessitates honest conversations, breaking down years of historical and societal barriers, and creating a new system that holds itself accountable for making progress. The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, and we are proud of our efforts as we march toward building a better future for our communities.