

Compton College Response to Chancellor's "Call to Action"

Introduction

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

In June 2020, Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley issued a "Call to Action" to actively strategize and take action against structural racism, poverty, and social injustice. Specifically, the chancellor's "Call to Action" asks for system-wide mobilization around six key areas. Here is our interpretation of those areas:

1. Review of campus and community-wide law enforcement and expand first responder training and curriculum.
2. Honest and open dialogue among faculty, staff, and administration that will address issues surrounding campus climate.
3. Assess classroom climate and create an action plan with a focus on building a campus wide 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 the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Integration Plan.
6. Join and engage in the Vision Resource Center "Community Colleges for Change."

While these items are clearly stated in the Chancellor's report, 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 system-wide review of law enforcement officers and first responder training and curriculum on community college campuses. Compton College shall and will support all efforts toward innovative public safety that can serve as a model for what community policing could be. This reimagining will require engagement from all stakeholders in support of 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 the discussion of community policing and perhaps encourage students to look at community safety and civil rights in a new progressive and empowering light. Since homelessness 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. We must expand our food pantry and continue to find ways to house students. Inspired by the work of Black Lives Matter, Compton College plans to establish the Compton College Taskforce for an Equitable Approach to Community Safety and Health, which will include our current peace officers, faculty, classified, administrators, and the larger Compton community, whose tax dollars support our institution.

Action 2: Dialogue to Address Campus Climate

Discussions around campus climate should not be centered solely on what is happening on the campus. Recent events have made this apparent. Compton College is made up of a diverse community of stakeholders who live in our service areas, the larger 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 difficult to foster dialogue and a sense of community. Students, staff, faculty, and administrators have expectations that they will learn and work in 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 opportunities for faculty, staff and administrators to participate in monthly 4-hour e-convening professional learning workshops that will focus specifically on race and equity in the classroom and in hiring. Compton will also host trainings for campus administrators in the art of holding open and honest conversations within their own departments about how we come together as an educational community with the goal of building inclusive and safe learning and working environments. For students, the college will continue the “Race Matters” student development workshop series every month. Prior topics have included “Race and Mental Health: Coping and Wellness Strategies,” and “Healing Space: Uplifting the Community After Tragic Loss.” For employees and students, the college will encourage and pay for attendance at the African American Male Education Network & Development’s (A2MEND).

To foster dialog, participants will share and report out on the key takeaways and lessons learned to facilitate change on campus that will better serve our students and enhance improved communications among all constituents. Thus, participants of the these convenings are expected to participate in a virtual 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](#)

that will serve as a repository for all the recordings that can be accessed by any member of the Compton College community and public for further dialog and action.

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 Chancellors 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 of its 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 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 of 2021, Compton College will launch AR 4025, a Culture, Diversity, and Equity Requirement for all students who plan to graduate with a degree from our institution. A certificate in the subject area is also in the works as faculty are beginning to collaborate on expanding the curriculum in each program area. This would include not just the Social Sciences and Humanities where these curriculum discussions often take place around race and identity, but also in areas such as STEM, Health and Public Services, and CTE. To this end, the Academic Senate has called for the creation of the Call to Action Curriculum Taskforce, made up of faculty (full and part-time) 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 be an advocate for change and to challenge racism at the personal and structural level. The major prepares students for both transfer and graduate studies as well as careers that serve the 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. Our Tarter Success Teams established in Spring 2020 have already organized workshops and supplemental activities

(speaker series, professional development, and community engagement) around these themes and will be engaged in ongoing planning to this end.

Additionally, Compton College has joined the Achieving the Dream (ATD) Network and invested heavily in professional development. 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-July 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.

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 it is designed for compliance or for 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 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 Board in March 2021. Additionally, Compton College understands that equity is embedded in everyone's work, rather than being encapsulated by a single person or position. Thus, the title of the Director of Student Equity 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 Chancellor Office's [DEI Integration Plan](#) 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 5 years" and asks campus leaders to mobilize to implement all tier 1 recommendations in the next 6 to 12 months and to act with urgency to implement tier 2 recommendations. Compton College is on track to meeting this shortened time frame.

In June 2020, Compton College's Board of Trustees adopted [Resolution #06-16-2020F Affirming Compton College District Commitment to Faculty and Staff Diversity](#). A detailed [action plan](#) to implement the resolution was also created. Compton College recently launched its new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion [website](#), which houses important 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 be identifying strategies to implement the various recommendations, including consideration of race, poverty, and service to 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 as an educational community, we all need to continue to invest time to learn, 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 staff with new information about the Vision Resource Center, provide sign-up assistance, and forward pertinent resources to the campus community.

Conclusion

This document describes Compton College’s status with the implementation of the six key actions from the Chancellor’s “Call to Action.” This is only the beginning of our work against structural racism. We recognize that the work ahead necessitates honest conversations, the breaking down of years of historical and societal barriers, and the creation of a new system that holds itself accountable to making progress. The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, and we are proud of our efforts as we race towards building a better future for our communities.