FACULTY HIRING DOES NOT HAVE TO BE EXPLICITLY RACIST TO REPRODUCE RACIAL INEQUITY
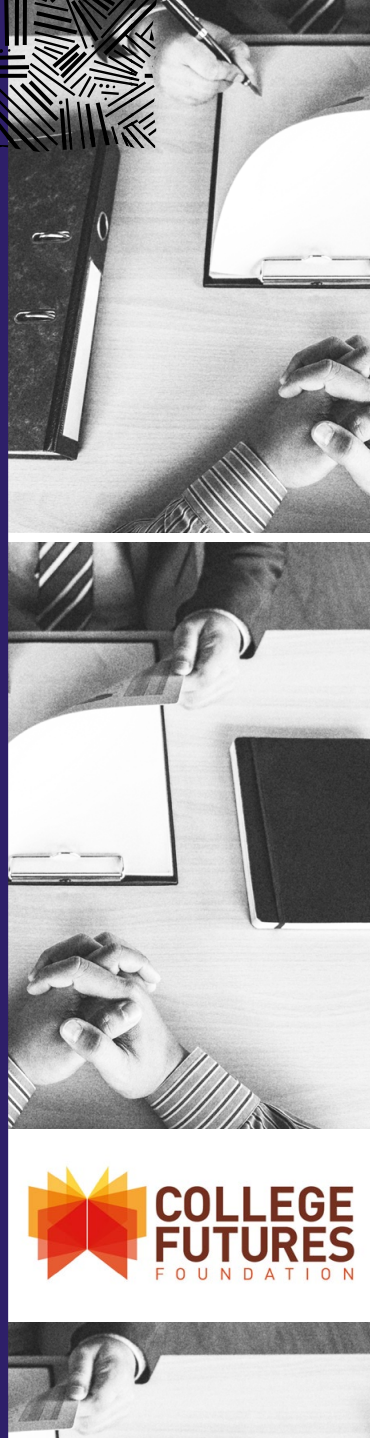
CONSIDERATIONS FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES WHEN IMPLEMENTING THE VISION FOR SUCCESS DEI PLAN

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Contents

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Message from Dra. Isela Ocegueda

The California Community College system can tout having the nation's most racially and ethnically diverse student body, yet we still struggle to fulfill the imperative that comes with this distinction. Though we know that faculty of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds have a positive impact on student educational outcomes, the majority of faculty in the California Community Colleges are White, while the majority of our students are students of color. Faculty of color are more likely to meaningfully support and connect with our students of color, and students of color see their own potential and possibilities in faculty who look like them. Understanding the direct impact that diversification of faculty can have on student success, it is important that we address how White supremacy operates in faculty hiring processes that are "seemingly" objective and thus often go uninterrogated, perpetuating the racial inequity in faculty hiring.

This report looks deeper at how race manifests in the faculty hiring process. The influence of implicit biases is critically examined, and we are equipped to identify and disrupt implicit biases when they operate in the faculty screening and hiring process. Even criteria that are perceived as "fair" or "neutral," like merit and fit, are disentangled to reveal how interpretation of these criteria are based on one's own experience and credentials and are actually very subjective.

Grounding this report in the California Community College's Vision for Success Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Integration Plan, the ideas and strategies presented here will be useful for administrators, managers, and faculty. As a former dean and now Vice-President of Instruction, I have reflected in my own work on the "questions to disrupt implicit biases in the faculty search processes" presented in this report, and as a result, I have supported the significant increase of faculty of color hired in the colleges I have worked. This report offers valuable resources and practical strategies that we can implement now to mitigate racial biases in our hiring policies and practices. Consequently, the report empowers us to address the racial inequities reflected in the disparity between student and faculty representation.

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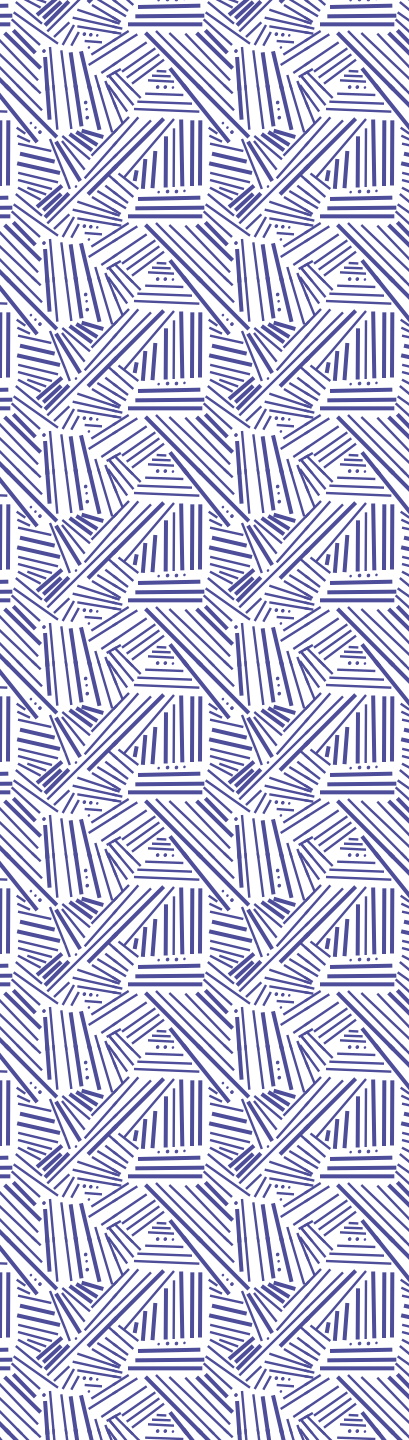
Executive Summary

Since the 1960s, students of color have demanded colleges and universities to diversify the professoriate racially. Decades of research have convincingly shown that without equity-minded administrators, managers, and faculty, practices and policies designed to advance racial equity fail to have the intended impact. In 2020, the California Community College Chancellor's Office released the **Vision for Success Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force report**. The Vision for Success Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force report provides California Community College administrators, managers, and faculty with system, district, campus, and department-level strategies to diversify the faculty body racially and ethnically. The premise of this report titled "Faculty Hiring Does Not Have to be Explicitly Racist to Reproduce Racial Inequity: Considerations for California Community Colleges when Implementing the Vision for Success DEI Plan" is that without disrupting biases that favor White faculty candidates and biases that disfavor faculty candidates of color, racial inequity will continue to persist in pre-hiring, hiring, and retention practices and policies.

The California Community College system enrolls the nation's most racially and ethnically diverse student body. However, the faculty body – specifically tenure-streamed faculty - continues to be White. Faculty diversity matters because faculty have the power to use their funds of knowledge to innovate academic curriculums, mentor students, and train future leaders. Without racially and ethnically diverse faculty, administrators and faculty operate with the expectation that students of color *must* navigate predominantly White classrooms that exclude the knowledge of communities of color.

As an alumnus of the California Community College system – Los Angeles Pierce College – faculty of color created classroom environments that valued my ways of learning and created possibilities for me to imagine a career in the professoriate. I synthesized research on faculty hiring and racial equity to write a report that provides actionable ideas and recommendations for administrators, managers, and faculty to apply equity-mindedness throughout the pre-hiring and hiring processes.

The report has two parts. First, I outline the California Community College's Vision for Success Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Integration Plan. In this section, I provide additional ideas and strategies for administrators, managers, and faculty to consider in implementing the DEI Integration Plan. Second, I caution administrators, managers, and faculty that the DEI Integration Plan will fall short of advancing racial equity without intentional efforts to identify and disrupt racial biases. In this section, I describe how racial biases inform understandings of merit and fit in ways that value White faculty candidates while devaluing faculty candidates of color. I also provide ideas and strategies to mitigate racial biases in pre-hiring and hiring practices and policies.

Why Race Matters in the Professoriate

The California Community College (CCC) system is the largest higher education sector in the United States of America. Like most community colleges in the United States, the CCC system operates with a student first mission that often guides state, district, and campus level initiatives. The CCCs primary missions are to prepare students (1) to transfer to four-year universities, (2) for workforce development and training, and (3) for basic skills and remedial education[1]. CCCs enroll one of the most racially and ethnically diverse student bodies in the nation. As seen on Table 1, in fall 2022, about 70% of fall 2022, first-time enrollments consisted of students of color.

TABLE 1: STUDENT ENROLLMENT DEMOGRAPHICS BY ETHNICITY FOR FALL 2022

Ethnicity	Percentage
African-American	5.49%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.33%
Asian	9.03%
Filipino	2.20%
Hispanic	52.19%
Multi-Ethnicity	4.42%
Pacific Islander	0.44%
Unknown	4.77%
White Non-Hispanic	21.13%

Note. The data in this table is from **California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems Data Mart**. The data is for first-time student enrollments by ethnicity for the state of California.

Faculty, specifically those who are tenured or are tenure-track, play a significant role in student success. Faculty oversee the curriculum, which could inform student learning, student sense of belonging, and student career aspirations. However, when there are stark demographic mismatches between students and faculty, questions about unfulfilled possibilities are left unexplored and unanswered. What I mean by unfulfilled possibilities, is how many students of color does the CCC system fail to develop basic skills, prepare to enter the workforce, and transfer to four-year universities because teaching approaches and classroom norms are more often aligned with the cultural lens of the predominately White faculty.

Faculty diversity matters because students of color need to see their racial identities represented among the faculty, and students also stand to benefit from interacting with faculty who share their cultural knowledge. Faculty of color are more likely to:

· *foster the achievements of students of color[2]*
· *use culturally relevant and affirming pedagogies[3]*
· *curb stereotype threat[4]*
· *develop personal relationships with students of color[5]*
· *enhance the sense of belonging of students of color[6]*
· *advocate on behalf of students of color[7]*
· *be someone whom students of color can identify and more easily approach[8]*

While faculty racial and ethnic diversity in the CCC system has improved over the last two decades, it has yet to reflect the student racial and ethnic demographics across the state's community colleges[9]. As seen on Table 2, in fall 2022, about 56%

of tenured and tenure track faculty were White and about 37% collectively identified as African American, American Indian and Alaskan Native, Asian, Hispanic, or Pacific Islander.

TABLE 2: FACULTY DEMOGRAPHICS BY ETHNICITY FOR FALL 2022

Ethnicity	Percentage
African-American	6.01%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.60%
Asian	10.80%
Hispanic	19.26%
Multi-Ethnicity	1.69%
Pacific Islander	0.49%
Unknown	5.94%
White Non-Hispanic	55.22%

Note. The data in this table is from California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems Data Mart. The data is for Academic, Tenured and Tenure-Track faculty employment.

Students of color are more likely to take classes with faculty of color and major in the field that the faculty of color taught. That is, students of color see future career possibilities in faculty who share similar race and ethnic backgrounds. If California wants to increase diversity in specific disciplines (e.g., STEM), then its leaders need to diversify the professoriate so students of color could imagine themselves in fields that have been predominantly White. For these reasons, the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) and other CCC leaders have invested in the Vision for Success Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force to help the CCC system meet its primary missions[10].

A study at a large, diverse community college in California found that dropout rates and grade performance gaps fell by 20 and 50 percentage points, respectively, when taking courses taught by faculty of color.

(Fairlie et al., 2014)

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to highlight how White supremacy, when left unaddressed, mitigates systemic racial equity efforts in faculty hiring. I begin with an overview of the Vision for Success DEI Task Force's DEI Integration Plan. I then provide a brief description of proposition 209 followed by a discussion on how White supremacy operates through merit and fit in faculty hiring. Throughout the report, I provide strategies and reflective questions to support CCC administrators, managers, faculty, and staff in implementing the DEI Integration Plan. As a CCC alumni and current faculty member, I present this report in the spirit of supporting the CCC's efforts to racially diversify the professoriate.

California Community College's Vision for Success Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Taskforce

Racial inequity in faculty diversity has been a decades-old issue in California. CCC leaders have used task forces, diversity committees, and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) plans to address the lack of racially and ethnically diverse faculty members[11]. In recent years, the CCC system's racial equity efforts to diversify the faculty have increased, as evidenced in the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges' (ASCCC) and the CCCCO's changes to policy and practice. In 2018, the CCCCO asked its Board of Governors to confront the equity gaps in faculty racial diversity[12]. The Board of Governors reviewed the Campaign for College Opportunity's report on data illuminating equity gaps in faculty racial diversity[13]. After reviewing the data, the Board of Governors asked the Chancellor's Office to coalesce key CCC stakeholders and create a Faculty Diversity Task Force, renamed Vision for Success DEI Task Force[14].

The Vision for Success DEI Task Force outlined six goals and seven commitments for the CCC system to improve student outcomes and meet California's workforce needs (See page 14 from the Vision for Success Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force report). The Task Force's theory of change is a systemic model that emphasizes transforming institutional, interactional, and individual policies and practices in three key processes: pre-hiring, hiring, and retention. The Task Force designed a DEI Integration Plan with 68 strategies to guide district and college leaders to create equitable policies and procedures and promote supportive and inclusive behaviors. Furthermore, the Task Force divided the 68 strategies into two tiers to norm the anticipated amount of time required for district and college leaders to achieve the different strategies. Tier 1 strategies have a one-to-two-year timeline, and Tier 2 strategies have a three-to-five-year timeline.

The Vision for Success Task Force's DEI Integration Plan is a multi-level model for change that calls on CCC faculty to question their

everyday and unspoken practices that reproduce racial inequity in their screening and hiring processes. The DEI Integration Plan provides strategies designed to change institutional, interactional, and individual processes that mitigate racial equity in faculty hiring.

INSTITUTIONAL DIVERSITY STRATEGIES	FOCUS ON POLICY CHANGE
INTERACTIONAL DIVERSITY STRATEGIES	FOCUS ON PROCEDURE CHANGE
INDIVIDUAL DIVERSITY STRATEGIES	FOCUS ON CULTURE CHANGE

As CCC districts and campuses work towards implementing the DEI Integration Plan, I recommend administrators, managers, and faculty members to align each DEI strategy with the CCC DEI statement. In so doing, administrators, managers, and faculty members create accountability in advancing the CCC DEI statement.

California Community College Chancellor's Office DEI Statement (2020)

"Embracing diversity means that we must intentionally practice acceptance and respect towards one another and understand that discrimination and prejudices create and sustain privileges for some while creating and sustaining disadvantages for others."

"In order to embrace diversity, we also acknowledge that institutional discrimination and implicit bias exist and that our goal is to eradicate those vestiges from our system. Our commitment to diversity requires that we strive to eliminate those barriers to equity and that we act deliberately to create a safe and inclusive environment where individual and group differences are valued and leveraged for our growth and understanding as an educational community."

(CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE, 2020, P. 30)
https://www.cccco.edu/-/media/CCCCO-Website/Reports/CCCCO_DEI_Report.pdf.

In the following, I provide ideas to support administrators, managers, faculty members, and staff in aligning their DEI strategies with the CCC DEI statement. First, I offer a brief overview of each type of DEI strategy (i.e., institutional diversity strategies, interactional diversity strategies, and individual diversity strategies). Second, I highlight examples of each type of DEI strategy with ideas to actualize commitments to racial equity. Given that I did not provide ideas to actualize commitments to racial equity for each of the 68 DEI Integration strategies, I recommend reviewing the **Tools to Redesign Presidential Search for Racial Equity** for additional ideas, strategies, and activities to implement racial equity within California public higher education screening and hiring context. The **Tools to Redesign Presidential Search for Racial Equity** was funded by College Futures Foundation and supported by the University of California, California State University, and California Community College systems heads.

"EQUITY AND EQUITY-MINDEDNESS ACCEPT THAT IT IS WHITENESS - NOT THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP - THAT PRODUCES AND SUSTAINS RACIAL INEQUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION. [IT] REQUIRES EXPLICIT ATTENTION TO STRUCTURAL INEQUALITY AND INSTITUTIONALIZED RACISM AND DEMANDS SYSTEM-CHANGING RESPONSES"
(BENSIMON, 2018)

RACIAL EQUITY

"A SOCIAL-JUSTICE IMPERATIVE THAT PRIORITIZES INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRANSFORMING ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES, POLICIES, AND CULTURE TO SUPPORT EQUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES, IN PARTICULAR BY RACE"
(POSSELT ET AL., 2020)

INSTITUTIONAL DIVERSITY STRATEGIES

Institutional diversity strategies strive to create system-level accountability for district and campus-level boards, administrators, and faculty to integrate DEI in their evaluation and decision-making practices:

- **CCCCO will collaborate with statewide stakeholders to implement the DEI plan.**
- **Boards will be required to review EEO plans and review the progress of activities associated with EEO plans.**
- **Campus-level practitioners will be encouraged to review diversity-related criteria in evaluations and revise procedures that address DEI intending to reduce biases in faculty hiring and tenure.**

Vision for Success Commitment 2: Always design and decide with the student in mind.

Tier 1 Activity: Require record keeping of hiring process decisions to allow for specialized statistical analysis of key hiring to measure impact and progress towards increasing the diversity of faculty and staff (classified and administrators).

Ideas to Actualize Commitments to Racial Equity

- *Department deans and department chairs should require screening and hiring chairs to document search committee decision-making processes/justifications about efforts to integrate equity throughout the pre-hiring (e.g., recruitment, advertising) and hiring processes (e.g., first-round interviews, finalist interviews).*
- *Institutional researchers should work with department deans and department chairs to collect data about recruitment, first-round interview, and finalist pools.*

- *Institutional researchers should work with department deans and department chairs to assess the two types of data in the previous two ideas to determine where inequities occur in the hiring process and which practices are reproducing those inequities.*
- *Institutional researchers, department deans, and department chairs should cross-reference the pre-hiring and hiring data (e.g., recruitment, first-round interview, and finalist stages) with the screening committee's decision-making processes/justifications about their equity efforts to identify where equity efforts fall short.*

Vision for Success Commitment 4: Foster the use of data, inquiry, and evidence.

Tier 1 Activity: CCCCO to standardize and revise the EEO plan template and multiple measures with an equity lens and geared towards an action plan with accountability and evaluation of implementation.

Ideas to Actualize Commitments to Racial Equity

- *Department chairs and screening chairs should use the following questions to assess whether the screening committee has used an equity lens to implement the DEI strategies.*
  - *What is the aim of the pre-hiring and hiring practice? Is the pre-hiring and hiring practice targeting a specific racial/ethnic group? Does the pre-hiring and hiring practice champion experience with equity and diversity?*

  - *Did the screening committee assess student and faculty data disaggregated by race/ethnicity? Did the screening committee use student and faculty data disaggregated by race/ethnicity to guide their pre-hiring and hiring practices? If there was a racial equity gap (e.g., lack of Black faculty members in the department), how did the screening committee use the pre-hiring and hiring practices to address the racial equity gap? What data did the screening committee collect to monitor equity in the pre-hiring and hiring processes? Was the data disaggregated by race/ethnicity?*

Vision for Success Commitment 5: Take ownership of goals and performance.

Tier 1 Activity: ASCCC, HR, and local union to create a process where conversations about cultural competencies can happen outside the evaluation process.

Ideas to Actualize Commitments to Racial Equity

- *At each campus, the vice president of instruction should work with the department deans and department chairs to establish key definitions and guidelines to have conversations about cultural competencies. Defining terms creates a foundation on which evaluation and decision-making committees (e.g., screening committees) work can be based.*
  - *Key definitions should align with the CCC DEI statement*
    - *Clearly define equity and equity-mindedness to support campus stakeholders (e.g., administrators, faculty, staff) to have conversations about cultural competencies that will advance the CCC DEI statement.*
    - *Use the Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California's **Core Concepts of Racial Equity handout** as a starting point to have conversations about equity-mindedness and cultural competencies.*

  - *Allow campus stakeholders to define how they understand equity and to identify the cultural competencies associated with their definition of equity.*
    - *The cultural competencies should reflect those from the student body.*
  - *Create opportunities for campus stakeholders to compare and contrast their definition of equity with the campus-wide definition of equity.*
  - *Provide tools for campus stakeholders to reflect on and work with equity-mindedness to help create conversations about cultural competencies that align with the CCC DEI statement.*
    - *See the Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California's **Laying the Groundwork** for activities.*

Vision for Success Commitment 5: Take ownership of goals and performance.

Tier 1 Activity: Districts and colleges, Association of Chief Human Resource Officers (ACHRO), ASCCC, and Chief Instructional Officers (CIO's) to develop guidance on including staff from other disciplines, departments, divisions, etc. on hiring and screening committees.

Ideas to Actualize Commitments to Racial Equity

- *Department deans and department chairs should first assess the department culture to determine the power dynamics that could facilitate or hinder equity.*
  - *In departments with resistance to equity, consider recruiting and assigning people with status, protection, and respect on campus to minimize negative consequences for helping screening committees integrate equity.*
  - *If the department deans and department chairs are the resisters, then the Vice President of Instruction should work with tenured faculty to assess the department culture in deciding who to assign to the screening committee.*

- Department deans and department chairs should make racial equity work experience a key criterion to be part of the screening committee. Sample guiding questions to select screening committee members include:
  - > In what way will this person add value to the faculty hiring process?
  - > What expertise, experience, and viewpoints (e.g., how they understand equity) would they bring to the process? Why are these important in hiring faculty members who advance the CCC DEI statement, help close the racial equity gaps in the department, and have the cultural competencies that reflect the student body?

✳ Vision for Success Commitment 6: Enable action and thoughtful innovation.

Tier 1 Activity: ASCCC to look at both the minimum qualifications and preferred qualifications to ensure diversity related experience and skillsets are preferred minimum qualifications.

Ideas to Actualize Commitments to Racial Equity

- Screening chairs and screening committee members should integrate diversity-related experience and skillsets throughout the various evaluation criteria.
  - > First, screening chairs should facilitate a meeting with the screening committee to identify the criteria (e.g., teaching philosophy, teaching approaches, mentoring approaches, community engagement experience).
  - > Second, screening chairs and committee members should integrate diversity-related experience and skillsets when defining the dimensions for each criterion.
  - > Third, the dimensions should be broad enough to allow faculty candidates to fulfill the criteria and for screening committee members to interpret the criteria.
  - > Fourth, criterion dimensions should be narrow enough to guide screening committee evaluations and decision-making.
  - > Fifth, the screening chair and committee members should develop high, medium, and low gradations for each criterion and include space for comments to justify assessments or share thoughts and reflections.
- Below is an example of defining criteria integrating diversity-related experiences and skillsets with holistic gradations:

	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
TEACHING	Has experience as a classroom instructor OR as an instructor outside the classroom	Has experience as a classroom instructor OR as an instructor outside the classroom AND has experience teaching diverse students, including students of color	Has experience as a classroom instructor OR as an instructor outside the classroom AND has experience with culturally relevant pedagogy AND has experience teaching students of color
MENTORING	Has experience mentoring diverse students, but it is not clear from the cover letter or resume that they have experience mentoring students of color.	Has experience mentoring students of color	Has experience mentoring students of color AND has experience leading a DEI initiative that focused on mentoring students of color

Interactional diversity strategies strive to provide a shared language and resources for administrators, faculty, and staff to integrate DEI into their faculty recruitment, hiring, and retention procedures.

- Support community college practitioners to create more welcoming and inclusive environments for diverse people on campus.
- Support campuses to create shared language and resources to integrate DEI in faculty recruitment, hiring, and retention.
- Support campuses to train key stakeholders in faculty hiring to value DEI and understand how to integrate DEI in faculty hiring.

✳ Vision for Success Commitment 2: Always design and decide with the student in mind.

Tier 1 Activity: Collaborate with the EEO Advisory to create a workshop series model for administrators and managers to understand and see the value of inclusive behaviors.

Ideas to Actualize Commitments to Racial Equity

- The workshop should provide opportunities for department deans, department chairs, and screening chairs to articulate how they think about racial diversity and racial equity regarding organizational change. That is, how do department deans, department chairs, and screening chairs understand efforts to change practices and policies to advance racial equity?

- Human resources personnel and chief diversity officers should use a theory of change model that focuses on racial equity and organizational change efforts. The Equity Scorecard from the Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California is one example of a theory of change that helps administrators, faculty, and staff develop equity-mindedness by engaging them in racial equity change work.

✳ Vision for Success Commitment 5: Take ownership of goals and performance.

Tier 1 Activity: CCCCO partner with statewide organizations to provide best practices modules for implementing the hiring processes that upholds diversity, equity, and inclusion with the goal of serving students with excellence.

Ideas to Actualize Commitments to Racial Equity

- Human resources personnel and chief diversity officers should create workshops that focus on identifying and disrupting biases in pre-hiring and hiring practices and policies.
  - > Require administrators, managers, and faculty to break down the pre-hiring and hiring process into stages (e.g., screening committee formation, job ad and recruitment strategies, evaluation rubric and interview questions, campus visits) and provide administrators, managers, and faculty with examples of how biases operate in each stage
- Human resources personnel and chief diversity officers should create training modules and resources with language and practices that focus on equity-mindedness.

Vision for Success Commitment 5: Take ownership of goals and performance

Tier 1 Activity: CCCCO and ACHRO to develop model language for exit interviews to assess perspectives on how the prevailing culture impacts diversity, attitudes towards diverse student and employee groups, awareness and success of diversity programs, likelihood of recommending districts to diverse job applicants, impact of current level of diversity on decision to leave.

Ideas to Actualize Commitments to Racial Equity

- *Human resources personnel should routinely assess the campus racial culture through national surveys like* **USC Race and Equity Center's National Assessment of Collegiate Campus Climates** *survey.*
- *Human resources personnel should systematically assess the exit interviews and write reports about major findings to share with the community.*

Vision for Success Commitment 7: Lead the work of partnering across systems

Tier 2 Activity: Districts and colleges to revise their policies and procedures every 5 years and include cross-functional staff in hiring and screening committees (i.e. including staff from other disciplines, departments, divisions, classified staff, etc.).

Ideas to Actualize Commitments to Racial Equity

- *Human resources personnel and department deans should require equity audits of screening and hiring practices every two years. The audits should focus on whether the screening committees have used an equity-minded lens to implement the DEI plan.*

- *Department deans and department chairs should require screening chairs to document every decision-making process throughout the search process, including efforts to integrate equity in each pre-hiring and hiring stage.*
- *Human resources personnel and department deans should collect data disaggregated by race/ethnicity of the recruitment, interviewed, and hired pools.*

INDIVIDUAL DIVERSITY STRATEGIES

Individual diversity strategies promote supportive and inclusive campus cultures so administrators, faculty, and staff can normalize and integrate DEI into their day-to-day practices and behaviors.

- *Support campuses to integrate DEI as part of their culture.*
- *Provide opportunities for campuses to secure funding to implement DEI strategies.*

Vision for Success Commitment 3: Pair high expectations with high support.

Tier 2 Activity: CCCCO to secure funding to create a statewide internship program and pipeline for graduate students to teach at California Community Colleges.

Ideas to Actualize Commitments to Racial Equity

- *Train potential faculty to be equity-minded and develop the necessary diversity experiences and skillsets.*

I provided the ideas to actualize commitments to racial equity in this section with the intention to support CCC administrators, managers, and faculty to align the Vision for Success Task Force's DEI Integration Plan with the **CCCCO's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility's action plans**.

> **"We measure progress on our DEIA journey in three core outcomes: cultural diversity, promoting equity through equity-minded policies and practices, and fostering inclusion through employee recruitment, hiring, and retention."**

The DEI Integration Plan provides structural changes at the state level. However, the CCCCO gives discrepancy to district and college leaders and practitioners to use the DEI Integration Plan to create campus cultures that value and invest in racial equity. As I highlight in the next sections, unchecked discretion coupled with resistance to racial equity in predominantly White environments creates situations where White supremacy, whether conscious or not, operates in administration, faculty, and staff members' interpretation and implementation of the DEI Integration Plan.

White supremacy is the belief that White people, including White people's experiences, cultures, identity characteristics (e.g., skin color), and extracurricular activities (e.g., sports associated with high socioeconomic White people), are superior to Asian Pacific Islander Desi American, Black, Latinx, Native American, and other people of color.

Gibbons, A. (2018). The five refusals of White supremacy. American Journal of Economics and Sociology, 77(3–4), 729–755. https://doi.org/10.1111/ajes.12231

Leal-Carillo and colleagues (2023)[15] reflected on the lessons learned from the partnership between the Success Center for California Community Colleges and the CCCCO in creating and facilitating the Vision for Success DEI Task Force. In their reflection, Leal-Carillo and colleagues (2023) emphasized that people drove change, not data. The observation that people drive change and not data reflects a culture of inquiry. As opposed to a culture of evidence where administrators, faculty, and staff position data as an entity that speaks for itself, in a culture of inquiry administrators, faculty, and staff use data as starting points to interrogate policies, practices, and norms that contribute to racial inequities[16].

CULTURE OF INQUIRY

Data are for institutional accountability and racial equity	Data are in the hands of all practitioners	Data are part of a process of critical inquiry, reflection, and change

Citation
Center for Urban Education. (2020). Equity-minded inquiry series: Data tools. Rossier School of Education, University of Southern California. **Link.**

Why Do People Matter in Interpreting Data?

The effectiveness of data in racial equity change work relies on administrators, faculty, and staff sensemaking of racial (in)equity on their campuses. I highlight the lessons about people drive change and resistance to racial equity because they echo decades of research highlighting the role of educators' racial schemas in interpreting and implementing transformational change (see **Trinidad, 2022**, for an example of racial schemas that CCC administrators, faculty, and staff use to make sense of race-conscious policy and practice). Racial schemas refer to the widely held beliefs that inform people how to make sense of race and racism. From this vantage point, racial inequity will continue to exist at the department, college, and district levels without the proper racial schema to interpret and implement the Vision for Success Task Force's DEI Integration Plan. The CCC's racial equity efforts rest on the willingness of district, college, and department practitioners to acknowledge the salience of race and racism in their evaluations and decision-making.

What is Equity-Mindedness and Why it Matters to Address Racial Equity in Faculty Hiring?

Equity-mindedness is a racial schema that guides people how to make sense and address racial equity[17][18]. In practice, equity-mindedness refers to the knowledge to be conscious of race, to be aware that racialized patterns are embedded in practices, policies, and cultures, and acknowledging a sense of responsibility to eliminate racial inequity by changing practices, policies, and cultures[19][20].

Equity-mindedness guides faculty not to ignore race and instead focus on structural racial patterns when assessing their practices, like faculty hiring.

Citation
Center for Urban Education (2020). Equity-minded inquiry series: Syllabus review. Rossier School of Education, University of Southern California. **Link.**

EQUITY-MINDED COMPETENCE

- Aware of their racial identity
- Uses quantitative and qualitative data to identify racialized patterns of practice and outcomes
- Reflects on racial consequences of taken-for-granted practices
- Exercises agency to produce racial equity
- Views the campus as a racialized space and actively self-monitors interactions with students of color

LACK OF EQUITY-MINDED COMPETENCE

- Claims to not see race
- Does not see value in using data disaggregated by race/ethnicity to better understand the experience of students of color
- Resists noticing racialized consequences or rationalizes them as being something else
- Does not view racial equity as a personal responsibility
- Views the classroom as a space utilitarian physical space

TABLE 3: EXAMPLES OF FACULTY USING EQUITY-MINDEDNESS FOR STRUCTURAL CHANGES

Equity-Minded Practice	Communicating Equity-Minded Practice	Using Equity-Minded Practice for Change
Faculty from across campus analyzed data disaggregated by race and learned that the second-to third-year retention rates for Black and Latinx students were lower than those of white students[21].	The faculty decided to create workshops to communicate the data on existing racial disparities to department chairs upon learning that their university was encountering problems retaining Black and Latinx students[22].	Faculty from one department, changed how they recruited and selected students for undergraduate research assistantships and created new advising practices to target Black and Latinx students[23].
Faculty from across campus discussed how their campus culture of niceness created challenges to assess and change practices and policies that perpetuate racial inequity because racial equity made senior, white faculty uncomfortable[24].	The faculty imagined the future of resistance to racial equity in faculty hiring committees to guide their creation of faculty recruiting and hiring templates that integrated equity as a criterion[25].	Search committee members used an evaluation criterion that required members to evaluate faculty candidates on their experience mentoring students of color and their potential to advance the university's equity efforts[26].

Misappropriation of Proposition 209 to Resist Racial Equity Efforts

Thuy Thi Nguyen has written a separate report in this series on the legality of using race in education which provides a critical and thorough description of Proposition 209 and racial equity change work in the CCC system. In this section, I will only briefly discuss Proposition 209 because faculty misappropriate it to resist racial equity change or misunderstand what is possible within the legal restrictions of Proposition 209. The legal framework that California courts have provided aligns with my argument about the necessity for administrators, faculty, and staff to develop and use an equity-minded lens to interpret and implement the DEI Integration Plan.

Proposition 209 is a statewide ballot measure that amended the California Constitution to prohibit state governmental institutions from discriminating "against, or grant preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting" (Cal. Const., art. I, § 31, subd. (a).). According to Nguyen (2023), after

Proposition 209, statutory law and case law have been passed to guide what the state of California can do to achieve racial diversity. California law prohibits setting and using quotas but allows **targeted recruitment and monitoring programs that collect and report data on women and people of color.**

As outlined in Nguyen's (2023) report, California's legal framework advises that race-conscious policies should not discriminate or grant preferential treatment based on race and race-based policies should remediate discrimination. As I elaborate in the following section, a race-neutral frame of thinking creates situations where White faculty operate under the assumption that their evaluations and decision-making are objective and race-neutral. In practice, a race-neutral frame of thinking allows White faculty to believe that how they apply merit and fit are objective. But the ideas of merit and fit are far from being objective and race-neutral because faculty use their preferences and biases to favor faculty candidate experiences and self-presentations that reflect White people.

> **California law prohibits setting and using quotas but allows targeted recruitment and monitoring programs that collect and report data on women and people of color.**
> (Nguyen, 2023)

How Does Race show up in Faculty Screening and Hiring Contexts?

Research has shown that policies and practices intended to centralize equity-mindedness in faculty hiring fall short when administrators, managers, and faculty do not identify, interrogate, and disrupt White supremacy throughout the screening and hiring processes[27] [28]. White supremacy is the belief that White people, including White people's experiences, cultures, identity characteristics (e.g., skin color), and extracurricular activities (e.g., sports associated with high socioeconomic White people), are superior to Asian Pacific Islander Desi American, Black, Latinx, Native American, and other people of color[29]. In screening and faculty hiring contexts, White supremacy beliefs manifest through positive biases for White candidates and negative biases against people of color. Screening and hiring committee members often use race-neutral interpretations to implement practices and policies in ways that favor White faculty candidates.

> **Race-neutral interpretations and implementations of practices and policies are often subtle, but visible in communicating who is valued and for reasons that have less to do with qualifications and more to do with preferences.**

Imagine a screening committee where White committee members visibly express disinterest in the teaching demonstrations of faculty candidates of color but sit in the front row, smile, make eye contact, and nod during the White candidate's teaching demonstration. Lara (2019) found similar examples in his study about the experiences of faculty of color serving on screening committees at five CCC campuses. His participants reported that White committee members:

- **Used nonverbal cues (e.g., disinterest and lack of curiosity) to eliminate candidates of color that otherwise were qualified for faculty positions**

- **Used the language of "this person is not a good fit" to eliminate candidates of color that they perceived did not share similar cultural values**

Lara, L. J. (2019). Faculty of color unmask colorblind ideology in the community college faculty search process. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 43*(10–11), 702–717. https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2019.1600608

WHY DOES WHITE SUPREMACY MANIFEST IN FACULTY SCREENING AND HIRING CONTEXTS?

Historically, screening and hiring practices and policies in higher education have been constructed based on dominant perspectives of race and other social categories[30][31]. Faculty screening and hiring committee members rarely define criteria to determine the desired characteristics and qualifications of a faculty candidate[32], and the lack of clearly defined evaluation criteria leads reviewers to rely on their default preferences and biases to make hiring decisions[33]. In most cases, racial biases inform evaluation processes because screening and hiring committees have discretion to assess their decision-making processes, including how they interpret and implement practices and policies[34]. In predominantly White institutions, like the CCC system, White faculty hold positions with decision-making power. In spaces where White people are positioned as the norm, they prefer those with similar personal and professional backgrounds, which normalizes White preference for White faculty candidates as the default[35].

And indeed, faculty often lack the training and capacity to identify how their practices and policies close the gates to racial diversity in the professoriate. Faculty who aspire to create a racially equitable hiring process may encounter barriers because they are advocating to change the very structures that professionally reward them and advantage the academy's dominant racial group.

WHY ARE RACIAL IMPLICIT BIASES AN ISSUE?

Implicit biases are among the many factors contributing to inequities in higher education, including the lack of racial diversity in the professoriate[36]. Although explicit biases also operate in evaluation and decision-making contexts, I focus on implicit biases because they work below consciousness and strike when individuals have access to limited information, are under time pressure, and must juggle multiple commitments (See **State of the Science: Implicit Bias Review 2015** report), which reflect the conditions under which screening and hiring committees assess faculty candidates. Implicit biases are attitudes and beliefs about race, ethnicity, gender, age, and other social identities that operate outside individual consciousness but influence judgments[37].

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO IDENTIFY AND DISRUPT IMPLICIT BIASES?

- Implicit biases are related to discrimination
- Implicit bias creates situations for people to express less concern about combating discrimination
- Implicit bias creates situations for perpetrators of discrimination to not be held accountable for racism and sexism

Social psychologists have found that implicit bias is related to discrimination, even after accounting for explicit biases[38]. Moreover, people hold perpetrators of discrimination less accountable and less worthy of punishment when they attribute the perpetrators' behavior to implicit bias rather than explicit bias[39][40]. Implicit biases about race are overlearned mental associations of Asian Pacific Islander Desi American, Black, Latinx, and Native American groups with stereotypes that people of color are inferior, lazy, and diversity hires[41][42]. These types of racist stereotypes about people of color create situations where predominantly White screening committees associate racial equity work with needing to lower standards of excellence. When such assumptions and biases are left uninterrupted, screening committee members rely on their taken-for-granted notions of who is deemed worthy and suitable for the position to establish the body of knowledge (e.g., teaching philosophies) and experience (e.g., teaching approaches) valued in evaluation and decision-making processes[43].

In faculty hiring, implicit biases about race happen when predominantly White screening committee chairs and members rely on their preferences to favor White faculty candidates and disqualify faculty candidates of color[44][45]. In practice, pro-White biases coupled with misperceptions about racial equity manifest when screening chairs and committee members...

RACIAL INEQUITABLE PRACTICE:	RACIAL INEQUITABLE PRACTICE:
Selectively apply hiring criteria based on race and gender	Expect faculty candidates of color to work twice as hard, but scrutinized them twice as hard in comparison to White faculty candidates
EXAMPLE:	**EXAMPLE:**
When White screening committee members expect women of color candidates to have ten years of teaching experience and graduate degrees from flagship universities as minimal criteria before valuing the culturally relevant expertise and experience of women of color. While not expecting White woman candidates to have the same amount of experience and the same types of degrees but highly value White woman for tutoring Black and Latinx students.	When White screening committee members positively evaluate White men over people of color with the same credentials, and in some cases, over more qualified people of color[46][47].
REFLECTION QUESTIONS FOR SCREENING COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO CONSIDER:	**REFLECTION QUESTIONS FOR SCREENING COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO CONSIDER:**
- How are you applying each criterion to each faculty candidate? - How have your emotional response and affect towards each faculty candidate informed your application of each criterion? Write this down and share with screening committee members.	- Did you use evidence (e.g., resumes, cover letters) when assessing each faculty candidate? It is okay to feel a sense of excitement for faculty candidates, but make sure that you let the screening committee know about such excitement and use evidence to support your assessments.

As seen on Table 4, the composition of screening committees determines the language used in job descriptions, how actively screening committee members recruit diverse hiring pools, and how they create criteria to assess faculty candidates whom they decide to hire. On Table 5, I provide reflective questions for screening and hiring committees to race and gender biases.

TABLE 4: EXAMPLES OF IMPLICIT BIASES IN THE FACULTY SEARCH PROCESS

Composition of Committee	Job Description and Recruitment	Evaluations of Resumes and Interviews	Decision-Making
Search chairs are often senior, white men Lack of racial diversity leads to homogenous group think	Calls for general positions are not race-neutral Passive outreach strategies	Favoring resumes from candidates presumed to be White and men Relying on individual preferences when evaluating candidates	Selectively applying gendered and raced criteria to eliminate diverse candidates

Note. For more information on the role of implicit biases in faculty hiring see O'Meara, K. A., Culpepper, D., & Templeton, L. L. (2020). Nudging toward diversity: Applying behavioral design to faculty hiring. *Review of Educational Research, 90*(3), 311-348. 10.3102/0034654320914742.

TABLE 5: REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS TO DISRUPT IMPLICIT BIASES IN THE FACULTY SEARCH PROCESSES

Composition of Committee	Is the screening committee racially and ethnically diverse? Does each screening committee member have experience with racial equity initiatives?
Job Description and Recruitment	Does the job description reference the CCC DEI statement? Does the job description have diversity experience and skillsets as preferred qualifications? Did each screening committee member actively recruit faculty candidates of color and faculty candidates with equity experience and skillsets?
Evaluations of Resumes and Interviews	Did each screening committee member paused to reflect whether they identified patterns by race and gender in their evaluations of faculty candidates? Did the screening chair observe patterns by race and gender in the screening committee's evaluations of faculty candidates? Did the screening committee strive to create an equitable interview experience for faculty candidates? Did the screening committee take time to reflect on their emotional reactions to each faculty candidate and how it might have impacted their assessments and the experience of each faculty candidate?
Decision-Making	Did the screening committee implement the DEI integration plan to recruit and evaluate each faculty candidate? Did the screening committee spend time reflecting on the different biases that came up throughout the search process? Did the screening committee spend time documenting the different biases that came up throughout the search process? Did the screening committee document each decision-making process and provide evidence that equity informed each decision throughout the search process? Did each screening committee member agree that the committee, as a collective, attempted every effort to integrate equity throughout the search process?

Although there are instances of outright discrimination, racial inequity often happens through undefined, unspoken, and uninterrogated criteria of merit and fit that faculty uphold to White, male, Western epistemological ideals[48].

"Faculty hiring at [predominantly White institutions] does not have to be explicitly racist to exclude racially minoritized groups."

Citation
Liera, R. (2020). Equity advocates using equity-mindedness to interrupt faculty hiring's racial structure. *Teachers College Record, 122*(9), 1-42. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146812012200910.

WHAT IS MERIT AND FIT? BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, HOW IS MERIT AND FIT RACIALIZED IN FACULTY HIRING?"

For many educators, racial equity does not mean excellence since it is often channeled through their understanding and application of merit and fit[49]. Racial equity disrupts perceptions of fairness because it requires higher education practitioners to distribute resources to racial groups experiencing equity gaps[50]. Merit and fit are terms that higher education practitioners use to serve as assessment metrics because of the assumption that merit[51] and fit[52] are objective.

TABLE 6: DEFINITIONS OF MERIT AND FIT

MERIT

Merit is the belief that people deserve "social rewards based on individual efforts, talents, and achievements"[53].

WHAT DOES MERIT DO? In faculty hiring, merit establishes the body of knowledge (e.g., teaching philosophies) and experiences (e.g., teaching, mentoring, advising, administrating) that search committee members consider as necessary for the job and worthy to be evaluated[54][55].

FIT

Fit refers to screening committee members matching the "right" faculty candidate to the job[56], organization[57][58], or culture[59].

WHAT DOES FIT DO? In faculty hiring, fit often determines who the screening and hiring committee perceives to be a good for the department because they will be a good colleague[60].
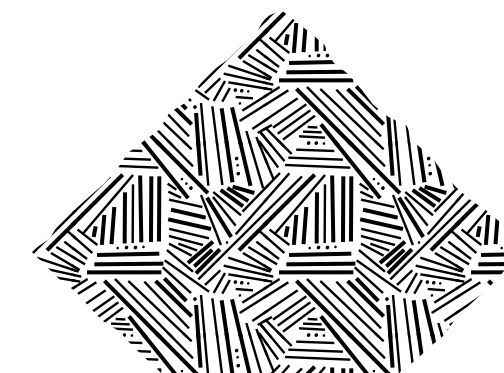
MERIT

Faculty screening committee members usually assess merit from faculty candidates' curriculum vitas (CV)/resumes, cover letters, and references and often treat such documents as standard and objective sources of information about applicants' quality and qualifications[61].

BUT MERIT IS NOT OBJECTIVE BECAUSE: Faculty with decision-making power (e.g., screening chair, White faculty, men faculty, tenured faculty) define merit self-servingly in ways that places value on credentials that reflect their own credentials[62].

In screening committees that are predominantly White, a meritorious faculty candidate is someone with professional experiences and academic credentials similar to those of White faculty members.

EXAMPLE: A White screening committee member praises a White faculty candidate as meritorious because he has ten years of teaching experience but does not have experience with culturally relevant pedagogy. The faculty member emphasizes that the screening committee should not worry because the White faculty candidate attended a master's program at the University of Southern California. The White screening committee member justifies his assessment by highlighting the Native American faculty candidate's lack of teaching experience (she has two years of teaching experience). He further minimizes the Native American faculty candidate's use of culturally relevant pedagogy to develop curricula and her excellence in culturally relevant teaching award.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS: Each screening and hiring committee member should complete the following sentence on separate sheets of paper: "When considering a candidate's 'merit' for this position, I think about these qualities ..."

COLLECTIVE REFLECTION QUESTIONS: The search chair should group together the responses for merit and discuss what screening committee members have shared.

Then the search chair could use the following discussion questions to facilitate a conversation among screening committee members: (a) What do our responses suggest about the criteria for merit that we associate with this position? (b) In what ways do these criteria for merit align with race-neutral/equity-minded conceptions? (c) Based on these criteria for merit, who will likely surface as strong candidates for the position? (d) How would these criteria for merit impact candidates of color?

LEADERSHIP ACCOUNTABILITY: Department deans/department chairs should assess the screening committee's definitions of merit to ensure that it aligns with the CCC DEI statement. Is the screening committee's definition of merit creating opportunities to assess faculty candidates' experiences and expertise with equity and diversity? If so, what evidence exists that the screening committee is using a definition of merit that aligns with the CCC DEI statement (e.g., how the screening committee defined the evaluation criteria)? If not, then department deans/department chairs should require the screening committee to revise their definition of merit.

FIT

Faculty screening committee members usually assess fit from faculty candidates' personality characteristics, behaviors, dress, identities, and leisure pursuits during interviews[63].

BUT FIT IS NOT OBJECTIVE BECAUSE: Unstructured assessments increase the risks that implicit bias will enter the hiring process and allow screening committees to draw on their emotional reactions, gut instincts, and feelings of chemistry to judge whether candidates are a good fit[64].

In screening committees that are predominantly White, a good fit for the department are faculty candidates with personality characteristics, behaviors, self-presentation of style, identities, and leisure pursuits similar to the predominantly White screening committee members.

EXAMPLE: A White screening committee member expresses excitement about a White faculty candidate's teaching approach because the White faculty candidate's presentation and communication styles feel comfortable and familiar. The same White screening committee member looked for mistakes in the teaching presentation of a faculty candidate of color because they were not familiar with the teaching approach. Since the White screening committee member was uncomfortable with the faculty candidate of color, they questioned whether the faculty candidate of color would be a good fit for the department.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION QUESTION: Each screening and hiring committee member should complete the following sentence on separate sheets of paper: "When considering a candidate's 'fit' for this position, I think about these qualities ...."

COLLECTIVE REFLECTION QUESTIONS: The search chair should group together the responses for fit and discuss what screening committee members have shared.

Then the search chair could use the following discussion questions to facilitate a conversation among screening committee members: (a) What do our responses suggest about the criteria for fit that we associate with this position? (b) In what ways do these criteria for fit align with race-neutral/equity-minded conceptions? (c) Based on these criteria for fit, who will likely surface as strong candidates for the position? (d) How would these criteria for fit impact candidates of color?

LEADERSHIP ACCOUNTABILITY: Department deans/department chairs should assess the screening committee's definitions of fit to ensure that it aligns with the CCC DEI statement. Is the screening committee's definition of fit creating opportunities to assess faculty candidates' experiences and expertise with equity and diversity? If so, what evidence exists that the screening committee is using a definition of fit that aligns with the CCC DEI statement (e.g., how the screening committee defined the evaluation criteria)? If not, then department deans/department chairs should require the screening committee to revise their definition of fit.

Concluding Thoughts

I join higher education policymakers, administrators, faculty, and staff who approach the limited racial diversity in the professoriate as an equity and social justice issue, which aligns with the Vision for Success DEI Task Force's DEI Integration Plan. As I outlined in the report, without intentional disruption of how White supremacy informs biases and understandings of merit and fit, the Vision for Success DEI Task Force's DEI Integration Plan could fall short in meeting its goals to diversify the CCC professoriate. As CCC leaders continue to plan on implementing the Vision for Success DEI Task Force's DEI Integration Plan, I hope that this report provides guidance to identify, disrupt, and mitigate how racial biases, merit, and fit shape the evaluation and decision-making processes.
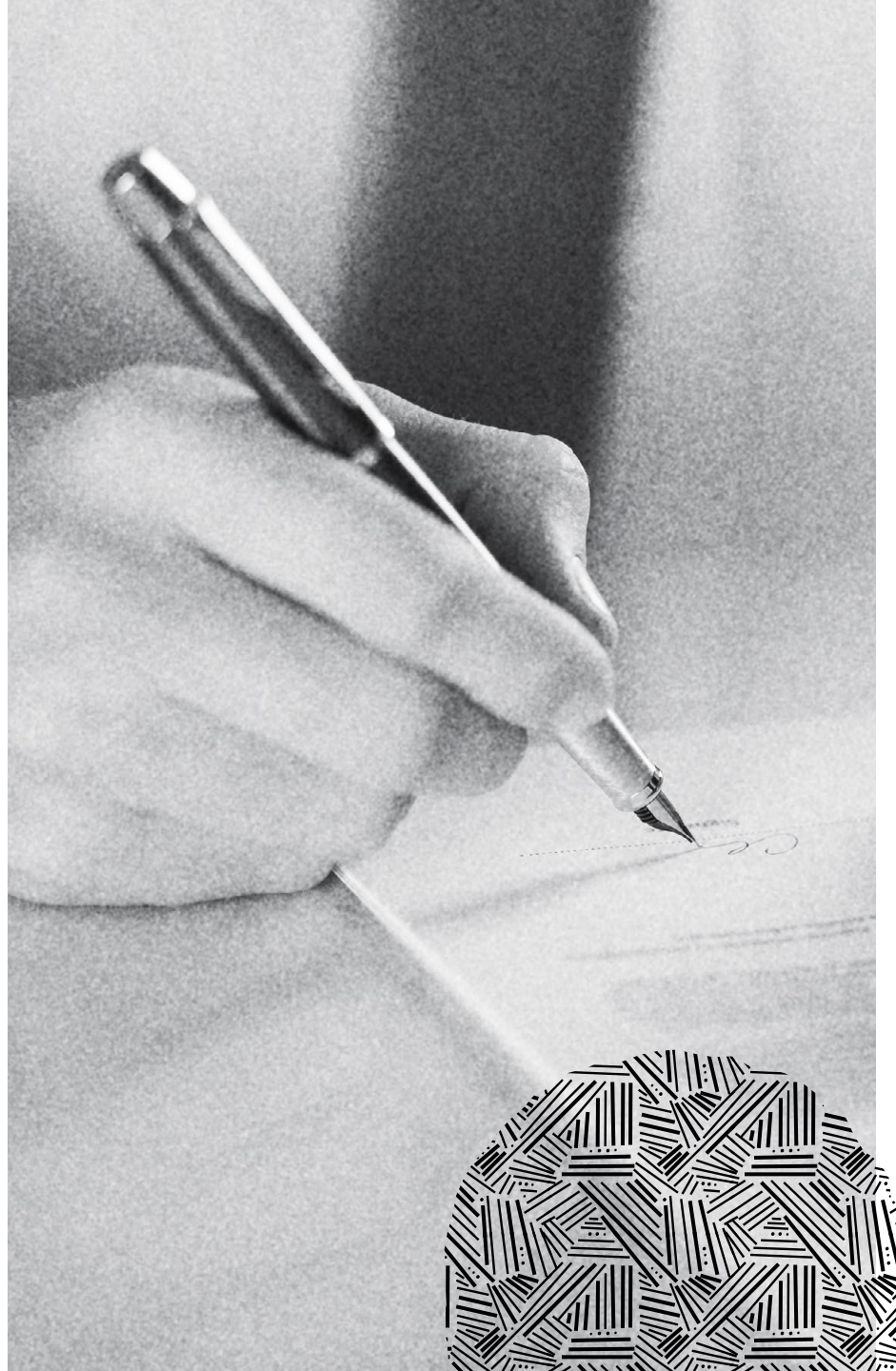
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The University of Southern California is home to a dynamic research, professional learning, and organizational improvement center that serves educational institutions, corporations, government agencies, and other organizations that span a multitude of industries across the United States and in other countries. We actualize our mission through rigorous interdisciplinary research, high-quality professional learning experiences, the production and wide dissemination of useful tools, trustworthy consultations and strategy advising, and substantive partnerships. While race and ethnicity are at the epicenter of our work, we also value their intersectionality with other identities, and therefore aim to advance equity for all persons experiencing marginalization. Our rigorous approach is built on research, scalable and adaptable models of success, and continuous feedback from partners and clients.

USC Race and Equity Center

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At College Futures Foundation, we envision a California where postsecondary education advances racial, social, and economic equity, unlocking upward mobility now and for generations to come. We believe in the power of postsecondary opportunity and that securing the postsecondary success of students facing the most formidable barriers will ensure that all of us can thrive—our communities, our economy, and our state. We believe that the equitable education system of the future, one that enables every student to achieve their dreams and participate in an inclusive and robust economy, will be realized if we are focused, determined, and active in our leadership and partnership.

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