

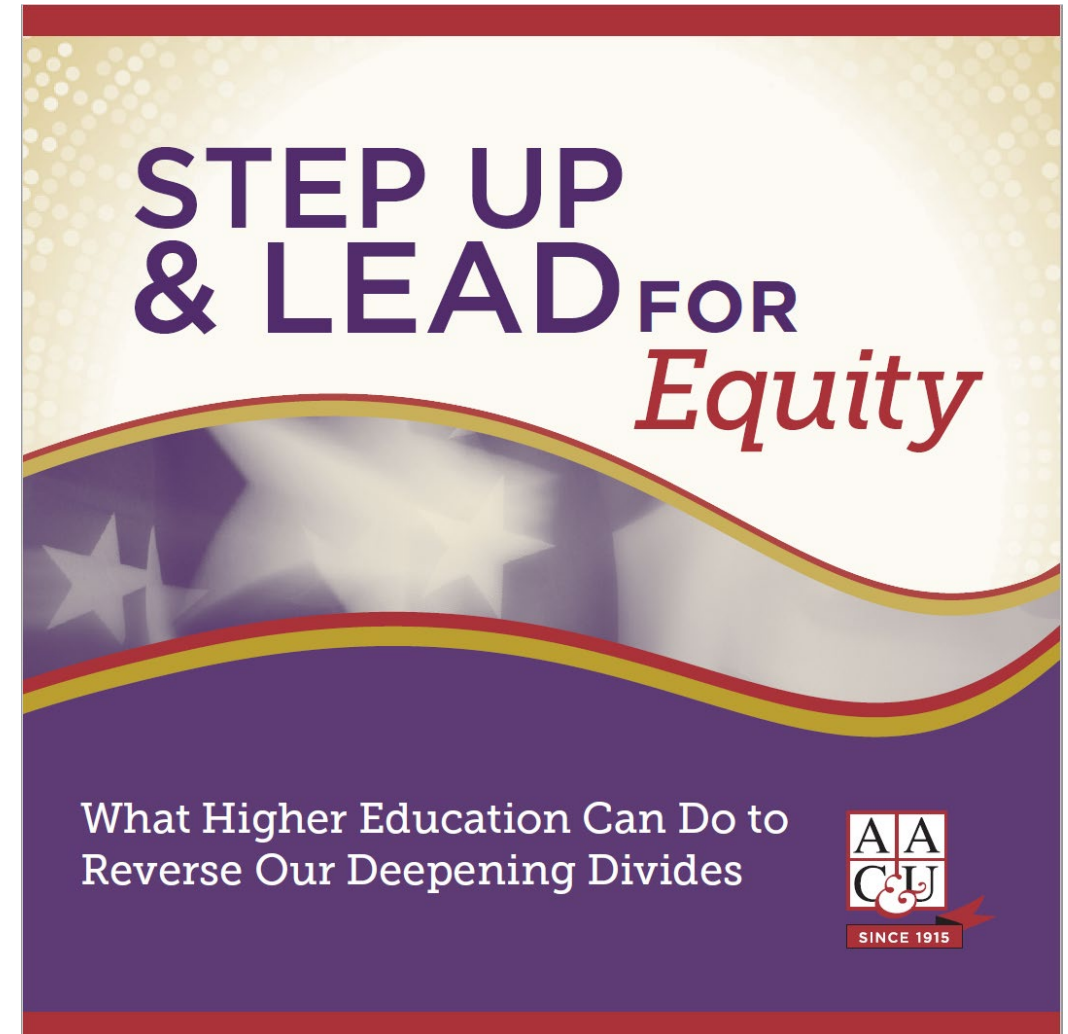


Best & Promising Practices for Equity in Higher Education



Purpose

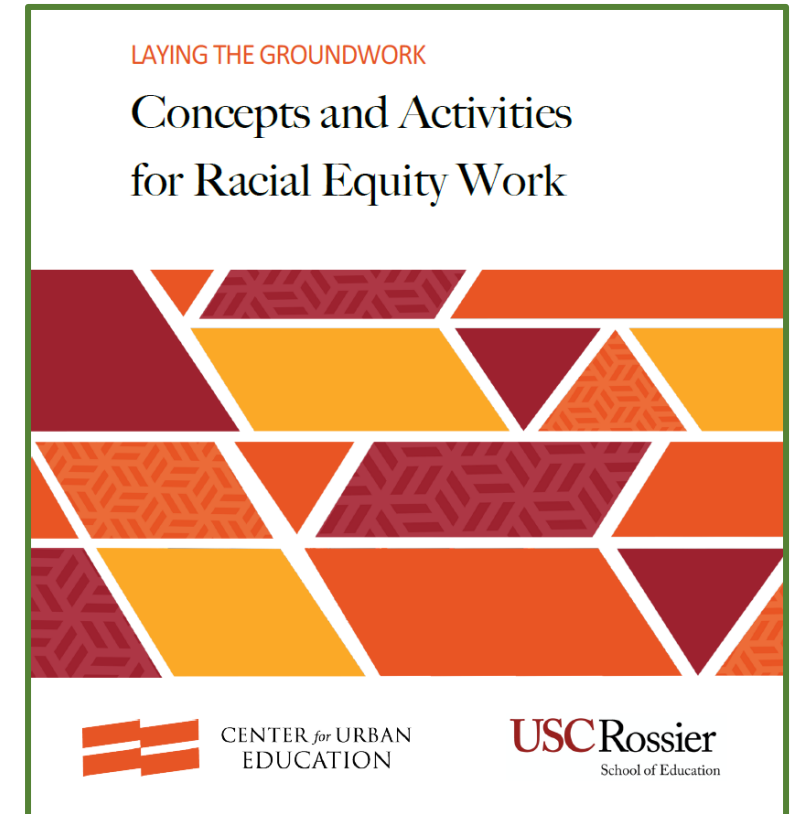
- Provide an array of **concepts and successful practices for embedding equity** in higher education to inform the strategic direction for GRC's Equity-Centered Strategic Plan.



Resources



- **Laying the Groundwork: Concepts and Activities for Racial Equity Work.** Center for Urban Education, Rossier School of Education, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, 2020.
- **Step Up & Lead for Equity: What Higher Education Can Do to Reverse Our Deepening Divides.** Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), Washington, DC, 2016.
- **Structural Equity: Big-Picture Thinking & Partnerships That Improve Community College Student Outcomes.** The Aspen Institute, College Excellence Program, Aspen, CO, 2016.
- **Online Learning during COVID-19: 8 Ways Universities Can Improve Equity and Access.**
- **Anti-Racism in Higher Education: A Model for Change.** Race and Pedagogy Journal, vol. 4, no. 3



Laying the Groundwork: Concepts & Activities for Racial Equity Work

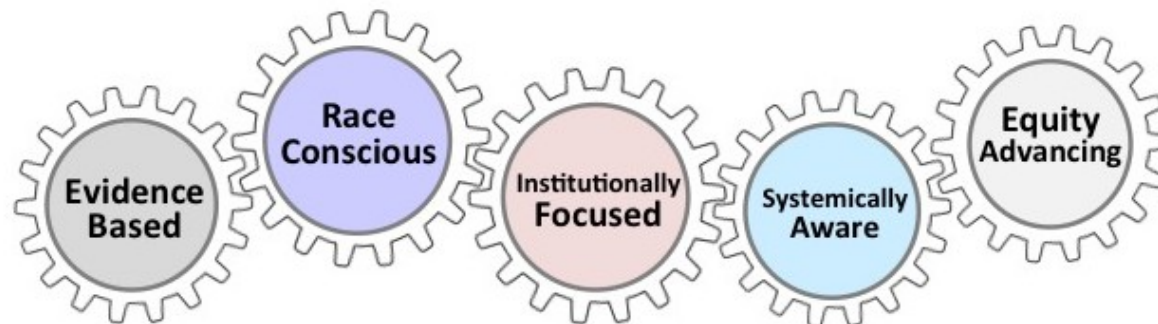


Why Race?

- **Demographic imperative:** Growing racial and ethnic diversity of the U.S.
- **Economic imperative:** Close gaps in educational access and completion to support the country's economic future
- **Justice imperative:** Address structural inequality and institutionalized racism to create a just system
- Socioeconomic class and income alone do not **fully account for inequalities** experienced by racially minoritized students, including:
 - Black, Latinx, Native American, and Pacific Islander students

Concept of “Equity-mindedness”

- Equity-mindedness is a **“cognitive frame”** or mental map of attitudes and beliefs.
- Reflects an awareness of the sociohistorical context of exclusionary practices in higher education and **frames racial inequity as a dysfunction of higher education’s policies and practices.**
- Developing equity-mindedness requires **shifting beyond “diversity-mindedness” and “deficit-mindedness”.**



Racial Equity Imperative

1

EQUALITY
imagines an
equal world.
*"I care about all
students equally"*




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Racial equity requires policies and practices directed where they're needed to fix barriers to achievement and provide the necessary support. When colleges focus solely on diversity, they bring more students into systems that put too many students on predictable paths toward failure.

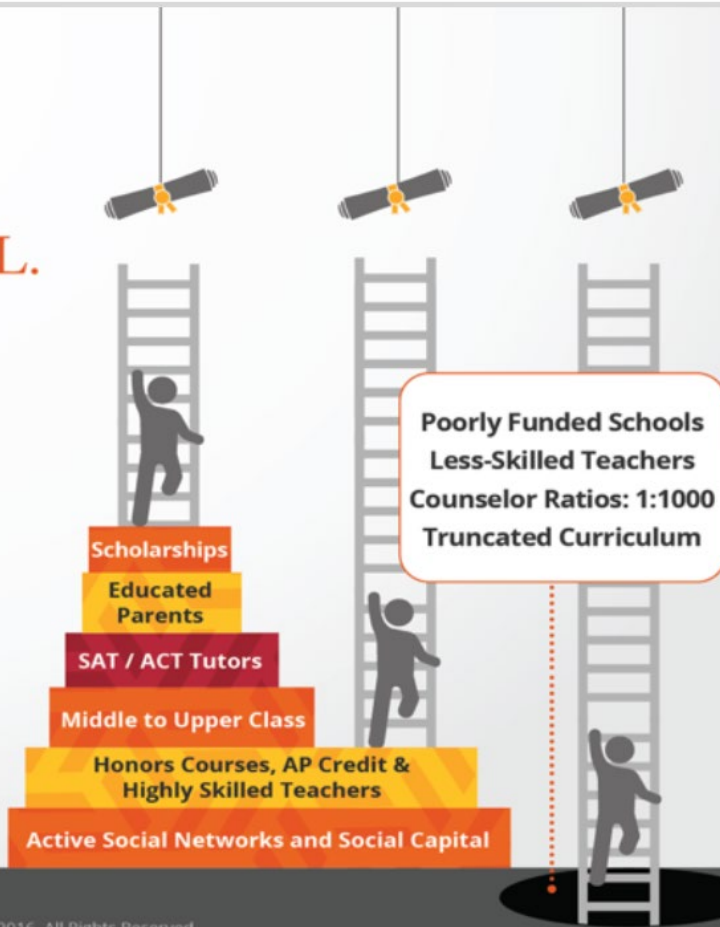
Racial Equity Imperative

2

But the world
ISN'T EQUAL.



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3

Within this same
picture, a
DIVERSITY
lens focuses only
on bringing more
students into an
unequal pathway.



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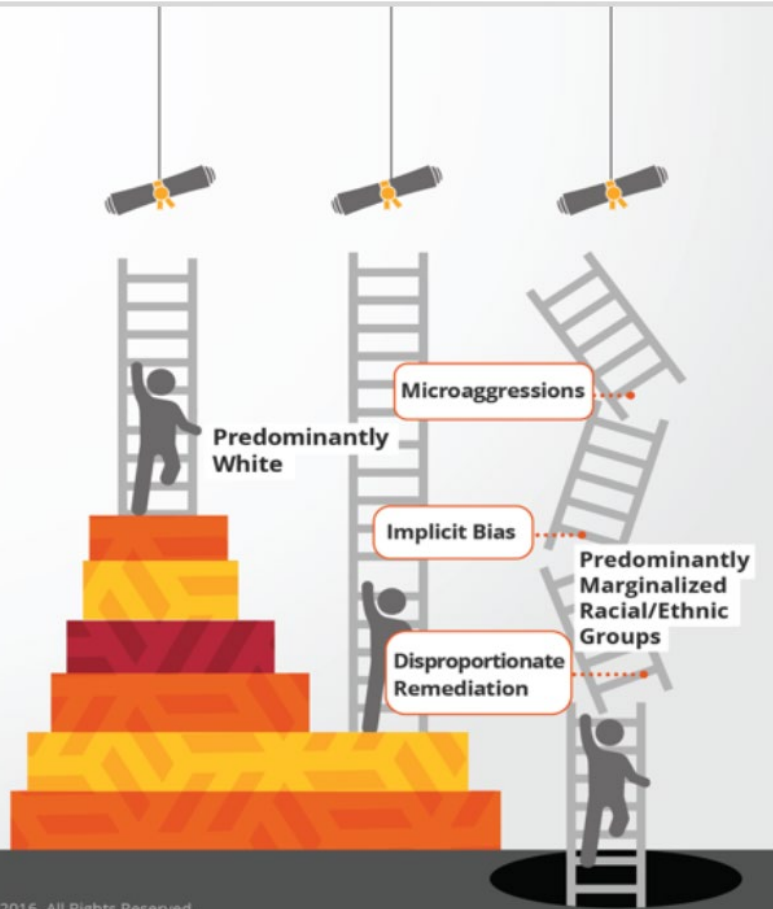


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Racial Equity Imperative

4

And it has
**BIAS AND
SYSTEMIC
RACISM.**



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5

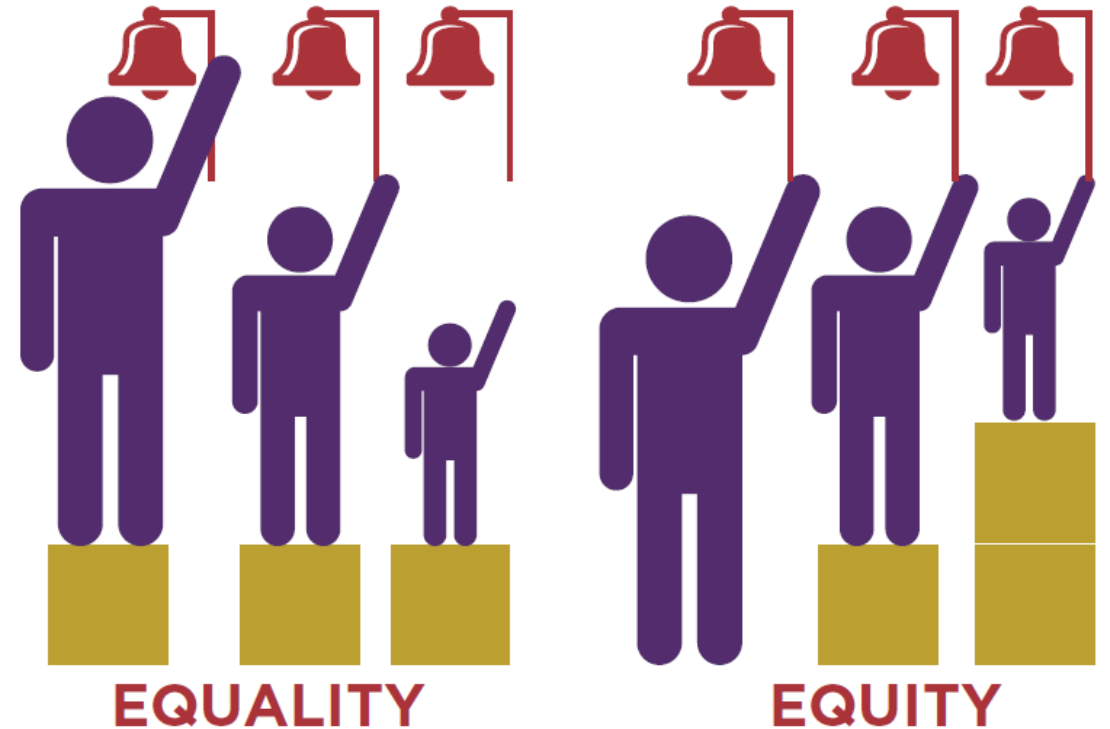
In contrast, **EQUITY** redirects resources to the pathways with greatest need to fix barriers and intentionally provide support.



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Step Up and Lead for Equity: What Higher Education Can Do to Reverse Our Deepening Divides

- **Equality** is about sameness; it focuses on making sure everyone gets the same thing.
- **Equity** is about fairness; it ensures that each person gets what he or she needs.



Step Up and Lead for Equity: What Higher Education Can Do to Reverse Our Deepening Divides



Does Your Institution Do the Following?

1. Know who your students are and will be.
2. Have frank, hard dialogues about the **climate for underserved students** with a goal of effecting a paradigm shift in language and actions.
3. Invest in **culturally relevant practices** that lead to success of underserved students—and of all students.
4. Set and monitor **equity-minded goals**—and allocate aligned resources to achieve them.
5. Develop and actively pursue a **clear vision and goals** for achieving the high-quality learning necessary for careers and citizenship, and therefore essential for a bachelor's degree.
6. Expect and prepare all students to produce culminating or **Signature Work** at the associate (or sophomore) and baccalaureate levels to show their achievement of Essential Learning Outcomes.

What Does It Mean to Be Equity-Minded?⁴

Equity-minded practices are created through

1. Willingness to look at student outcomes and disparities at all educational levels disaggregated by race and ethnicity as well as socioeconomic status.
2. Recognition that individual students are not responsible for the unequal outcomes of groups that have historically experienced discrimination and marginalization in the United States.
3. Respect for the aspirations and struggles of students who are not well served by the current educational system.
4. Belief in the fairness of allocating additional college and community resources to students who have greater needs due to the systemic shortcomings of our educational system in providing for them.
5. Recognition that the elimination of entrenched biases, stereotypes, and discrimination in institutions of higher education requires intentional critical deconstruction of structures, policies, practices, norms, and values assumed to be race neutral.⁵

Structural Equity: Big-Picture Thinking & Partnerships that Improve Community College Student Outcomes



- **Four Case Studies:**
 - Santa Barbara City College (CA), El Paso Community College (TX), Lake Area Technical Institute (SD), Valencia College (FL)
- Created **deep links to other sectors** to help build structural equity through pipelines that lead to greater educational and economic opportunity among underrepresented students
- Internal transformation; also actively positioned themselves as part of a **broader ecosystem of institutions** acting in concert to transform students' lives
- Built partnerships to create **seamless pathways** from high school to community college and on to a four-year degree and a career



Structural Equity: Big-Picture Thinking & Partnerships that Improve Community College Student Outcomes



Strategy 1: Think Big Picture to Redefine Student Success and Set Equity Goals

- Understand **who your students are** and the opportunities existing for them in local and regional contexts
- **Rely on data to set big-picture goals** and define strategies extending beyond the college
- Define **specific measures** for benchmarking progress



Structural Equity: Big-Picture Thinking & Partnerships that Improve Community College Student Outcomes



Strategy 2: Work Externally to Change the Student Experience,

- Identify vital external partners
- Devise strategies that speak to both partners' needs and goals
- Establish **common metrics** for progress and success
- Create structures for communication about **curriculum alignment and skills expectations**
- Establish conditions in which all partners are **accountable** for success

Structural Equity: Big-Picture Thinking & Partnerships that Improve Community College Student Outcomes



Strategy 3: Work Internally to Build Urgency and Commitment to Equity Goals

- Create systems for regularly analyzing and discussing data
- Celebrate wins to build success upon success
- Continue to evaluate success and revise goals and strategies accordingly





Online learning during COVID-19: 8 ways universities can improve equity and access

Challenges with Online Learning

- Lack of bandwidth and/or equipment
- Unstable housing or homelessness
- Lack of technological skills and digital literacy
- Language and cultural barriers
- Personalized accommodation and support

Online Learning during COVID-19: 8 Ways Universities Can Improve Equity and Access



1. Create accessible materials

- Share documents and materials that are compatible with assistive technologies; provide descriptions in hyperlinks and images for students with **visual impairments** and using screen readers; format text in **easily readable colors and fonts**; provide course content materials in **multiple formats**.

2. Choose adequate digital technologies

- Choose tools that include accessibility features, such as text-to-speech, high-contrast themes, enlarged cursors, **closed-captioning**, keyboard shortcuts and alternative text.

3. Record lectures, and caption videos and audio content

4. Adopt inclusive culturally responsive teaching

- Instill equity as a value in designing learning experiences; **avoid one-size-fits-all** instructional designs; be aware of the **risks of a “color blind”** approach as claiming not to see race may mean ignoring racism or discrimination; design courses to activate students’ **cultural capital**.

Online Learning during COVID-19: 8 Ways Universities Can Improve Equity and Access



5. Adopt a flexible approach to student participation

- Discontinue traditional 3-hour lectures; give priority to project-based assignments to promote asynchronous participation; provide additional time for completing exams.

6. Ensure financial support and equipment

7. Understand student needs

- Host panels with student organizations to learn about their new reality, their needs and what they want faculty to know; administer ongoing surveys to monitor students' situations

8. Address systemic racism

- Staff noted that there is more work to be done in providing quality learning experiences and equitable experiences for ethnically diverse students.



Anti-Racism in Higher Education

- Presents a model for change that **distributes leadership and institutional power** across racial lines
- Diversity initiatives have failed to educate about the reality and prevalence of **white dominance** and supremacy on campuses
 - The focus has been on merely changing individuals rather than dismantling structural inequalities that perpetuate systemic racism
- This removes **blame of academic failure** from the education system and places it on the individual and/or subgroup.



Anti-Racism in Higher Education

Sharing Power

- Increasing the percentage of people of color holding leadership positions
- Current leadership must very intentionally create an ecosystem in which emerging leaders' identities are recognized and celebrated



Anti-Racism in Higher Education



Re-Educating White Leaders

- Practice **self-examination** and cultivate deeper criticality to recognize the systemic nature of oppression and how their whiteness has systematically privileged them, shaped their thinking processes, and **both consciously and unconsciously affected their leadership decisions**.
- Begin with the **Boards of Trustees**, presidents of colleges; and move on to middle managers and beyond.
- The process of learning the **racial history of whiteness**, how it's impacted the college's inception, and personal work on conscious and unconscious biases, should be incorporated into **annual work responsibilities**, and monitored accordingly.



Best & Promising Practices for Equity in Higher Education

Group Discussion

Discussion Questions



- 1. Which of these equity best and promising practices resonate most strongly with you? And why?**
- 2. How can you integrate these practices in the development of your work group's recommendations?**