

Revision Responsibility: Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and
Assistant to the President for Access & Diversity

Responsible Executive Officer: President

Source/Reference: [TBR Policy 1:09:00:00](#)
[T.C.A. § 49-8-203](#)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the definitions and to promote the inclusion of diversity and equity throughout Columbia State Community College campuses and the communities it serves.

DEFINITIONS

Diversity can be broadly defined as differences. When applied within the context of education and the educational community, diversity represents the inclusion and support of groups of people with a variety of human characteristics that go beyond the legally protected classes of race, sex, age, religion, national origin, disability status, veteran status – to include, but not be limited to, other categories such as socio-economic status, sexual orientation, first generation college status, non-traditional age, adult, urban or rural upbringing – and other personal characteristics that shape an individual’s identity and life experience in a substantive way.

Equity refers to ensuring that each student has access to a high-quality education and that each student receives what they need to be successful through the intentional design of the college experience.

POLICY

I. Introduction

- A. Columbia State Community College believes that access to a high-quality, post-secondary education is vital to the continued advancement of Tennessee’s strong workforce and state democracy. The emphasis on diversity is principal to ensuring and preserving access to higher education and success for all, particularly marginalized and underserved students. Therefore, Columbia State will model and promote diversity at all levels and in all sectors, and will foster environments of equity and inclusive excellence.
- B. Columbia State is committed to equity and is accountable for review and implementation of processes, procedures, and an environment that is conducive and intentionally designed for the success of each student.

II. Statement of Policy

- C. Columbia State specifically finds that diversity of students, faculty, administrators, and staff is a crucial element of the educational process, and reaffirms its commitment to enhancing education through affirmative steps to increase diversity at all levels.
- D. The creation and cultivation of programs, policies, and practices designed to increase and sustain diversity is essential to be responsive to:
1. Shifting demographics;
 2. The need to prepare students to succeed in a global and inter-connected world;
 3. The need to create an environment that promotes social justice and anti-discrimination practices;
 4. The need to utilize the talents, experiences, and ideas of a broad group of people in order to achieve inclusive excellence and student success;
 5. The needs of the corporate, civic, and educational environs for culturally competent individuals, and;
 6. The unique mission and vision of Columbia State Community College.
- C. Columbia State specifically asserts that, as we highly value and appreciate diversity, we are committed to equity, as grounded in the principle of fairness. To demonstrate that commitment the College will:
1. Intentionally create environments where all students, faculty, and staff can thrive;
 2. Continually scrutinize and dismantle structural barriers facing historically underrepresented and underserved students; and
 3. Develop and review procedures, practices, and behaviors that eliminate equity gaps and lead to success for all students.
- D. Columbia State will develop, review, and evaluate efforts or plans to achieve diversity and equity. In doing so, the College will:
1. Continue to set and assess the diversity and equity goals within the College's strategic plan;
 2. Regularly assess broadly disseminated relevant institutional data that demonstrates progress towards meeting diversity and equity goals and objectives; and

3. Ensure broad campus representation and involvement on committees and with development and implementation of initiatives regarding diversity and equity.

New policy created December 2020; Reviewed and recommended by Cabinet, January 2021, approved and signed by the President.