

Reaffirmation of Our College Values:
Holding to Our Equity Lens Through College and District Downsizing
April 2018

From our beginnings, Foothill and De Anza have come to stand for something noble: the belief that human diversity, equity and care for the most vulnerable are valuable and important to excellence and the health of a thriving community. As we face the painful implications of the magnitude of this budget crisis, we ask that stakeholders (the governance groups, unions, and the Board of Trustees) involved in this process recommit ourselves to our institution's principles and values. One principle for framing our work is reflected in the wisdom in the Chinese character for crisis represents both "danger" and "opportunity". This budget crisis is an opportunity to make clear what our values are. Who we are in a crisis will determine who we are afterward.

Therefore, as we move through these tumultuous days, working to resolve the budget issues before us, we reaffirm our values. We will insist on accountability and transparency in all discussions, prioritize compassion, equity, and justice in all decisions, and the protection of the most vulnerable among our staff and our student populations.

In 2015 and 2016, members of the De Anza and Foothill communities signed on to support respective 5-year Educational Master Plans for our campuses. Foundational to these plans is the equity framework. Since 2013 and through our Student Equity Plans, we have clearly articulated our commitment to our diverse student populations and the programs that sustain them. We determined that such affirmations would underscore our individual and institutional commitment to maintain and increase both staff and student equity. We believe that these commitments must be honored.

We hereby affirm, and urge our representative bodies and allies to adopt the following principles:

- We believe in democratic participation by every member of our community.
- We are committed to protecting the rights of others, particularly the most vulnerable among us.
- We know diversity is our strength, and ensuring solidarity means standing up for working class students, prioritizing the needs of underserved student populations and closing the achievement gap. The programs that serve historically underserved students must be protected.
- ***While we understand that all collective bargaining agreements must adhere to processes, we are committed to workers' rights, and we believe that cuts to positions will disproportionately affect people of color who have been hired more recently. To sustain our integrity and strength as an institution, we must protect equity and diversity at all levels in our community, and prioritize protecting the employment of part-time faculty and classified professionals.***
- We uphold the value of accessible, affordable, quality higher education as a public good.
- ***We have worked for years to have a multicultural, intersectional lens in courses across all disciplines. We value this as essential to attracting, engaging, and retaining our students.***
- We affirm that educational quality and institutional equity in this crisis and beyond depends upon maintaining a diversity of course offerings, majors, and student pathways.
- We recognize that we are in a serious time of contraction as colleges and as a district. However, we reject the notion that diminishing opportunities and cutting programs for the most vulnerable are the inevitable solutions.

Over the past few years many of us have sponsored or participated in a range of professional development workshops, presentations, and engagement activities grounded in the critical distinction between what is “equality”, and what is “equity”. This time of crisis is the time to conscientiously apply an equity lens as a core principle in our decision-making process. It is important to view these decisions, not only through the lens of accounting, but through the lens of accountability: to our students, to our communities, and to our commitments to equity and our values.

We therefore call on each of our governance and employee groups to sign on to this statement and keep these principles in the forefront of their thoughts and hearts as we go through this painful process. The work we do now, the commitments we keep now, and those we ignore or break now, will have a ripple effect. They will determine who we will be in the future.

Signed:

Equity Action Council, De Anza College
Academic Senate, De Anza College
Classified Senate, De Anza College
De Anza Student Body Senate
Instructional Planning and Budget Team
Student Services Planning and Budget Team
De Anza College Council

References:

De Anza College An Equity Framework: Education Master Plan 2015-2020

http://www.deanza.edu/ir/state-of-the-college-related-information/pdf/EMP2015-2020_3-11-16.pdf

Foothill College Education Master Plan 2016-2022

<https://foothill.edu/accreditation/subchg/EMPdraft2016-22.pdf>

De Anza College (Equity) Conceptual Framework

<https://www.deanza.edu/equityoffice/conceptualframework.html>

De Anza College Mission and Values Statement

<https://www.deanza.edu/about-us/mission-and-values.html>