

Student Equity Planning

Fact Sheet

January 2014

History: In 1991, the California Legislature charged all levels of public education to provide educational equity “through environments in which each person ... has a reasonable chance to fully develop his or her potential” (Education Code §66010.2c). In keeping with these requirements, the California Community Colleges (CCC) Board of Governors (BOG) adopted a student equity policy in 1992, to ensure that groups historically underrepresented in higher education have an equal opportunity for access, success, and transfer; enjoining all districts to develop, implement, and evaluate a student equity plan. In 1996, the BOG amended its policy to establish the adoption of a student equity plan as a minimum standard for receipt of state funding. In 2002, the BOG implemented title 5 regulations requiring colleges to develop a student equity plan, and the Chancellor’s Office provided guidelines to the colleges for developing plans in June 2003. Colleges were asked to update and complete plans in 2005. In response to the economic downturn and State budget cuts that began in 2008-09 and continued through 2012-13, the legislature instituted categorical program flexibility that suspended many regulatory requirements related to student equity and other initiatives. In January 2011, in response to SB 1163 (Liu), the BOG embarked on a 12-month planning process to improve student success, creating the Student Success Task Force. The Task Force published recommendations in early 2012, many of which became part of the Student Success Act of 2012 (SB1456). Among many important changes in the Act, it reaffirmed the importance of focusing on student equity in the effort to improve student success. In 2013, the Chancellor’s Office convened a Student Equity Workgroup to review and update the student equity planning process, ensuring that each college identifies strategies to address and monitor equity issues as well as to mitigate disproportionate impact on student access and achievement. The Chancellor’s Office provided an updated plan template to colleges in late 2013.

Description: The student equity plan focuses on increasing access, course completion, ESL and basic skills completion, degrees, certificates and transfer for all students as measured by success indicators linked to the CCC Student Success Scorecard, and other measures developed in consultation with local colleges. “Success indicators” are used to identify and measure areas for which disadvantaged populations may be impacted by issues of equal opportunity. Each college develops specific goals/outcomes and actions to address disparities that are discovered, disaggregating data for indicators by student demographics, preferably in program review. College plans must describe the implementation of each indicator, as well as policies, activities and procedures as they relate to student equity at the college. Student equity plans are prepared with three- to five-year timeframes in terms of planned activities and improvements, to align with the Student Success and Support Program Plan, but must be updated annually. Annual updates will be due in the Chancellor’s Office during the third week of October.

Appropriation: Although the BOG has made student equity planning a minimum standard for receipt of state funding since 1996 and has long recognized the importance of student equity, until the passage of the Student Success Act of 2012, student equity was not tied to any categorical program and did not receive formal funding through the legislative budget process. In January of 2014, in recognition and support of the importance of the need to identify and support equity and success for all students, the governor’s 2014-15 budget proposed to target \$100 million of additional Student Success and Support Program (SSSP) funding to close achievement gaps in access and success in underrepresented student groups, as identified in local student equity plans.

Eligibility criteria: Title 5 regulations (title 5, §54220(d)) specify that, at a minimum, colleges must review and address the following populations when looking at disproportionate impact in student equity plans: American Indians or Alaskan natives, Asians or Pacific Islanders, Blacks, Hispanics, Whites, men, women, and persons with disabilities.

Critical Issues: Many colleges do not have updated student equity plans due to the suspension of the requirement to complete plans, and the need to review and update the planning process. Further changes may be needed to update title 5 regulations to integrate student equity planning into other efforts such as college and/or district accreditation, educational master planning, program review, and basic skills planning processes. Doing so will help colleges adopt an institution-wide, holistic approach to planning, budgeting, and the delivery of instruction and services to support equity in student access and success. In addition, if the legislature approves the governor’s proposed budget, the Chancellor’s Office will be charged with developing a process for allocating targeted funding to districts and colleges. The 2014 budget bill, SB 851 (Leon), specifies that the Chancellor’s Office shall allocate funds to districts “in a manner that ensures districts with a greater proportion or number of students who are high-need, as determined by the Chancellor’s Office, receive greater resources to provide services to these students.”