



SUBJECT: Diversity Philosophy

REFERENCE:

1. PURPOSE

To communicate support for, and adaption of, the Association of Community Colleges' (AACC) "Statement of Inclusion".

2. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

3. DEFINITIONS

4. POLICY

5. BACKGROUND OR EXCLUSIONS

6. GENERAL PROVISIONS

A. Statement of Inclusion

The Association of Community Colleges (AACC) believes that community colleges provide access to a broad spectrum of quality educational opportunities and life experiences. The colleges value diversity as an enhancement of those experiences in their classrooms, administrative offices, and board rooms. They are committed to policies that promote fairness and inclusion for all in the life of the college. As a reflection of AACC commitment, Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College strives to promote fairness and inclusion in its own policies and practices.

Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College strongly endorses the continued use of admissions guidelines and employment practices that promote board diversity in community colleges.

AACC and Southern believe that colleges should be free to pursue standards and guidelines which allow them to fulfill their diversity missions and visions. The students they educate will help provide tomorrow's leaders, and their college experience must demonstrate the richness and substance of our diverse, multi-cultural and global environment. The college environment should promote understanding and appreciation of others, while encouraging students to grow as individuals.



Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College reaffirms its commitment to diversity.

In accord with this philosophy, Southern strives to continually evaluate its hiring, admissions, and financial aid policies to ensure diversity and equal access within the institution. The college strives to ensure that the results of these evaluations conform to the concept of open access - the cornerstone of the community college mission.

Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College believes that diversity is crucial to a democratic society.

AACC and Southern believe that community colleges are, in effect, microcosms of our greater society. As such, they should encourage and enhance the fullest understanding of human rights and responsibilities and should teach the skills that allow their students to effectively participate in a democratic society. The colleges should be responsible for shaping an environment that mirrors the general culture and creates opportunities for all within the college community to interact with understanding, tolerance, and respect for others. In this way, diversity in education not only serves as a model for the world at large, but it also helps perpetuate social harmony for the future.

- B. Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College hereby endorses the following statement on the importance of diversity in higher education as published by the American Association of Community College in February 1999.

On the importance of Diversity in Higher Education.

America's colleges and universities differ in many ways. Some are public, others are independent; some are large urban universities, some are two-year community colleges, others undergraduate education. Each of our more than 3,000 colleges and universities has its own strengths of America's higher education system, and has helped make it the best in the world. Preserving that diversity is essential if we hope to serve the needs of our democratic society.

Similarly, many colleges and universities share a common belief, born of experience, that diversity in their student bodies, faculties, and staff is important for them to fulfill their primary mission: providing a quality education. The public is entitled to know why these institutions believe so strongly that racial and ethnic diversity should be one factor among the many considered in admissions and hiring. The reasons include:

- **It enriches the educational experience.** We learn from those whose experiences, beliefs, and perspectives are different from our own, and these lessons can be taught best in a richly diverse intellectual and social environment.
- **It promotes personal growth -- and a healthy society.** Diversity challenges stereotyped preconceptions; it encourages critical thinking; and it helps students learn to communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds.



- **It strengthens communities and the workplace.** Education within a diverse setting prepares students to become good citizens in an increasingly complex, pluralistic society; it fosters mutual respect and teamwork; and it helps build communities whose members are judged by the quality of their character and their contributions.
- **It enhances America’s economic competitiveness.** Sustaining the nation’s prosperity in the 21st century will require us to make effective use of the talents and abilities of all our citizens, in work settings that bring together individuals from diverse backgrounds and cultures.

American colleges and universities traditionally have enjoyed significant latitude in fulfilling their missions. Americans have understood that there is no single model of a good college, and that no single standard can predict with certainty the lifetime contribution of a teacher or a student. Yet, the freedom to determine who shall teach and be taught has been restricted in a number of places, and come under attack in others. As a result, some schools have experienced precipitous declines in the enrollment of African-American and Hispanic students, reversing decades of progress in the effort to assure that all groups in American society have an equal opportunity for access to higher education.

Achieving diversity on college campuses does not require quotas. Nor does diversity warrant admission of unqualified applicants. However, the diversity we seek, and the future of the nation, do require that colleges and universities continue to be able to reach out and make a conscious effort to build healthy and diverse learning environments appropriate for their missions. The success of higher education and the strength of our democracy depend on it.

7. **RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCEDURES**

8. **CANCELLATION**

9. **SIGNATURE**

President

Date

Attachments

Distribution

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