

## **LTCC Academic Senate**

### **Statement of Values and Actions on Inequity and Racism**

#### **Preamble**

The Academic Senate of Lake Tahoe Community College (LTCC), which values inclusiveness and dialogue among all the faculty, has crafted this Statement of Values and Actions on Inequity and Racism using a participatory and polyvocal process. In total, over 50 individuals commented on the Statement through a survey, Google document, Zoom forum, and e-mail communication.

The Academic Senate of LTCC acknowledges that we exist, as a college, on the traditional land of the Washoe and Great Basin Tribal Nations.

#### **Values**

The Academic Senate of LTCC believes that all people deserve to live in a world where they feel safe and free to pursue their dreams without fear. Because of this, we stand behind anyone who speaks out in the advancement of social equality and justice.

The Academic Senate of LTCC acknowledges that citizens across the country are protesting not only the death of George Floyd in May 2020, but also police killings of many other unarmed Black people over time and the defense of such oppressive policies in government.

The Academic Senate of LTCC also acknowledges the history of slavery, Jim Crow segregation, and the many other oppressive and systemic forces that have created inequalities in the United States that must be addressed immediately.

The Academic Senate of LTCC values the diversity that empowers, enriches, and grows its institution. It is proud to welcome faculty, classified staff, students, and community members who reflect a diverse range of races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, ages, and abilities.

The Academic Senate of LTCC believes that education is a great instrument of change. An educated populace is more likely to look at issues critically and listen to other viewpoints with the goal of mutual understanding and societal betterment. The Academic Senate of LTCC understands that popular discourse about societal issues is often characterized by perspectives that lack scientific research and critical thinking. We thus commit to using our collective knowledge as a means to educate our community and ourselves.

The Academic Senate of LTCC recognizes that, as faculty, we care deeply for our students. We know many students are struggling during this stressful time and we encourage those who are having trouble to reach out to us for assistance.

The Academic Senate of LTCC acknowledges that people of color—including faculty, staff, students, and community members—and other individuals impacted by oppressive forms and actions experience racism, discrimination, and forms of systemic oppression that are not experienced by individuals in dominant groups. We also acknowledge that people of color and other individuals impacted by oppressive forms and actions experience forms of trauma connected to such oppression.

The Academic Senate of LTCC acknowledges that people of color—including faculty, staff, students, and community members—and other individuals impacted by oppressive forms and actions are asked, too

often, to represent, speak about, or narrate their experiences with such oppression. While these expressions are germane to combatting the oppression that they detail, ALL members of the faculty must be involved in engaging dialogue about and enacting change related to these oppressions.

The Academic Senate of LTCC upholds the fundamental human right to protest and we support our students, staff, and community members who lead on-campus and community demonstrations and other events related to systemic and institutional racism. Further, we stand in solidarity with students and colleagues who are fighting for justice and safety in our institution, our community, and our society at large. We affirm collectively that it is our duty to love and protect one another.

### **Actions**

The Academic Senate of LTCC commits to an intersectional understanding of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, classism, ageism, discrimination based on disability, and all other related forms of oppression in ways that acknowledge the systemic (and not only individualistic) nature of these forms. We further express our goals to communicate our opposition to these forms, focus on the understanding of them, and affirm our collective dedication to their elimination at the College and in our communities. We also state our desire to liaise with the LTCC Equity Office so as to collaborate on mutual actions related to oppression, discrimination, and privilege.

The Academic Senate of LTCC, as inspired by the Lake Tahoe Community College Classified Employee Senate's "Action Plan in Follow-Up to the Officers' Statement on Inequity and Racism," recommends the review of LTCC governance structures, including the Academic Senate, its bylaws, and its standing committees, so as to ensure that faculty, staff, and student equity are at the forefront of campus governance processes. The Academic Senate further recommends that it review its meeting structures, committees, and other organizational dynamics so as to further guarantee that these forms of equity are being addressed.

The Academic Senate of LTCC renews its commitment to hiring and retention practices that are based on principles of equity and that focus on the achievement of diversity among its staff. Included in its actions, the Academic Senate of LTCC states the following intentions. We will:

- Work with Human Resources, the EEO Committee, and, possibly, a faculty committee focused on diversity issues within hiring, to ensure that LTCC is committed fully to principles of equity that focus on the achievement of diversity among its staff throughout the hiring process.
- Address the current practice of redacting information on job applications to ensure that it does not impact negatively the success of applicants who are from underrepresented populations.
- Investigate the costs involved in applying and interviewing for a position, as well as the time investment and interview processes (which can be extended over a long time period), to determine if they negatively impact the recruitment of applicants from diverse and underrepresented populations.
- Consider changes to the application and hiring processes that may include: bilingual processes, explanation of processes and documents involved in applying, stressing the value of work and life experience in candidates' applications, among other ideas.
- Investigate additional opportunities to promote the recruitment of faculty and staff of color and of diversity within networks that will better allow for the recruitment of such diverse candidates.
- Create after-hire support networks for faculty that include mentorship, professional and emotional support, and emphases on community efforts in terms of assistance.

The Academic Senate of LTCC expresses its commitment to diversity in education and training beyond the classroom, counseling office, or the Library and Learning Services. To this end we:

- Request a process to bring more speakers and workshop facilitators to campus who are able to educate us all in topics connected to racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, classism, ageism, discrimination based on disability, and all other related forms of oppression.
- Recommend that we take advantage of on-campus talent and experience in training others at LTCC about the positive values of diversity as well as the pitfalls associated with privilege.
- Advise the Senior Leadership Team and Board of Trustees to support faculty professional development opportunities that promote education and training related to diversity, understanding privilege and oppression, and related areas (for example, NCORE). We encourage LTCC to support increased budgetary allotments for such professional development opportunities and for the attendance of more faculty participants in such trainings. We also wish to remind that such trainings, even virtual ones, often have significant associated registration costs.
- Recommend the investigation of expanding on-campus resources and trainings that may further assist LTCC faculty in understanding the values of diversity and intercultural communication and the perils of privilege and oppression. Included in such work may be: bias trainings, video and Web resources, Canvas sites, and readings.
- Suggest that campus groups (or the LTCC community as a whole) investigate reading or “book club” groups that could read a text focused on white supremacy, oppression, or diversity-related topics and that the groups become foundations for campus- and group-wide dialogue about these important topics.
- Offer the idea to develop on-campus meeting and dialogue opportunities among faculty to address student, community, and social diversity, oppression, and privilege issues. We suggest that dialogue on these topics among ALL faculty is paramount to moving LTCC in positive and inclusive directions.

The Academic Senate of LTCC states its interest in working with the Instruction Office and Senior Leadership Team, as well as the Guided Pathways Committee, to guarantee that diversity, privilege, anti-racism, discrimination, and related topics are a vital and foundational focus of all LTCC Guided Pathways and meta-majors initiatives.

The Academic Senate of LTCC desires to expand faculty leadership positions so as to include diverse and new faculty voices among these positions. We will work to encourage such faculty to express interest in or run for such positions and we will work with them in mentorship and support opportunities following their ascension to such offices. We will also consider the idea of term limits, or other changes to Academic Senate and committee structures, as one possible way of encouraging new and diverse forms of leadership.

The Academic Senate of LTCC encourages campus stakeholders to focus on non-hegemonic leadership styles and forms of decision making that promote inclusion, non-hierarchical processes, and participatory and dialogic approaches among all constituents. It further encourages campus members to participate in conversations and discussions that are framed in non-combative, non-person-directed, unaggressive, and community-focused discourse. Even during conversations about difficult topics, we can take a stand to maintain positive, inclusive, and collective approaches to these challenging topics.

The Academic Senate of LTCC renews the commitment it expressed years ago in the “Faculty Statement on Tolerance and Diversity” in that it will openly identify and report hate speech or related racist, sexist, homophobic, or other discriminatory language or behavior to LTCC leadership (in line with LTCC Board Policy 5500 and Administrative Procedure 5520). The Senate will:

- Investigate the success to which its statement and LTCC Board Policy 5500 and Administrative Procedure 5520 have lessened the incidents of hate speech on campus.
- Consider the development of a “hotline” or other resource that will provide students and staff of diversity an opportunity to file complaints about hate speech and forms of injustice as well as communicate traumas or experiences that may not be experienced by staff from dominant populations on campus.

The Academic Senate of LTCC states its commitment to inclusive and diverse curriculum, teaching and pedagogical practices, and classroom and professional approaches. To this end, we make the following recommendations in terms of actions:

- Consider the degree to which diversity is addressed in current LTCC curriculum; possibly including an audit conducted by the LTCC Curriculum Committee. Further, we will look into the expansion of diversity-related GE courses.
- Analyze relevant SLO and eLumen data that may be connected to specific demographic groups so as to determine gaps in equity that may be illustrated by these data.
- Suggest faculty development opportunities such that faculty are encouraged to incorporate diversity, understandings of oppression and privilege, and related areas in their curriculum and class activities.
- Consider the expansion of LTCC programs in disciplinary areas that focus inherently on diversity (for example, ethnic studies, gender studies, cultural studies, Native American and indigenous studies, etc.).
- Address forms of racism that may be present in educational initiatives and work with faculty to ensure that such initiatives may be enacted in ways that avoid racist, oppressive, and discriminatory intentions.
- Investigate opportunities within all teaching modalities—F2F, DE, ISP, and EVE—to promote student expressions of diversity (for example, consider using discussion fora in Canvas to discuss oppression, discrimination, and privilege).
- Consider pedagogical or other training approaches that will provide students with a meaningful and authentic opportunity to share and discuss their experiences with privilege, oppression, diversity, and related areas.
- Teach faculty about opportunities that include reading, research, content, media, and forms (for example, specific approaches to writing assignments) that relate to students’ abilities to understand and act on privilege and well as hear other students’ experiences with white supremacy and other forms of oppression.

The Academic Senate of LTCC expresses its commitment to ending student inequality. To that end, we will work to achieve the following:

- Investigate opportunities to expand student material support in needed areas, including, food pantry (Equity Office), transportation, book lending (OER/ZTC; EOPS students and bookstore codes), housing (addressing homelessness), technology (including access and training - phones, computers, printers, etc.), and related areas.
- Focus on ways of using intersections of Instruction and Student Services to promote inclusion, diversity, and respect. As some examples, expansion of student mental health, early alert, and embedded tutoring programs, etc.
- Work with Onestop faculty and staff, as well as other faculty and staff across campus, to ensure that counseling, training, meeting and other practices are focused on approaches appropriate to respecting the diversity of our students.

- Recommend to campus and student leadership, including the Student Senate, that LTCC commits to more student fora that focus on issues of privilege, oppression, trauma, and related areas so as to ensure that our students have a voice in these challenging times.

The Academic Senate of LTCC encourages LTCC to investigate current and future investments, contracts, and financial transactions with outside businesses, companies, and contractors such that the College supports entities that are committed to social justice and diversity. We further encourage divestment with any entities or individuals who are known to promote, support, or advocate for any white supremacist organizations and causes.

The Academic Senate of LTCC affirms a commitment to non-violence as a principle that we recommend all of us at the College, and all of us in the Community, should follow. We will explore working with members of the community to pressure the local and regional police and criminal justice authorities to develop non-violent, demilitarized, and community-focused principles of policing and criminal justice.

The Academic Senate of LTCC states a commitment to serve and assist in the achievement of social justice for all of our students, including justice-involved students, many of whom are victims of a biased and racist criminal justice system. The Academic Senate of LTCC further expresses its opposition to mass incarceration because of its connection to systemic forms of racism and inequality. We will work in all of our capacities to ensure the achievement of social justice for all of our students.

Signed,  
The Faculty of Lake Tahoe Community College  
June 17, 2020