

**SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
SCP-1160**

SUBJECT: Diversity Philosophy

REFERENCE: The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), Position Statement on Inclusion (<http://www.aacc.nche.edu>); AACC and ACCT (Association of Community College Trustees) Joint Statement of Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Excellence in Student Success and Leadership Development (<http://www.aacc.nche.edu>)

ORIGINATION: August 20, 1998

EFFECTIVE: ~~November 8, 2015~~

REVIEWED: July 14, 2020

SECTION 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To communicate support for, and adoption of, the American Association of Community Colleges’ (AACC) “Position Statement on Inclusion,” and the AACC and ACCT (Association of Community College Trustees) Joint Statement of Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Excellence in Student Success and Leadership Development.

SECTION 2. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

- 2.1 This policy applies to all programs, processes, employees, departments, units, committees, councils, and boards associated with Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College.

SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 *Diversity* is a commitment to valuing and promoting differences, similarities, and characteristics that make groups and individuals unique in an atmosphere that promotes and celebrates individual and collective achievement. Examples of these characteristics are: age; cognitive style; culture; disability (mental, learning, or physical); economic background; education; ethnicity; gender identity; geographic background; language(s) spoken; marital/partnered status; physical appearance; political affiliation; race; religious beliefs; and sexual orientation.
- 3.2 *Inclusion* involves empowering and leveraging diversity in the workforce and student body by enabling individuals to contribute to their fullest potential through individual development, retention, and pluralistic work and educational processes.
- 3.3 *Pluralistic work and educational processes* are work/education methods practiced in participation, consideration, and respect for members of diverse ethnic, racial, religious, or social groups.

SECTION 4. POLICY

- 4.1 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 the AACC commitment, Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College strives to promote fairness and inclusion in its own policies and practices.~~ (Statement revised and moved to 4.3)

4.2 The AACC and ACCT represent more than 1,100 community, junior, and technical colleges throughout the United States. Both the AACC and ACCT are committed to fostering the advancement of community colleges, in part, by applying principles of equity and diversity within their organizations and promoting these values within member colleges. Community colleges provide the most diverse and inclusive segment of higher education in the United States. These colleges serve a larger proportion of women, African Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders, Hispanic/Latino, Native Americans, LGBTQ students and students with disabilities than any other segment of higher education. Therefore, Community Colleges are positioned uniquely to foster an environment that honors, respects, and embraces the variety of students attending the Nation's colleges and universities. And as such, has been entrusted with creating educational environments that are safe, respectful, and responsive; and, where the potential of students can be attained at the highest level possible.

4.3 As a reflection of the AACC and ACCT commitment to equity, diversity, and excellence in student success and leadership development, Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College strives to promote fairness and inclusion in its own policies and practices.

SECTION 5. BACKGROUND OR EXCLUSIONS

5.1 None

SECTION 6. GENERAL PROVISIONS

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

6.1.1 The AACC, ACCT, 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.

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

6.2.1 In accordance 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.

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

6.3.1 The AACC, ACCT, 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.

- 6.4 The AACC, ACCT, and Southern strongly endorse the adoption of policies and procedures designed to counteract and prevent hate crimes.
- 6.4.1 Hate crimes, are defined herein as crimes that manifest evidence of prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, or ethnicity, including where appropriate, the crimes of murder, non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, aggravated assault, simple assault, intimidation, arson, and destruction, damage or vandalism of property. The AACC, ACCT, and Southern, furthermore, endorse the systematic reporting of hate crimes by institutions, in order to encourage the implementation of effective intervention measures that will serve to address these challenges on college campuses. Community awareness and education strategies are additional byproducts of all these efforts.
- 6.5 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 reasons include:
- 6.5.1 Diversity in the institution's student body and workforce 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.
- 6.5.2 Diversity in the institution's student body and workforce promotes personal growth and a healthy society. Diversity challenges stereotyped preconceptions; it encourages critical thinking; and it helps students and employees learn to communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds.
- 6.5.3 Diversity in the student body and workforce 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.
- 6.5.4 Diversity in the student body and workforce 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.
- 6.6 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, does 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.

SECTION 7. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 7.1 All employees, supervisors, committees, councils, and boards making recommendations or decisions for the institution are responsible for supporting and promoting this diversity philosophy.

SECTION 8. CANCELLATION

8.1 None.

SECTION 9. REVIEW STATEMENT

9.1 This policy shall be reviewed on a regular basis with a time frame for review to be determined by the President or the President’s designee. Upon such review, the President or President’s designee may recommend to the Board that the policy be amended or repealed.

SECTION 10. SIGNATURES

Board of Governors Chair **Date**

President **Date**

Attachments: None.

Distribution: Board of Governors (12 members)
www.southernwv.edu

Revision Notes: September 2000 - Reformatted policy to the MAP system.
August 2010 - Revised to reflect current AACC Position Statement on Inclusion.
July 2015 - Policy reviewed for accuracy and no modifications are needed.
July 2020 - Revised to include the AACC and ACCT Joint Statement of Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Excellence in Student Success and Leadership Development.