

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

SUBJECT: ~~Diversity Philosophy~~Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination 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~~West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education, Procedural Rule Series 40: “Equal Opportunity,” effective August 31, 2025 – System-wide procedural standards for equal opportunity and nondiscrimination at WV community and technical colleges; West Virginia Executive Order No. 3-25 (January 2025) – Elimination of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives in state agencies and institutions of higher education; West Virginia Senate Bill 474 (2025 Regular Session), “Equal Treatment by Executive Branch Agencies” – Prohibiting the establishment or funding of DEI offices, officers, trainings, or programs in state institutions of higher education; West Virginia Code §18B-1G-4 – Annual reporting requirements for compliance with DEI prohibitions in higher education; Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Titles VI and VII) – Federal nondiscrimination protections in education and employment; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 – Prohibition of sex discrimination in federally funded education programs and activities; Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 – Federal protections against disability discrimination; West Virginia Human Rights Act (WV Code §5-11-1 et seq.) – State nondiscrimination law covering employment, housing, and public accommodations.

ORIGINATION: August 20, 1998

EFFECTIVE: ~~January 15, 2021~~

REVIEWED: ~~July 14, 2020~~September 12, 2025

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.~~ Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College’s commitment to equal opportunity, nondiscrimination, and compliance with federal and state law, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and applicable provisions of West Virginia Code. This policy replaces prior “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” frameworks to ensure compliance with West Virginia law, including Executive Order No. 3-25 (January 2025) and Senate Bill 474 (2025 Regular Session)

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.
- 2.2 Nothing in this policy restricts academic freedom, federally mandated nondiscrimination practices, student organizations, or services required by federal or state law.

SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 Diversity – 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. Equal Opportunity – Ensuring that all individuals are treated fairly and without unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, age, veteran status, or other status protected by federal and state law.
- 3.2 Nondiscrimination – Compliance with applicable federal and state laws that prohibit discrimination, including but not limited to Title IX, ADA, Section 504, Title VI, Title VII, and the West Virginia Human Rights Act.
- 3.3 Academic Freedom – The right of faculty and students to engage in research, scholarship, and classroom discussion consistent with institutional mission and applicable law.

SECTION 4. POLICY

- 4.1 Southern believes that community colleges provide access to a broad spectrum of quality educational opportunities and life experiences. The College values diversity-equal opportunity as an enhancement of those experiences in its classrooms, administrative offices, and board rooms. Southern ~~is committed to policies that promote fairness and inclusion for all in the life of the College~~ affirms its commitment to equal opportunity and nondiscrimination in all educational programs, admissions, hiring, and employment practices, consistent with state and federal law.
- 4.2 Southern is committed to fostering the advancement of community colleges, in part, by applying principles of equity-and-diversity-equal opportunity and nondiscrimination within its organizations and promoting ~~these~~those values throughout the institution. Southern will foster an environment that honors, respects, and embraces the variety of its students; will create and maintain educational environments that are safe, respectful, and responsive; and that will allow the students to attain their highest potential. Southern prohibits unlawful discrimination and harassment in any form. Complaints of discrimination or harassment shall be addressed under the College's Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination Policy (SAA-2000-C1-2021).
- 4.3 As a reflection of Southern's commitment to equity, diversity, and excellence in student success and leadership development, it strives to promote fairness and inclusion in its own policies and practices. Southern does not operate or fund offices, staff positions, trainings, or initiatives primarily focused on "diversity, equity, and inclusion" (DEI) as defined by W. Va. Code §18B-1G-2.
- 4.3.4 The College prohibits discrimination or harassment in recruitment, employment, promotion, transfer, training, compensation, benefits, discipline, layoffs, termination, and working conditions, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, veteran or military status, genetic information, and any other status protected by law.

SECTION 5. BACKGROUND OR EXCLUSIONS

- 5.1 None

SECTION 6. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- 6.1 Southern strongly endorses the continued use of admissions guidelines and employment practices that SCP-1160, Diversity Philosophy Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination Philosophy

promote ~~broad diversity equal opportunity and nondiscrimination~~ in community colleges. Southern will pursue standards and guidelines which allow it to fulfill its ~~diversity~~ missions and visions. The students we educate~~ion~~ 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 shall annually report compliance with W. Va. Code §18B-1G-4 to the Chancellor of the Community and Technical College System, including confirmation that the College does not operate prohibited DEI offices, officers, trainings, or programs.

6.2 Southern reaffirms its commitment to ~~diversity~~equal opportunity and nondiscrimination. In accordance with this philosophy, Southern strives to continually evaluate its hiring, admissions, and financial aid policies to ensure ~~diversity and~~ equal access and fair treatment 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 values a learning and working environment that respects the dignity of every individual. Equal access and fair treatment shall be ensured through compliance with federal and state nondiscrimination laws.

6.3 Southern ~~West Virginia Community and Technical College~~ believes that diversity is crucial to a democratic society. ~~Southern will encourage and enhance the fullest understanding of human rights and responsibilities and should teach the skills that allow our students to effectively participate in a democratic society. Southern is 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.~~recognizes the importance of teaching the skills that allow our students to participate effectively in a democratic society, while maintaining compliance with federal and state nondiscrimination requirements.

6.4 Southern ~~strongly endorses the adoption of policies and procedures designed to counteract and prevent hate crimes. 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.~~condemns all forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment, and violence, including acts motivated by bias, consistent with federal and criminal statutes.

6.5 ~~Southern's belief, born of experience, is that diversity in its student body, faculty, and staff is important for it to fulfill its 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 our 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 we continue to be able to reach out and make a conscious effort to build healthy and diverse learning environments appropriate for our mission. The success of higher education and the strength of our democracy depend on it.~~

6.76.5 The institution accepts primary responsibility for developing, implementing, and monitoring equal opportunity policies consistent with the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education Procedural Rule Series 40 and applicable federal and state laws. These efforts shall be integrated into institutional performance goals.

6.6 Where applicable, the President or designee shall establish realistic goals and timetables to advance equal opportunity in employment practices and include progress metrics in institutional planning.

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 ensuring compliance with this Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination Philosophy.

7.2 The President or designee shall oversee annual reporting requirements to the State and ensuring ongoing compliance with state and federal law.

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.

September 2025 – Revised to ensure compliance with West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education, Procedural Rule Series 40: “Equal Opportunity,” effective August 31, 2025 – System-wide procedural standards for equal opportunity and nondiscrimination at WV community and technical colleges; West Virginia Executive Order No. 3-25 (January 2025); Senate Bill 474 (2025 Regular Session); and West Virginia Code §18B-1G-4. All references to “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” programs, offices, staff, and training were removed. The policy was reframed to emphasize equal opportunity, nondiscrimination, and compliance with federal laws (Title IX, ADA, Civil Rights Act) and state laws. Added provisions clarifying annual reporting requirements, academic freedom, and permitted exceptions under WV law.