



# Diversity Definitions

## **PCC Mission Priority Terminology:**

*Common terms that are part of our collective  
discourse, planning, and mission delivery efforts.*



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and **Inclusion**

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**PCC Mission:** Portland Community College supports student success by delivering access to quality education while advancing economic development and promoting sustainability in a collaborative culture of diversity, equity and inclusion.

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**Access:** Equitable access allows for an individual to experience a mutually beneficial relationship with the institution that creates a true sense of ownership, belongingness and familiarity. It is the ability, right, and permission to approach, enter, speak with, or use all aspects of the community college, no matter who you are. This challenges the assumption that the community college open door policy equates to access for all, including historically underrepresented populations.

**Accessibility:** Giving equitable access to everyone along the continuum of human ability and experience. Accessibility encompasses the broader meanings of compliance and refers to how organizations make space for the characteristics that each person brings. It is not just about the physical environment: it is about access to and representation in content for all.

**Achievement:** Equitable achievement allows for an individual to exercise, refine, and acquire capacities that nurture and grow their talents both individually and as a member of a collective. This dimension challenges simplistic notions that achievement equates to individualistic accomplishments.

**Anti-oppression:** A framework for constructively addressing and changing oppressive dynamics as they play out in our environment.

**Anti-racism:** Is the practice of identifying, challenging, and changing the values, structures and behaviors that perpetuate systemic racism; the active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies, practices, and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably.

**Antiracist:** A person who opposes racism and promotes racial tolerance. Focused and sustained action, which includes inter-cultural, inter-faith, multi-lingual and inter-abled (i.e. differently abled) communities with the intent to change a system or an institutional policy, practice, or procedure which has racist effects.

**Belonging:** After an individual's basic needs are met, the door is opened to create a sense of belonging. In the college environment, both the academic and social elements work in tandem to create a sense of belonging, which cultivates feelings that the individual matters, they are valued, they feel safety in the group, and it is conveyed that they are indispensable to the group. A sense of belonging is relational, reciprocal, and dynamic.

**Decolonizing:** To free from the process whereby a nation or culture establishes and maintains its domination on another nation or culture.

**Diversity:** Individual and group differences along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, and various lifestyles, experience, and interests. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions contained within each individual. Diversity is a group of people who are different in the same place.

**Equity:** Refers to a heightened focus on groups experiencing disproportionate impact in order to remediate disparities in their experiences and outcomes. Equity takes into consideration the fact that the social identifiers (race, gender, socio-economic status, etc.) do in fact affect equality. In an equitable environment, an individual or a group would be given what was needed to give fair and just treatment. Equity is an ideal and a goal, not a process. It requires an intentional commitment to strategic priorities, resources, respect and civility, and ongoing action and assessment of progress towards achieving specified goals.

***Racial Equity:*** When race does not determine or predict the distribution of resources, opportunities, and burdens for group members in society. When we use the term, we are thinking about racial equity as one part of racial justice, and thus we also include work to address root causes of inequities not just their manifestation. This includes elimination of policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them.

***Social equity:*** A state of affairs in which all people within a society have fair access to the rights and opportunities that allow people to pursue a life of their own choosing and to avoid extreme deprivations in outcomes; including equitable access to education, social services, health care, and justice in the legal system.

***Inclusion:*** The active and intentional operationalization of diversity and equity within every facet of life and activities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect. Organizationally, inclusion requires the identification and removal of barriers (e.g. physical, procedural, visible, invisible, intentional, unintentional) that inhibit members' participation and contribution and the need for decision/policy making in a way that shares power. Inclusion also requires every member of the community to demonstrate these values and principles of fairness, justice, equity, and respect in learning, teaching, service and employment, by being open to different voices and perspectives, developing an understanding of different cultures, experiences and communities, and making a conscious effort to be welcoming, helpful and respectful to everyone.

**Inclusive Culture and Climate:** One that embraces diversity and creates an atmosphere of respect for all members of the community.

**Culture:** How people feel about the organization and the beliefs, values, and assumptions that provide the identity and set the standards of behavior; “the way we do things around here”

**Climate:** The shared perceptions of the people in a group or organization; the feel of the school/work environment

**Intercultural Competency:** A process of learning about and becoming allies with people from other cultures, thereby broadening our own understanding and ability to participate in a multicultural process. The key element to becoming more culturally competent is respect for the ways that others live in and organize the world and an openness to learn from them.

**Social Justice:** Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others and the society as a whole. The goal of social justice education is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society that is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. Social justice is both a goal and a process.