



the RP group

Research • Planning • Professional Development  
for California Community Colleges

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# The RP Group's Equity Journey

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Erik Cooper

# Who are we?

- The RP Group is BOTH:
  - Representative body for CCC IRPE professionals
    - 12 Regional Representatives, 2 appointees, 5 executive members
  - Research and Professional Development Organization
    - Executive Director
      - Research and Evaluation Team (2 Managers + Staff)
      - Professional Development Team (2 Managers + Staff)

# Mission, Vision & Core Values

As the representative organization for Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (IRPE) professionals in the California Community Colleges (CCC) system, the RP Group strengthens the ability of CCC to discover and undertake high-quality research, planning, and assessments that improve evidence-based decision-making, institutional effectiveness, and success for all students.

- **Vision:** The RP Group strives to build a community college culture that views planning, evidence-based decision-making, and institutional effectiveness as integral, collaborative strategies that work together to promote student success, increase equitable outcomes, improve college operations, and inform policymakers.
  - **Quality:** Our projects, products, and initiatives are carefully researched, thoroughly vetted, and broadly informed.
  - **Authenticity:** Our board, staff, consultants, volunteers, and members have direct experience with community colleges and share a deep passion for ensuring the success of our students and institutions.
  - **Equity:** We are motivated to equip our community colleges to significantly improve achievement among students historically underserved by our institutions and to provide a path to mobility for those most vulnerable in our society.
  - **Collaboration:** Our engaging, action-oriented, and practitioner-based approach draws on the collective wisdom of our system and empowers our stakeholders and clients to lead their own meaningful inquiry and evidence-based decision-making.

# Selected Works

## Research & Evaluation

- Student Support (Re)Defined (2011-Current)
- Through the Gate (2016-Current)
- African American Transfer Tipping Point (2020-Current)
- Beyond Financial Aid (2013-15)
- Multiple Measures Assessment Project (2014-Present)

## Professional Development

- Strengthening Student Success Conference
- The RP Conference
- Summer Institute
- Leading from the Middle

# What's in a name?

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- Drs. Cooper – No relation?



# Could we do this ourselves?

Maybe, but probably not well...

Intentionality

No empty words, no meaningless gestures

And then things changed

George Floyd

June 2020 Letters to the Field

We were committed, but did we have the resources?

# The Consultants and the EDI Committee

## Allied Path Consulting

Veronica Keiffer-Lewis, Tony Santa Ana, Arnita Porter

## The RP Group

- Staff – Darla Cooper, Alyssa Nguyen, Brad Trimble, Katie Brohawn, Ileri Valenzuela
- Board – Erik Cooper, Jeremy Brown, Bryan Ventura, Daniel Miramontez, Sabrina Sencil
- Field – Michelle Fowles, Hannah Lawler

EDI vs DEI

# The Tasks

## Training

- Board and Staff Training
- Integrating Training to IRPE PD

## Framework

- Framework
- Assessment Tool
- Glossary

## Digital Library



# The Commitment

*The RP Group recognizes it is not enough to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion; we must proactively work to oppose racial inequity and lead social justice within the educational system. The RP Group must capitalize on its unique position as both a provider of research and professional development, and as a representative body for IRPE professionals to advance equity and drive systemic change.*

# Training

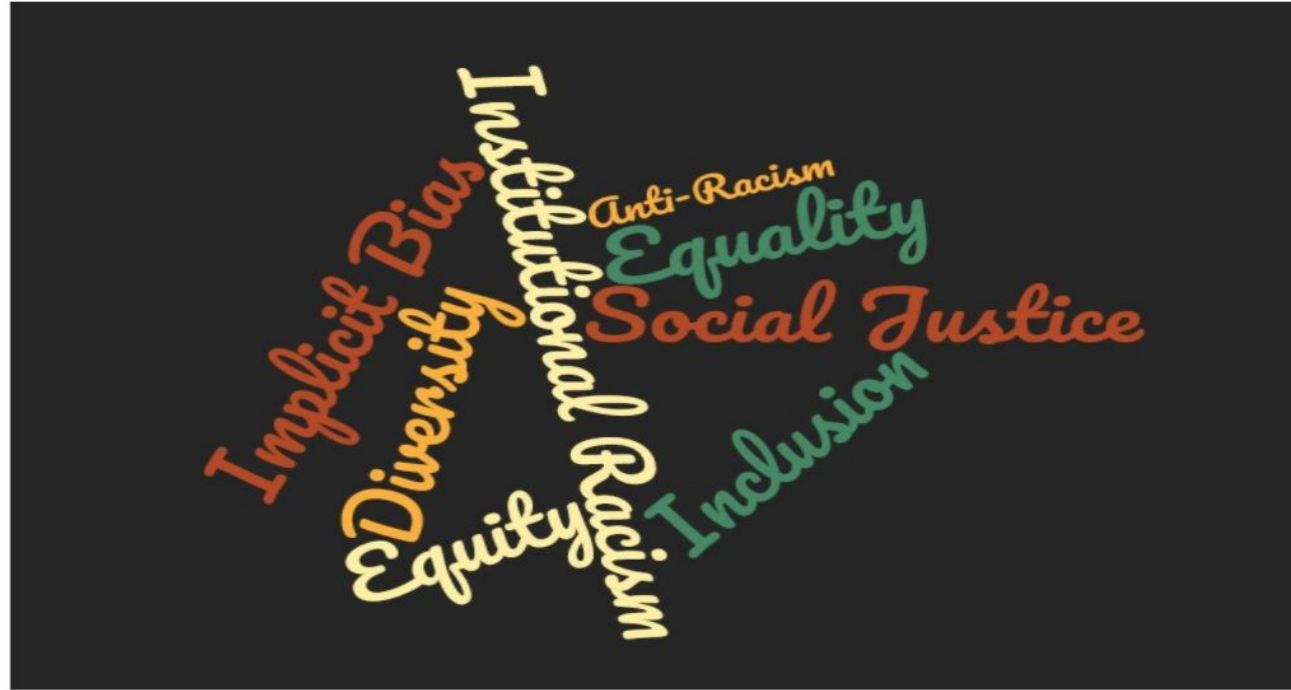
## Board and Staff Training

1. Defining Equity
2. Bias and Microaggressions
3. TBD

## Integrating Training to IRPE PD

- Transitions
  - 2020 Summer Institute -> 2021 Summer Institute
  - Strengthening Student Success Conference
    - Threads to Focus

# Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Terminology





What do you see?

# The Tasks

## Training

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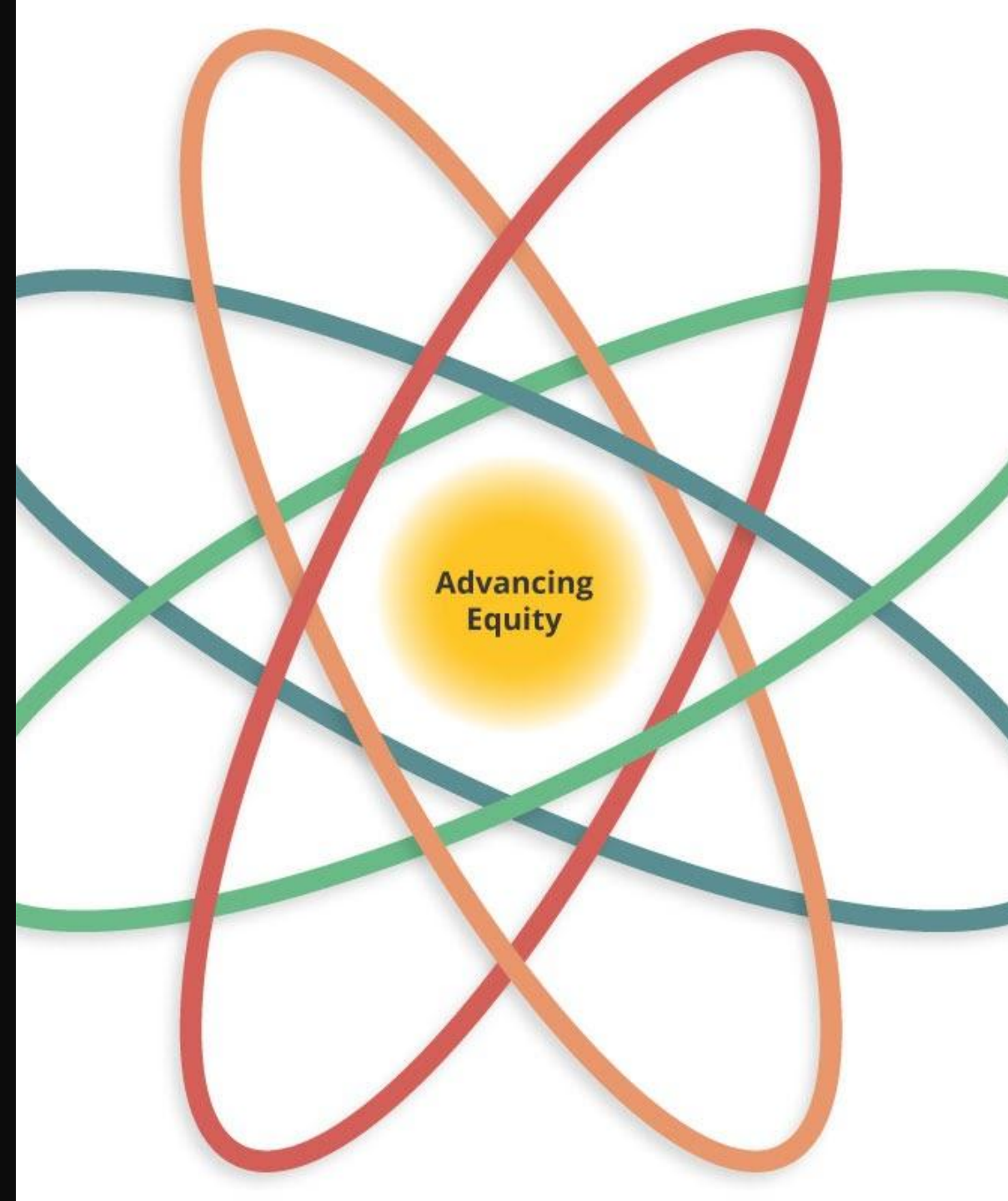
# The Framework

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Advancing equity is a holistic approach and requires us to examine, scrutinize, and rebuild the various systems that were built to benefit one group and disadvantage others. Within our system, racial identity is frequently the most salient indicator of advantage and oppression. As such, in order to advance equity broadly, our work must begin with race and how it intersects or interacts with other characteristics. As IRPE professionals, we have a privilege and responsibility to go beyond identifying gaps in outcomes to use the data to inform actions that eliminate these gaps.

The RP Group's Equity Framework is based on four core components:

1. Equity-Minded
  2. Cultural Humility
  3. Distributed Leadership, and
  4. Evidence-Based
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# The Framework Defined

**Equity-Minded** is a perspective or lens underpinning the operations of the organization that centers on recognizing and redressing systems of oppression in its policies, practices, and actions. This underpinning includes: self-reflection, examining and prioritizing who is/has been most directly impacted, and interrogation of the status quo to ensure equity is at the forefront of the work.

**We demonstrate equity-minded by:**

- Fostering a culture that enables the people within the organization to continuously grow and improve equity efforts on a personal, professional, and collective level as first generation equity professionals
- Leading by example by modeling equity-minded practices and keeping equity at the forefront of its operations and work and calling out inequities
- Documenting and developing resources (e.g.,playbook, checklists, etc.) that can be shared more broadly within and outside of the organization to promote knowledge-building and sharing of the equity-minded language, practices, and considerations

**Evidence-Based** is a commitment to collecting and analyzing data from multiple sources and perspectives to identify problems as well as solutions; recognizing that something does not work unless it works for all; and, integrating both quantitative and qualitative analyses to provide necessary context/perspective.

**We demonstrate evidence-based by:**

- Keeping equity at the forefront of all stages of the process, from deciding what data to collect, to how to analyze and interpret it, to how to present/share the findings
- Analyzing data thoroughly enough to assess whether it something works for all, calling out inequities where they exist, and serving as thought-partners in moving from data to action
- Ensuring methodology is aligned to the question (and appropriate to the context) at hand, transparent enough to be replicable, and identifying limitations where they exist

**Cultural Humility** is the ability to reflect critically upon and acknowledge our own biases, perspectives, shortcomings, and limitations of our expertise as part of the process of learning and building the capacity to improve our community and the communities we serve. Honoring the work, voice, and perspectives of those who have an experience with our institutions.

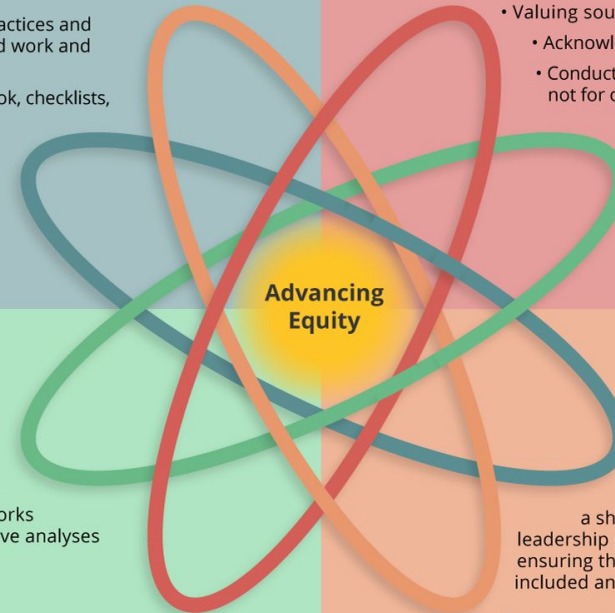
**We demonstrate cultural humility by:**

- Committing to a learning posture that listens to understand rather than respond
- Challenging our own perspectives
  - Valuing sources of knowledge and expertise from various contexts
  - Acknowledging gaps in expertise
  - Conducting research for advocacy and building capacity (even if not for our own benefit)
- Acknowledging and analyzing the impacts (intended and unintended) of our work
  - Committing to the work despite the challenges and barriers ahead
  - Questioning - "why do I think/believe this...?"; carefully consider constructive criticism (4Cs)

**Distributive Leadership (DL)** is an equity-minded approach to leadership. DL is a collective commitment to lead and implement change, unified by a shared vision. It welcomes a variety of perspectives and leadership potential and is not limited to one person or position; ensuring those impacted by implementing the vision are valued, included and empowered to implement change within their roles.

**We demonstrate distributed leadership by:**

- Creating the conditions (trust, time, space, capacity building, and resources) for successful and meaningful engagement in collectively leading change
- Committing to the work and shared learning over the product or outcome.
- Engaging in active reflection and reconnection to the vision and the progress being made; celebrate both success and failure, and what can be learned from them
- This includes identifying barriers, blindspots, and missing voices and ways the group can address it/them



# Assessment Tool

Component and Guided Questions	Current standing/progress	Next steps and/or supports
<p><b>Equity-Minded</b> is a perspective or lens underpinning the operations of the organization that centers on recognizing and redressing systems of oppression in its policies, practices, and actions. This underpinning includes: self-reflection, examining and prioritizing who is/has been most directly impacted, and interrogation of the status quo to ensure equity is at the forefront of the work.</p>		
<p>1. Consider and prioritize groups that have been historically marginalized?</p>	<p><i>Success and progress:</i></p>	<p><i>Next steps or areas of focus:</i></p>
	<p><i>Challenges and barriers:</i></p>	<p><i>Support and resources needed:</i></p>
<p>2. Address or redress past or current practices, processes, and/or systems that produced inequities?</p>	<p><i>Success and progress:</i></p>	<p><i>Next steps or areas of focus:</i></p>
	<p><i>Challenges and barriers:</i></p>	<p><i>Support and resources needed:</i></p>



# Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Resources

Equity has been one of the RP Group's long-standing core values. However, we have come to recognize that it is not enough to promote equity; we must proactively work to oppose inequity to bring about social justice changes within the educational system. The RP Group must capitalize on its unique position as both a provider of research and professional development, and as a representative body for IRPE professionals to advance equity and drive systemic change.

In order to advance our mission and support IRPE practitioners we are curating resources to help researchers better incorporate equity and equitable practices into their research. In order to accomplish, the RP Group Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee has developed a framework whereby we can monitor our progress in achieving our goals, develop professional development that will help us advance equity, and help RP Group staff better represent equity in our research.



**Advancing equity** is a holistic approach and requires us to examine, scrutinize, and rebuild the various systems that were built to benefit one group and disadvantage others. Within our system, racial identity is frequently the most salient indicator of advantage and oppression. As such, in order to advance equity broadly, our work must begin with race and how it intersects or interacts with other characteristics. As IRPE professionals we have a privilege and responsibility to go beyond identifying gaps in outcomes to use the data to inform actions that eliminate these gaps.



# Digital Library

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If you have additional resources that you would like to see included in the EDI Resource Library, please use the form linked below. Please only submit one resource per entry.

## RP Group EDI Library Resource Submission Form

This form only collects one resource at a time - either a link or form so that the area in the library where this resource would go can be identified.



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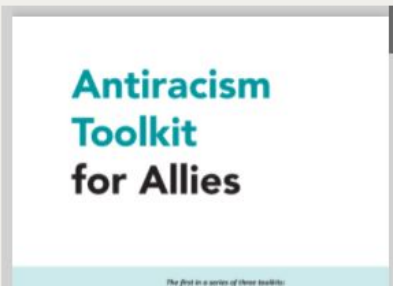
We demonstrate cultural humility by:

- Committing to a learning posture that listens to understand rather than respond
- Challenging our own perspectives
- Valuing sources of knowledge and expertise from various contexts
- Acknowledging gaps in our own expertise
- Conducting research for advocacy and building capacity [d1] (even if not for our own benefit)
- Acknowledging and analyzing the impacts (intended and unintended) of our work
- Committing to the work despite the challenges and barriers ahead

When possible, we provide a preview of the resource, but please note that some resources do not allow a preview.



[First-Generation Equity Practitioners: Are They Part of the Problem?](#)



[Antiracism Toolkit for Allies](#)

# Digital Library

# The Timeline

## Training

- Board and Staff Training - Ongoing
- Integrating Training to IRPE PD - Ongoing

## Framework

- Framework – Winter Release
- Assessment Tool – Internal Pilot, Spring Release
- Glossary – Spring Release

Digital Library – Internal Pilot, Spring Release

# What comes next?

Finally, we would like to recognize that we are all in different places in our personal journeys. The RP Group as an organization and as a group of individuals is no different. Our positions and documents will continue to evolve as we grow personally and professionally as an organization and individuals.