



# Affirmation of Commitment to Social Justice

Adopted by the Board of Trustees on December 14, 2016

The Board believes it is necessary and prudent to regularly evaluate the District's guiding principles that dictate our behavior and actions to ensure they are relevant and reflective of the aspirations and needs of our students, faculty and staff as well as the diverse local community we serve. The District, through its recently adopted Strategic Plan, outlined several unwavering educational values that embrace the fundamental notion of equity and social justice for our students. As the demand for attaining a higher education continues to grow, and as the world in which we operate continues to evolve in its complexity, the San Mateo County Community College District is actively committed to supporting the educational process according to the primary tenets of social justice.

We believe that social justice is practiced when we openly challenge injustice and value diversity. It exists because all people share a common humanity and therefore have a right to equitable treatment and support for their human rights, and are entitled to a fair allocation of community resources. When the tenets of social justice are fairly applied, people do not experience discrimination or prejudice nor is their welfare/well-being constrained in any manner.

As such, the San Mateo County Community College District commits to a fundamental duty to create a socially just environment with the following core values and principles:

- **Dignity and Respect.** The Board has an unwavering belief that universally all humans have inherent value and every person should be treated with dignity and respect. Without exception, all individuals should be extended a basic level of understanding and accommodation so they may conduct their lives with decency and pride.
- **Access and Affordability.** Ensuring that all students, regardless of citizenship or status, have access to affordable, high-quality education is essential. Education is an equalizer that provides an opportunity for upward mobility. The Board is committed to keeping the District's colleges accessible and affordable so all individuals throughout the socio-economic spectrum have an equal opportunity to attain their natural potential.
- **Removing Barriers.** The Board is committed to removing barriers to student success and reinforces the importance of routine examination of curriculum, policies, procedures, and practices to ensure that limitations are not applied which unfairly impede student growth, expression or learning.
- **Serving All.** Community College students are among the most diverse learners in the world. The District values the unique characteristics of our students, and is committed to meeting our students where they are and to providing them the quality education and support services that best support their individual needs and circumstances.
- **Valuing and Promoting Diversity.** The Board is committed to its continued practice of promoting, encouraging and fostering diversity, equity and inclusion inside and outside of the classroom, including in its hiring, promotion, employment, contracting, and purchasing practices. The District's colleges continue to undertake bold steps to ensure that students are exposed to a variety of

opinions, ideas, cultures and people, have regular interaction with those from similar and differing experiences and backgrounds, and are encouraged to maintain and include familiar and important cultural symbols that reflect their heritage and aspirations.

- **Participation and Freedom of Expression.** The Board expects the District's colleges to be community focused institutions where students, faculty, staff and the general public participate without fear or concern for retaliation or intimidation. Our colleges are models for open expression and are safe zones for sharing ideas and opinions.
- **Safe and Inviting.** The safety and security of the District's students and employees is a top priority for the Board. All students and employees must feel that their learning and work environments are free from fear, intimidation, violence, aggression, harassment, bullying, discrimination and intolerance.

The Board believes that adherence to this commitment to educational social justice will continue to advance the interests of our students, faculty, staff and the broader community we serve.