

BOARD ADOPTED STATEMENT ON RACISM



The recent deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and many others are acts of violence and racism that we all must condemn, combined with the systemic racism and inequality that plagues our world, nation, state, communities, and institutions of higher education, it is time for Michigan's community colleges to speak with one voice.

Michigan's public community colleges are open access institutions of higher education and they seek to provide an affordable and accessible education to the communities they serve. Community colleges aspire to lift students out of poverty and create more equitable outcomes for historically marginalized students for whom higher education has been inaccessible and unwelcoming. For decades, our purpose has been to use the tool of education to address economic inequalities and social injustices.

We have not done enough. Racism, inequality, discrimination, and violence continue to exist in our communities. Without action on our part, colleges expect that these injustices will continue to spread in our communities, our institutions, and our students.

It is time for us to do more. Community colleges across Michigan are leading action in their communities. They are listening to students, faculty, staff, alumni, and their communities to identify inequities. They are investigating institutional policies and practices that cause inequitable outcomes. They are examining their campus culture. Most importantly, they are taking action.

The Michigan Community College Association has advocated on behalf of community colleges for policies and practices that support the needs of our students. Equity and social justice have been the *implicit* focus of our work. It is time to make equity and social justice an *explicit* focus of our work. As a collective of community colleges, we have committed to a number of specific action items. We will:

1. Advocate for federal, state, and local policies that eliminate barriers to higher education, particularly cost;
2. Disaggregate student outcomes data by race, ethnicity, gender, and income, to identify gaps and address inequitable outcomes;
3. Increase the number and percentage of marginalized students who successfully complete college-level English and mathematics;
4. Create opportunities for more community college students, especially marginalized students, to transfer to bachelor's degree granting institutions with acceptable transfer credit for all of their courses;
5. Increase the adoption of free textbooks through the expansion of open educational resources (OER);
6. Build a community of community college presidents to focus on inequality and social injustices.

These actions are deliberately specific. In that specificity, we have undoubtedly missed countless other important priorities. But this is just a start. We can no longer settle for incremental change. Colleges must act with urgency to create a society where there are no longer distinctions among those who finish higher education due to where they start. We must instead provide supports that meet students where they start to guarantee they all have the same opportunity to finish. We are ready to do this work.