

Statement Concerning the Value of Cultural Competence at CRC

Definition of Cultural Competence

Cultural competence is an ongoing process of increasing proficiency in the ability to assess and revise individual and organizational behavior in response to an expanded understanding of culture. Culture refers to an integrated pattern of collective behavior, including habits, customs, values, beliefs, and institutions. Cultural competence is associated with attributes, knowledge and skills that enable individuals and organizations to demonstrate respect and value for each person and to manifest an understanding of the dynamics of difference.

Cosumnes River College pursues attitudes, values, and practices that promote healthy, constructive interactions in a diverse community and enable the college to work effectively with our diverse students. To promote cultural competence and create an inclusive learning environment, CRC values:

- 1) Diversity and pluralism
- 2) Continuous personal and professional development, assessment and revision
- 3) Awareness of the dynamics of cross-cultural interactions
- 4) The ongoing pursuit of teaching strategies and student services that better serve diverse populations
- 5) An environment of respect, equity, and justice

Snapshots of Student Demographics (Fall 2014 Census)

- Enrollment at CRC was approximately 14,767 students
- CRC served a diverse community including many students of mixed heritage. The composition included: 29.3% Asian-American/Pacific Islander, 24.7% White/European American, 23.5% Hispanic/Latino, 14.0% African American/Black, 0.7% Other and 0.5% Native American.
- CRC served the younger as well as the older student with exactly 60% of the student population under the age of 25% and almost 13% over the age of 39.
- The ratio of female students to male students was approximately 56% female and 44% male.
- More than 37% of CRC students were first-generation college students.
- CRC students come from varied backgrounds with slightly more than 40% of students reporting incomes considered below poverty and almost 26% of students reporting incomes that are considered middle income.
- According to the Spring 2010 UCLA Diverse Learning Environments Survey, more than 18% of our students identified they were bisexual, gay, lesbian or questioning their sexual orientation.
- Approximately 5% of CRC students received services through the Disabled Students Program.
- More than 52% of CRC students attended classes only during the day only and 15% of students attended classes only at night. Slightly more than 22% of students took classes during the day and evening and almost 13% of our enrollments were in online classes.
- Most students attended part time with approximately 24% taking fewer than 6 units and 43% enrolled in 6 to 11.9 units.

The Cultural Competence Continuum

Organizational

Cultural destructiveness. The most negative end of the continuum is represented by attitudes, policies, and practices that are destructive to cultures and consequently to the individuals within the cultures.

Cultural incapacity. The system or agency does not intentionally seek to be culturally destructive but rather lacks the capacity to help minority clients or communities.

Cultural precompetence. Agencies move toward the positive end of the continuum by recognizing cultural differences and making efforts to improve.

Cultural competence. Culturally competent agencies accept and respect cultural differences, continue self-assessment of cultural awareness, pay careful attention to the dynamics of cultural differences, continually expand their cultural knowledge and resources, and adopt culturally relevant service models in order to better meet the needs of minority populations.

Individuals

Cultural destructiveness - refusing to recognize differences from mainstream culture or assigning values (either negative and positive) to them (e.g., state policies that refuse to offer supplemental language classes in early elementary grades to children whose language is not the dominant culture's in order to prevent them falling behind in school)

Cultural incapacity - unintentional systemic bias (e.g., setting size or age limits regardless of qualifications due to arbitrary "job requirements")

Cultural blindness - an expressed philosophy of being unbiased (e.g., "This organization is totally color blind - our ability to work with others is never affected by our differences.")

Cultural pre-competence - realization of own weaknesses, strengths, and needs (e.g., "I hold these beliefs because that's what my parents believed and my experiences reinforced those beliefs. However, others may have had different experiences and I may only remember those experiences that validate my viewpoint, not those that contradict it.")

Cultural competence - genuine respect for cultural differences with ongoing self-assessment (e.g., embracing practices unique to the different cultures represented in your organization with individuals from those cultures explaining their significance)

Cultural proficiency - seeing culture as central to who each of us is (e.g., respecting each individual as a unique joining together of different experiences and ways of seeing the world)