

## A Proposed Definition of Anti-Racism for College of Marin: Background, Definition, & References

As part of the development of the most recent Educational Master Plan and three-year Strategic Plan, College of Marin adopted the Education Trust-West definition of equity:

Equity means recognizing the historical and systemic disparities in opportunity and outcomes and providing the resources necessary to address those disparities (Education Trust-West, n.d.).

Additionally, the Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California's definition of equity-mindedness, derived from the work of Bensimon (2005), was also adopted by the College. The term "Equity-Mindedness" refers to the perspective or mode of thinking exhibited by practitioners who call attention to patterns of inequity in student outcomes. These practitioners are willing to take personal and institutional responsibility for the success of their students, and critically reassess their own practices. It also requires that practitioners are race-conscious and aware of the social and historical context of exclusionary practices in American education:

In order to understand and become "Equity-Minded", it warrants that various practitioners (faculty, administration, staff, etc.) assess and acknowledge that their practices may not be working. It takes understanding inequities as a dysfunction of the various structures, policies, and practices that they can control. "Equity-Minded" practitioners question their own assumptions, recognize stereotypes that harm student success, and continually reassess their practices to create change. Part of taking on this framework is that institutions and practitioners become accountable for the success of their students and see racial gaps as their personal and institutional responsibility (Center for Urban Education, n.d.).

Now, with the call to actively promote anti-racist policies, procedures, and practices, the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee (PRAC) suggests the following definition of anti-racism, adapted from the framework Ibram X. Kendi offers in his book, *How to be an Antiracist*. Kendi's framework posits that all policies and ideas fall under two categories—racist and antiracist. Within our educational context, these adapted definitions are:

- **Racist:** Any policy, idea or funding decision that produces or sustains racial disparities in educational outcomes.
- **Anti-Racist:** Any policy, idea or funding decision that produces or sustains racial equity in educational outcomes.

While broad, these definitions offer a measurable metric to assess programs and make data-informed decisions along the uncomfortable path to equity. This passage from *How to be an Antiracist* provides further context for adopting these modified definitions:

"A racist policy is any measure that produces or sustains racial inequity between racial groups. An antiracist policy is any measure that produces or sustains racial equity between racial groups. By policy, I mean written and unwritten laws, rules, procedures, processes, regulations, and guidelines that govern people. There is no such thing as a nonracist or race-neutral policy. Every policy in every institution in every community in every nation is producing or sustaining either racial inequity or equity between racial groups (p. 18)."

## References

- Bensimon, E.M. (2005). Closing the achievement gap in higher education: An organizational learning perspective. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 131, 99-111.
- Center for Urban Education, University of Southern California. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://cue.usc.edu/about/equity/equity-mindedness/>
- Education Trust-West. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://west.edtrust.org/>
- Kendi, I.X. (2019). How to be an antiracist. New York: One World.