

**RCW 28B.50.920 Diversity, equity, and inclusion—Strategic plans—Student-based organizations—Outreach programs—Model faculty diversity programs.**

(1) Beginning July 30, 2022, all community and technical colleges must submit, on a biennial basis, strategic plans to the state board for community and technical colleges for achieving diversity, equity, and inclusion of all races on their campuses.

(2) Colleges must create their strategic plans using an inclusive process of stakeholders including, but not limited to, classified staff, faculty, administrative exempt staff, students, and community organizations. Colleges are encouraged to use campus climate surveys to develop and update strategic plans for diversity, equity, and inclusion of all races.

(3) In addition to planning, each community and technical college shall include in its diversity program opportunities for students from historically marginalized communities to form student-based organizations, and to use community-based organizations, that permit students to work together to mentor and assist one another in navigating the educational system and to access trained mentors using evidence-based mentoring strategies.

(4) Each community and technical college shall establish a culturally appropriate outreach program. The outreach program may include communities of color, students with disabilities, neurodiverse communities, and low-income communities and be designed to assist potential students to understand the opportunities available in the community and technical college system. The outreach program may assist students with navigating the student aid system. Outreach programs may include partnerships with appropriate community-based organizations and use research and supports from the student achievement council.

(5) The state board for community and technical colleges shall develop a model faculty diversity program designed to provide for the retention and recruitment of faculty from all racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. The faculty diversity program must be based on proven practices in diversity hiring processes.

(6) Each community and technical college shall conspicuously post on its website and include in the strategic plans, programs, and reports definitions for key terms including: Diversity, equity, inclusion, culturally competent, culturally appropriate, historically marginalized communities, communities of color, low-income communities, and community organizations. [2021 c 272 § 3.]

**Intent—2021 c 272:** "The legislature recognizes that student completion rates for workforce training certification and degree programs at community and technical colleges are far lower than desirable to ensure that students may utilize the opportunities of postsecondary education to lift themselves and their families out of poverty and to meet our state's student achievement council road map goals, including for 70 percent of Washington residents to have a postsecondary certification or degree to meet workforce needs. The legislature recognizes that first-generation college-attending students, students with disabilities, and underrepresented minority students face far greater obstacles to apply, remain in school, and complete programs. This disparate impact greatly affects our state's commitment to equity.

The legislature recognizes that offering tuition financial support to first-generation and underrepresented minority students is

necessary for students to enroll and attend college but must also be accompanied by proven supports for them to complete their degrees or workforce training programs.

The legislature recognizes that there are mentorship and advising programs based on strong evidence that have been proven to be successful in greatly increasing retention and degree or workforce training completion rates for first-generation students, underrepresented minority students, students with disabilities, and for all students at community and technical colleges. It is the legislature's intent that successful programs such as guided pathways be implemented at all community and technical colleges with the goal of doubling completion rates (as measured by completion in six years) for students in the next eight years. To accomplish this goal, the legislature intends to achieve full implementation of research-based programs to improve student outcomes, such as guided pathways. The legislature affirms that all students receiving Washington college grants, college bound scholarships, or federal Pell grants should receive the supports, including mentoring, that have been proven to increase completion rates.

The legislature further finds that research establishes that students from underrepresented minorities are far more likely to complete degrees or workforce training certification programs if the faculty and staff of the college reflect the diversity of the student body. Therefore, the legislature intends for the state's community and technical colleges to develop and implement plans to increase faculty and staff diversity." [2021 c 272 § 1.]

**Findings—2021 c 272:** "The legislature finds that there is a need to expand investments in community and technical colleges for the purpose of guaranteeing both equitable access and educational success for all residents of the state, particularly for students from communities of color and low-income communities. The legislature finds further that equality of opportunity for all students requires investments to support services that are critical to: The success of students of color and low-income students; provide systemwide equity initiatives intended to make community and technical college campuses welcoming, benevolent places; overcome the digital divide for all students; and provide qualified and available counseling throughout the community and technical college system. The legislature also finds that a more full-time, stable, fairly compensated, and diverse community and technical college faculty is necessary to enhance student success and to improve the mentoring available for a diverse student body. The legislature also finds that resources for student aid and workforce investment need to be adequate to meet the needs of all students in the state, particularly those from families of color and low-income families." [2021 c 272 § 2.]

**Short title—2021 c 272:** "This act may be known and cited as the our colleges our future act of 2021." [2021 c 272 § 11.]