

Lack of a college-wide retention plan for students of color to progress through their academic career at Foothill.

In our efforts to understand retention data and trends that are occurring, it is important to focus on who is not being retained, as well as why those students are leaving. Interrogating both of those things encompasses a wider scope of the story and provides a deeper understanding of our students' lived realities, which can only improve our efforts as we propose interventions and implement campus-wide retention strategies.

The 2019-2022 Foothill College Student Equity Plan identified a disproportionate gap in college retention for African-American and Latinx female students.⁴⁰ The CCCCO identifies retention as continued enrollment from fall to winter quarter. While Foothill's 2015-16 Student Equity Plan did not have a metric that directly identified college retention as an overarching issue, there were many activities such as development of mentoring, early alert and expansion of and support to learning communities, which suggested a desired focus on successfully retaining students through the end of a term. Furthermore, the same plan suggested the need for a Student Success and Retention Team to oversee the implementation and progress of the 36 activities listed within that plan. While the retention team was never formed due to competing demands and scheduling conflicts, the idea still holds value and should be revisited.

While the college currently has state funded retention programs for students (EOPS/CARE), resource centers (Disability Support Programs and Services/ Veterans Resource Center) and learning communities to help students successfully complete courses and remain enrolled, these programs are often limited by capacity, funding, and qualifications students must meet to access those services. There are still a significant number of students outside these programs who are not being served where the need still exists.

In an effort to coordinate and broaden our retention efforts, the Office of Equity suggests the following goals.

As we focus on outreach and access in order to diversify our student population, prioritizing

retention of these diverse communities must occur in conjunction with those efforts so that the work of diversity does not fall to merely a performative effort.

- ✔ **Goal 38:** The college has a coordinated plan with a set of successful, culturally relevant interventions in play that retains students through three important milestones in a term: 1) course registration through to census, 2) from census through the end of the quarter with successful course completion, and 3) successful enrollment in the subsequent term. Specifically, this plan would consist of strategies that not only are proven effective for Foothill's most vulnerable student populations (in this case, African-American and Latinx women), but can be inclusive and encompassing of other populations' needs.
- ✔ **Goal 39:** The promising practices of existing retention programs and learning communities are incorporated into the rest of the campus.
- ✔ **Goal 40:** The college addresses the retention challenges that arise when students, staff and faculty do not have access to the physical campus and cannot meet with students in a traditional face-to-face environment. Challenges include but are not limited to privacy for confidential conversations, dedicated studying spaces with easy access to academic materials, resources and employee support, and connection to a college community that counteracts student isolation in higher education.