

Student Conduct and Support Inquiry Group

President Barnes' Social Justice and Racial Equity Taskforce
Draft Report - September 2021

Introduction

President Barnes' Racial Equity and Social Justice Taskforce (hereafter referred to as the "Taskforce") was convened in early Fall 2020 in response to a number of high-profile incidents across the nation of racial violence, police brutality, and subsequent political unrest. Amid a national reckoning about the pervasiveness of racism and bias, many educational institutions took the opportunity to examine their own structures, policies, and practices to create more equitable environments for students, faculty, and staff. This Taskforce comes out of that mission, which has been furthered by the [CCCCO Call to Action](#) (June 2020) and the [GCCCD Board Resolution 20-015](#) (June 2020).

Members of the Taskforce collectively identified four areas for inquiry and subsequent recommendations: Hiring Processes, Professional Development, Student Conduct and Support, and Institutionalizing Anti-Racism. This report outlines the processes, findings and recommendations of the **Student Conduct and Support Inquiry Group** (hereafter referred to as the "Inquiry Group").

The Student Conduct and Support Inquiry Group is comprised of the following members:

Rana Al-Shaikh, Student Services Specialist
Martha Galvan, Counseling Faculty, Financial Aid
Madison Harding, Institutional Effectiveness Specialist
Tania Jabour, Instructor of English
Tammi Marshall, Instructor of Math
Jessica Robinson, Vice President of Student Services
Lauren Vaknin, Dean of Student Affairs
Greg Vega, Director of Admissions and Records

Over the 2020-21 academic year, members of the Inquiry Group collectively analyzed data related to our area of inquiry, reviewed a breadth of documents and publications, examined policies and procedures, and held interviews with a wide range of constituents, all at the college and district level. The group also attended Taskforce open forum sessions, and participated in the GCCCD Public Safety Workgroup meetings and forums.

From that process, the group identified four sub-categories within Student Conduct and Support for analysis and subsequent recommendations: Academic Misconduct, Behavioral Misconduct, Student Complaints and Grievances, and Campus Safety. The following report is organized by those

sub-categories, with a brief description of the current state of each area, our findings, and our recommendations. In many instances, members of the Inquiry Group have already taken action and/or initial steps toward the recommendations based on our review and preliminary findings, where such actions were pressing and fell within the purview of group members to initiate; those are indicated as well.

Academic Misconduct: Policies and Procedures

The GCCCD Student Code of Conduct lists “cheating, plagiarism (including plagiarism in a student publication), or engaging in other academic dishonesty as defined by the College’s academic integrity standards” as a prohibited behavior. Academic misconduct is subsumed under general misconduct, listed as one of a number of potential violations of the Code of Conduct, and is handled according to the processes outlined in [Student Conduct: Community Standards, Policies, and Procedures](#) (2018).

The [Cuyamaca College Faculty Handbook](#) (2017-2019) offers a more detailed breakdown of academic misconduct, with definitions of and examples for plagiarism, cheating, and other types of academic misconduct. An undated [Student Discipline Brochure](#) made for faculty as a short reference guide to student behavioral issues offers further recommendations to faculty about including academic integrity policies on course syllabi, going over this information with students in class, and clarifying expectations for academic work. The brochure outlines steps that faculty should take if they find evidence of academic misconduct in their classrooms, including informing the student, writing a letter detailing the incident and resulting action, and forwarding that letter to the student, the Department Chair, the Division Dean, and the Dean of Academic Affairs. On the [Faculty Resources](#) webpage and in the Faculty Handbook, instructors are advised to report students suspected of academic misconduct to the Dean of Student Affairs. Under the [Faculty](#) tab of the [Student Affairs](#) webpage, there is [sample verbiage for syllabi](#) about academic misconduct, as well as multiple templates for warning letters to students (which may be used for behavioral or academic misconduct).

In practice, referrals are handled with the following process:

If faculty members have evidence of academic misconduct, they can issue a zero on the assignment and make a referral to Student Affairs. If this is the first academic misconduct violation for the student, the Dean of Student Affairs provides a verbal warning (no formal disciplinary files) and meets with the student to discuss academic misconduct and the GCCCD [Student Code of Conduct](#). The Dean of Student Affairs provides an overview of the process and discusses possible sanctions for any further violations to the policies. The goal is for the student to take responsibility and not engage in any further academic misconduct in the future. The academic misconduct violation will be unofficially documented (no formal disciplinary file) in case there are further violations. These meetings provide an opportunity to discuss additional resources that can be useful for the student.

If the student decides to appeal an academic misconduct issue, they first go through the instructional process, and appeal to the Instructor, then to the Department Chair/Coordinator, and finally to the Division Dean. If the student wants to appeal the academic misconduct violation after working through the instructional process, they can move forward with the formal [GCCCD Grievance Policies and Procedures](#).

If the student previously engaged in academic misconduct, the formal GCCCD Student Conduct Process applies. The student is sent a formal allegation letter and asked to schedule a meeting with the Dean of Student Affairs within ten days. The student meets with the Dean of Student Affairs for the fact-finding investigation. Depending on the outcome of the fact-finding investigation, the Dean of Student Affairs makes a recommendation for a resolution. (If the recommended sanction is more than a ten day suspension, the case will be referred to the [Student Conduct & Grievance Committee](#) for a hearing).

If there is a recommended sanction from the Dean of Student Affairs, the student has the option to accept the sanction and resolve the case, or move forward with a formal student conduct hearing outcome to determine the outcome of the case. The Student Conduct and Grievance Committee forwards the recommended resolution to the Vice President of Student Services for the formal recommendation. The student can appeal the decision to the President. These steps are outlined in detail in the [Student Conduct: Community Standards, Policies, and Procedures](#) booklet.

Academic Misconduct: Findings

- According to [data](#) pulled by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Success and Equity in November 2020, from 2018-2020, students who identify as female and students who identify as white are disproportionately impacted by academic misconduct referrals:
 - Students who identify as female account for 60% of formal sanctions for academic misconduct (overall population is 56%)
 - Students who identify as white account for 64% of formal sanctions for academic misconduct (overall population is 43%)
 - Note that in this data, students who are of Middle Eastern descent and/or who identify as Chaldean likely represented as white. There are potentially specific equity implications regarding misconduct referrals for our Middle Eastern students; more information is needed on that.
- Across relevant college publications, there is a lack of student-facing information about what constitutes academic misconduct and how to avoid it. Conversely, there is a lack of information about what academic integrity is, why it's important, and how to uphold it.
- While there is more detailed information about academic misconduct intended for a faculty audience (as opposed to for a student audience), such as that found in the [Faculty Handbook](#) and [Student Discipline Brochure](#), that information should be updated to address more current

trends in academic misconduct behavior. It also needs to be edited for clarity and consistency across faculty resources in order to promote alignment and common practices.

- Across conversations with faculty constituents, including an [interview](#) with the Instructional Leadership Advisory Team (ILAT), there is a lack of alignment and consistency with how individual faculty members and/or instructional departments handle academic misconduct incidents among students. Many instructional chairs and coordinators suggest that it is more equitable and student-centered to handle suspected cases of academic misconduct between the instructor and student (rather than refer those cases to the Dean of Student Affairs). Faculty receive conflicting instructions about how to document, report, and handle suspected violations from college publications and from department chairs.
- In interviews, students report generally knowing that academic misconduct is wrong and that it carries penalties. Students consistently note, however, that what constitutes misconduct is vague. Students report knowing that information about academic misconduct can usually be found on the course syllabus; they associate academic misconduct with admonishments and threats of punishment in the first week of class, but they noted that the topic typically isn't addressed in their classes beyond the first week, and they struggled to articulate what the disciplinary process for suspected violations entails.

Most overwhelmingly, students report confusion about academic integrity and misconduct and emphasize that standards and expectations shift from class to class; one noted that in one of their classes they are encouraged to look up information on the internet, while in another, that practice constitutes plagiarism ([Poli Sci Club Interview Notes](#)). Another student noted that those inconsistencies lead to confusion and fears of being wrongly accused or accidentally using prohibited resources; another student in that interview added that they want teachers to know that they are trying to uphold the rules, but that it's challenging to ask about plagiarism when the context for the conversation is limited to getting caught and being punished ([Stats Class Interview Notes](#)).

- The Dean of Student Affairs emphasizes that there is a significant need for educational resources for academic misconduct violations. The Dean notes that for other behavioral referrals, such as those related to drug/alcohol abuse or social/emotional dysregulation, there are a number of non-punitive, educational tools and resources to which the student can be referred. Student Affairs has no such resources for academic misconduct. Furthermore, the Dean notes that faculty across the college can take an inconsistent approach to academic misconduct referrals, making it a challenge to effectively address and manage the referral process.

Academic Misconduct: Recommendations

1. Examine equity implications in academic misconduct referrals, including locating root causes for academic integrity violations across disproportionately impacted student groups, addressing potential biases in reporting, and developing culturally-specific tools and resources for students and faculty.
 - Conduct further research to determine the extent to which students who identify as Middle Eastern, Iraqi, and/or Chaldean are disproportionately referred for academic misconduct, and if so, to identify root causes of those referrals, and the extent to which the referrals stem from student behaviors, instructor perceptions/mindsets, or both.
2. Develop and widely disseminate current, detailed, and specific information for students about what constitutes academic misconduct and how to avoid it, and perhaps more importantly, what academic integrity is, why it's important, and how to uphold it.
3. Update faculty resources, such as the Faculty Handbook and the forthcoming Instructional Chairs and Coordinators Handbook (title TBD) so that information about academic misconduct is clear, consistent, and current.
4. Facilitate widespread professional development so that faculty are better equipped to promote academic integrity in their face-to-face and online classes; this may include instruction on how to spot common violations, support with how to promote academic integrity throughout the whole semester (rather than just in the first week), assistance with creating consistent expectations and standards across courses and disciplines, and facilitation with inviting students to participate in crucial conversations about the integrity of their work.
5. Revise the reporting process so that expectations for how to handle cases of academic misconduct are clear, consistent, and evenly applied. Address and resolve variances in departmental cultures and practices that lead to widely different practices in handling suspected cases of academic integrity violations.

Academic Misconduct: Updates/Steps Taken

In Spring 2021, Grossmont & Cuyamaca Colleges rolled out the Maxient software program for conduct and grievance cases. As a result, faculty and staff can report general conduct and academic misconduct issues on the reporting form. The software program provides reporting and recordkeeping information for complaints, crisis management, Title IX, student conduct, and grievance cases. The next phase will include the student reporting form for complaints. In addition, the Division Deans will be provided access to manage student complaints within their division.

In summer 2021, with support from the Innovations in Outcomes Assessment Grant (through IEPI), psychology instructor Marissa Salazar developed in-depth Canvas training modules on academic integrity. These modules, formatted as interactive videos, are intended for students to engage with in any course or discipline, in order to understand the basics of academic integrity, the value of skill-building, how to cite sources, and how to avoid common issues in academic misconduct. Professor

Salazar is piloting those modules in her courses this semester and will be assessing their efficacy. Those modules will eventually be reviewed and revised/expanded upon by a larger, campus-wide Academic Integrity Team.

In fall 2021, Student Affairs partnered with faculty leaders to launch a new [Academic Integrity Team](#), a workgroup of faculty across disciplines, students, and relevant administrators/staff. The primary objective of this workgroup will be to promote a culture of academic integrity through an equity lens. This could involve reviewing current academic integrity policies and procedures, learning about and addressing the root causes of integrity violations, creating resources for students and practitioners, and developing alignment among departments across the college (or between the college and other institutions).

Behavioral Misconduct: Policies and Procedures

Expectations for student conduct, as well as policies and procedures related to suspected violations of the student code of conduct are outlined in [Student Conduct: Community Standards, Policies, and Procedures](#) (2018). The [Student Conduct](#) webpage contains information related to student conduct expectations, with descriptions and linked information regarding Student Conduct, The Complaint Process, Discipline Introduction, Grievance Introduction, Title IX, and resources for faculty.

When there are reports of student behavioral issues from faculty, staff, or students, the Dean of Student Affairs conducts a fact-finding investigation per the [GCCCD Student Conduct Policies & Procedures](#). The Dean reviews the allegations and moves forward with the appropriate next steps. Depending on the intended outcome of the complaint, previous conduct issues, and the level of severity for the alleged conduct report, the Dean of Student Affairs initiates an informal conduct resolution process or the formal GCCCD conduct process.

The formal student conduct process is outlined in the [GCCCD Student Conduct Policies & Procedures](#). The student receives written notice outlining the alleged code of conduct violation(s) and information for the initial meeting. The Dean starts the fact-finding investigation and the student is informed of their rights and responsibilities per the GCCCD Student Conduct Process. The goal is always to try and resolve the matter informally.

If there is a finding of responsibility for the alleged violation to the Student Code of Conduct, the Dean makes a recommendation for a sanction to resolve the matter. (If there is a recommendation for a suspension of more than 10 days, the matter is referred to the Student Conduct Committee.) The student has the right to accept the sanction, or move forward with requesting a [Student Conduct hearing](#).

The Student Conduct Hearing Committee includes one faculty member, one administrator, and one student selected from the approved panelists on the Student Conduct & Grievance Committee. (The student will have a right to challenge any member of the Student Conduct Committee.) The members of the Student Conduct Committee will hear the case and make a recommendation on the outcome of the matter. Their recommendation is sent to the Vice President, Student Services to make the final determination on the matter. The student can then appeal the decision to the College President. (If the outcome is a recommendation for expulsion, the matter is forwarded to the Board of Trustees for a final decision.)

Additionally, faculty may remove students from class for behavioral misconduct; class removals do not include due process for the students. Per [Education Code 76032](#), *an instructor may remove, for good cause, any student from his or her class for up to two (2) class sessions. The student shall not return to the class during the period of the removal without concurrence of the instructor, and if required the consent of the CSSO or designee.*

If an instructor issues a class removal, the instructor will submit the [removal form](#) to the Division Dean, Chair/Coordinator, and the Dean of Student Affairs. The Dean of Student Affairs meets with the student prior to the student returning to the class.

In 2018, the Dean of Student Affairs facilitated a revision to the Student Code of Conduct to remove language and images related to the criminal justice system, and to make the content less punitive and more student-centered. For this review process, at the recommendation of the Director of Admissions and Records, the Inquiry Group identified David R. Karp's *The Little Book of Restorative Justice for Colleges and Universities* (2nd Ed.) as a mentor text to guide our analysis of the processes and procedures related to behavioral misconduct. The group reviewed content on the principles of Restorative Justice, models of campus practice, and data related to the framework's efficacy.

Representatives from this Inquiry Group attended USC's Equity Leadership Alliance e-Convenings; the February 2021 session on [Confronting Explicit Acts of Racism and Racial Violence on Campus](#) contained content that is related to issues of student behavioral misconduct. In that workshop, USC Race and Equity Center Executive Director Shaun Harper offered guidance for how colleges can prevent and handle such incidents.

Behavioral Misconduct: Findings

- According to [data](#) from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Success, and Equity, from Fall 2018 - Fall 2020, students who identify as male, white, and/or American Indian/Alaskan Native were overrepresented in informal reports and formal sanctions for misconduct:
 - Students who identify as male comprise 43% of the total student population, but represent 53% of referrals for formal sanctions.
 - Students who identify as American Indian/Alaskan Native comprise 1% of the total student population, but represent 3% of referrals for formal sanctions.

- Students who identify as white comprise 43% of the total student population, but represent 61% of formal sanctions and 72% of informal reports.
- Note that in this data, students who identify as Middle Eastern, Iraqi, and/or Chaldean are likely represented as white. There are potentially specific equity implications regarding misconduct referrals for our Middle Eastern and/or Chaldean students; more information is needed on that.
- According to the same [data](#), students who identify as male and white are overrepresented in general misconduct cases (as opposed to academic misconduct):
 - Students who identify as male comprise 43% of the total student population, but represent 82% of general misconduct cases.
 - Students who identify as white comprise 45% of the total student population, but represent 55% of general misconduct cases.
 - Again, students who identify as Middle Eastern, Iraqi, and/or Chaldean are likely represented as white in this study.
- According to internal [data](#) obtained by the Office of Student Affairs, students who identify as male, Black, and/or as two or more races are overrepresented in class removals:
 - Students who identify as male comprise 43% of the total student population, but represent 55% of those who are removed from classes due to misconduct.
 - Students who identify as Black/African American comprise 6% of the total student population, but represent 10% of those who are removed from classes due to misconduct.
 - Students who identify as two or more races comprise 7% of the total student population, but represent 30% of those who are removed from classes due to misconduct.
 - **Male students of color are disproportionately referred for class removals for misconduct, which are not formal sanctions and are based on instructor discretion.**
- The [Student Code of Conduct](#) was revised in 2018 to remove language and images related to criminality or the criminal justice system. The revision included additional options for sanctions, including community service, educational sanctions, and referrals to support services and/or resources.
- In interviews, students widely report being unfamiliar with the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Most stated that they had no experience with behavioral misconduct and were not entirely sure where or how to report incidents that they witness or that affect them; some stated they would tell an instructor or counselor. In the interview with ASGCC, one student keenly noted that the language in the Student Code of Conduct is gendered and dated, and the information is not presented through an equity lens ([Interview with ASG](#)).
- Conversations among district constituents about public safety, when addressing the topic of how to handle behavioral misconduct, reveal that campus practitioners (faculty and staff) do not necessarily approach such issues with an equity mindset. Comments in committees and forums were often explicitly racist and fear-based, and were more focused on using campus law

enforcement to handle incidents than on addressing why students may have been behaving in ways that are perceived to be inappropriate.

- Faculty-facing information in college publications, including on the [Student Affairs website](#), in the [Faculty Handbook](#), and in the [Student Discipline Brochure](#), while substantive, detailed, and clear, does not meaningfully support faculty in taking equity-minded approaches to issues of behavioral misconduct.
- Student Conduct processes have become increasingly equity-minded over recent years, with the inclusion of non-punitive, support-oriented referrals and sanctions. However, such processes fall short of living up to more current, equity-based models, such as the [Trauma-Informed College Model](#) and/or Restorative Justice approaches to student conduct issues.

Behavioral Misconduct: Recommendations

1. Create a cohesive, student-centered, and equity-minded culture for addressing behavioral misconduct.
 - Conduct further research or inquiry to determine the extent to which students who identify as Middle Eastern, Iraqi, and/or Chaldean are disproportionately referred for behavioral misconduct, and if so, to identify root causes of those referrals, and the extent to which the referrals stem from student behaviors, instructor perceptions/mindsets, or both.
 - Address the disjuncture between the more equity-minded approaches adopted by Student Affairs, and the more punitive approaches outlined in college publications, and adopted and/or advocated for by some campus constituents, including some faculty and staff.
2. Engage all faculty, staff, and administrators in equity-minded professional development about student misconduct.
 - Such programming should include training in stereotyping, implicit bias, microaggressions, current data regarding inequitable outcomes for students of color, and restorative approaches.
 - Such programming should aim to create consistency in responses to alleged misconduct and awareness about disproportionate impact for students of color.
 - In-depth training should be specifically mandated for faculty, staff, and students who serve as representatives on the student conduct and grievance committees.
3. Rewrite all publications related to behavioral misconduct through an equity lens and with an explicitly restorative approach:
 - The Student Code of Conduct booklet, as well as the Code of Conduct, Complaint Process, and Discipline sections of the Student Affairs webpages, and all other related materials, should include content about stereotype, implicit bias, microaggressions, and non-punitive approaches to misconduct.

- The Faculty Handbook should include a more substantive entry on behavioral misconduct that goes beyond links to resources, and also includes the above information.
 - Communications with students regarding potential violations, and or other punitive situations, such as notification of academic probation, should be conveyed in a manner that shows concern for students; correspondences should go beyond admonishing against the identified behavior and/or notifying students of sanctions, and toward inviting conversations with students about their experiences and perspectives regarding the issue in question.
 - Update the Student Code of Conduct to offer information to students in a validating tone that conveys care and concern for their experiences at our college. The Code should be attentive to student identities and experiences, and should refrain from using gendered language.
 - Explore formats for information about student conduct that are engaging, interactive, and more current and/or appropriate for student audiences.
4. Continue to evolve processes and procedures for handling allegations of behavioral misconduct toward a more equitable model by adopting a model, such as The Trauma-Informed College Model (Mortaloni) and/or Restorative Justice Framework (Karp).
- Draw from principles of Restorative Justice to develop more *inclusive decision making* and *active accountability* in interactions with students regarding their conduct (Karp).
 - Revise the process for class removals in such a way that better protects student rights and prevents disproportionate uses of class removals for students of color.
 - Create an ombudsperson role to ensure that students who experience allegations of misconduct have an equity-minded advocate and facilitator.
5. Optional, related to USC's Equity Alliance: Regarding the potential for student misconduct to constitute a larger racialized campus incident, the college should adopt the specific recommendations of the USC Equity Alliance (link when available) in preventing and handling such incidents.
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Complaints and Grievances: Policies and Procedures

The Student Affairs website has informational pages for students regarding [Complaints](#) and [Grievances](#). Students and community members who have a *complaint* are encouraged to resolve the issue at the local level. Students are offered a summary of the chain of command for complaints (department supervisor, department administrator, vice president of related area), while community members are directed to email the vice president of the area to which the complaint pertains. Those who have unresolved complaints or complaints related to discrimination are instructed to take their matter to the California Community College Chancellor's Office. Complaints related to accreditation are directed to ACCJC.

The [Grievance Introduction](#) page on the Student Affairs site states that “the grievance procedure may be initiated by a student who reasonably believes he or she has been subject to unjust action or denied rights that have adversely affected his or her status, rights, or privileges as a student. It is the responsibility of the student to submit proof of alleged unfair or improper action.”

The page outlines the grievance process: students with a grievance are encouraged to seek an informal resolution before exercising their due process rights to a hearing. Students are advised that if the issue remains unresolved at the local level, they may meet with the Dean of Student Affairs to pursue further action. Students may opt to submit a Grievance Statement within 30 days of the incident itself or of the student’s knowledge of the incident, and no later than 1 year after the incident. Students may request a Formal Grievance Hearing if there is no resolution after issuing the Statement.

The [Grievance Introduction](#) page notes that students who believe they have been subject to unlawful discrimination based on their identity, status, or ability should contact the GCCCD Vice Chancellor of Human Resources (a mailing address is listed) directly. The site further notes that the grievance process doesn’t apply to situations where an employee of the college may be disciplined from substantiated allegations.

The Student Grievance & Due Process Procedures handbook (2017) outlines the process for students to utilize when they have a grievance. The college’s grievance process is governed by

[AP 5530 Student Right \(sic\) and Grievances](#)

[BP 5530 Student Rights and Grievances](#)

The grievance process encourages an informal resolution prior to submitting a formal student grievance. As outlined in the handbook, students are encouraged to meet with the Dean, Student Affairs to discuss the grievance. The Dean, Student Affairs will communicate with the student and all parties involved to try and resolve the matter. If the student believes the matter is not resolved, the student can start the formal student grievance process. The process includes having the student submit a Written Statement of Grievance (*specifying the time, place, nature of the complaint, the specific policy or regulation alleged to have been violated, and the remedy or correction requested.*)

If there is no resolution to the Written Statement of Grievance, the student has the right to submit a request for a Formal Grievance Hearing. The Student Grievance Committee will review the [request for the formal grievance hearing](#). The composition for the Student Grievance Committee includes two faculty members, two students, and one administrator.

The Student Grievance Committee grants student hearings based on the following criteria:

- *The request contains facts/documentation which, if true, would constitute a grievance*
- *The grievant is a student as defined in these procedures, which includes applicants and former students*
- *The grievant is personally and directly affected by the alleged grievance*

- *The grievant conformed with the grievance procedures and the grievance was filed in a timely manner*
- *The grievance is clearly not frivolous or without foundation, or clearly not filed for purposes of harassment*

If the matter pertains to a grade complaint, the Student Grievance Committee refers to California Education Code Section 76224 (a):

“When grades are given for any course of instruction taught in a community college district, the grade given to each student shall be the grade determined by the faculty member of the course and the determination of the student’s grade by the instructor, in the absence of mistake, fraud, bad faith, or incompetency, shall be final.”

While all college and district publications related to grievances and/or complaints encourage students to seek out local and/or informal resolutions, there is very little information available to faculty or staff about how to handle a student grievance or complaint, and the information that is available is not equity-minded. The [Faculty Handbook](#) only offers guidelines for dealing with academic or behavioral misconduct. [Faculty Resources](#) posted on the Student Affairs webpage likewise offer little guidance for how to address or resolve issues in an equitable fashion, before the student pursues a formal grievance process.

Complaints and Grievances: Findings

- Internal [data](#) obtained by Student Affairs demonstrate that students who identify as male and students who identify as Black are overrepresented in formal and informal grievance proceedings. The following data account for those who filed a grievance between 2012-2013 and 2019-2020 (including those that withdrew their grievance, or whose grievance was handled through a separate process):
 - Students who identify as male comprise 43% of the total student population, but represent 63% of those who filed a grievance.
 - Students who identify as Black/African American comprise 6% of the total student population, but represent 21% of those who filed a grievance.
- The information listed on the Student Affairs webpages regarding Complaints and Grievances is detailed, but is potentially contradictory. For example, directions regarding how to pursue complaints and grievances are substantially different; instructions regarding how to file a complaint related to discrimination and a grievance related to discrimination are also markedly different. There is no clear distinction between a complaint and grievance.
- Students are encouraged to settle complaints and grievances locally; many take their issues to instructors and department chairs. **There is no tracking process in place to capture data about**

who brings forth grievances or complaints, what those grievances or complaints regard, or how/if they are resolved.

- Faculty have few resources to guide how they handle grievances or complaints; approaches may vary widely. In an [interview](#) with the Instructional Leadership Advisory Team (ILAT), faculty chairs and coordinators described the processes they take to try to resolve student complaints.

Some spoke about the value of trying to see the issue from the student's perspective; some talked about complaints and grievances and potential "teachable moments" for students and faculty alike. None referred to any formal process or documentation regarding the grievance or complaint; few noted the role of Student Affairs in facilitating a formal grievance process if the issue isn't resolved to the student's satisfaction.

- **Many student complaints and grievances are about grades; there is a widespread and inaccurate notion among faculty chairs/coordinators and administrators alike that instructional faculty have sole purview and discretion about student grades.**
- In interviews, students report not knowing the processes involved in pursuing a complaint or grievance. Some noted that they would take their concern to the faculty or staff member involved in the incident, or a trusted teacher, or a counselor. One mentioned knowing a "chain of command" from faculty, to chair, to administrator, and noted they would try to follow that order in pursuing an issue. **Students expressed that instructors can be "out of line" as or more often than students, and that the system is designed to protect them (link to Pathways interview).**
- **AP 5530 and BP 5530 are vague, incorrect, and are not in compliance with Title IV guidance.** Title IV [Article 55025](#) outlines the mechanism by which the Chief Administrative Officer can direct the alteration, removal, or destruction of inaccurate information (such as grades). Title IV also outlines the use of a substitute instructor to determine/review grades in certain instances. Neither is reflected in our policies and procedures. Inquiry group members who participate in formal grievance hearings can recall specific instances where, as a result of district guidelines, student rights were violated.
- **Overall, complaint and grievances processes present an undue burden on students, and students most likely to experience discrimination may face the most barriers to raising issues.** There are significant equity barriers for students in the college/district's complaint and grievance processes.

Complaints and Grievances: Recommendations

1. Conduct further research and/or inquiry to better understand why students who identify as Black/African American pursue grievances at higher rates and to better enable the college to

identify and enact specific measures toward creating a more equitable experience for Black/African American students.

- Create staffing conditions that allow for more diverse representation in areas that interact with students around issues of student conduct and grievances, such as on the [Grievance Committee](#).
2. **Create an informal process for student complaints and grievances that:**
 - **Includes documentation of and captures data regarding informal/local complaints and grievances,**
 - **Removes undue burdens on students regarding reporting and following-up,**
 - **Offers systematic, equity-minded guidelines for faculty and staff who handle grievances,**
 - **Clarifies students' rights regarding grade grievances,**
 - **Tracks the resolutions or outcomes to informal grievances, and notifies all parties involved in the process (including students).**
 3. Clarify and potentially align student-facing content regarding complaints and grievances, including the difference(s) between the two; if recommended steps differ for similar-sounding circumstances, such as when a student believes they have experienced discrimination, offer students clear and consistent guidance. Add note here about more accessible formats for information for students?
 4. Develop training/professional development with expressed intent of: A) providing more equitable conditions for students who identify as Black/African American specifically, and B) aligning approaches to student complaints and grievances, better protect student rights, and ensure that all students have access to a safe and equitable environment for learning overall:
 - Training for faculty about how to handle student complaints
 - Training for chairs and coordinators about how to handle student complaints with reporting processes in place
 - Training for administrators about the nuances of Title IV, particularly with regard to grade grievances and other protections of student rights
 - Make this training a requirement for faculty chairs/coordinators and those who serve on the grievance committee.
 5. Create more accessible formats for information related to complaints and grievances for students (ie. not so text-heavy)
 6. Create a workgroup or body to update the GCCCD Student Grievance Booklet (2017) to reflect updates since the last publication and to make it more student-friendly and equity-minded.
 7. Update AP 5530 and BP 5530 to ensure they are in compliance with Title IV and protect student rights (this is in-process). (BP/AP 5530 went to DEC as a first read on September 7th. It will be on the October DEC agenda as a second read, and if approved by DEC, will go to the Board at the October 12th Board meeting.)

Complaints and Grievances: Updates/Steps Taken

[Proposed Edits to AP 5530](#): update status of this pending edit

Student Safety & Campus Policing: Current State

This Inquiry Group examined GCCCD's approaches to public safety through an equity lens. On the heels of multiple high-profile incidents of police brutality against people of color in 2020 (which were part of a long history of state-sanctioned violence), one of the pressing questions for the district and the college is how balance the need for public safety with the real and/or perceived risk that law enforcement presence can pose to faculty, staff, and students of color.

Currently GCCCD contracts with the San Diego Sheriff's Department to provide dedicated law enforcement officers to Grossmont and Cuyamaca Colleges. At the time of the [interview](#) with Deputy Jerry Jimenez, GCCCD employed one full-time Sheriff Deputy, though normal staffing levels are two Deputies. Sheriff's Deputies contracted with GCCCD are assigned with maintaining general public safety, supporting Student Affairs (criminal or welfare checks), and assisting CAPS with their day-to-day duties.

In that interview, Deputy Jimenez noted that he works closely with CAPS representatives and approaches each call on a case-by-case basis. He noted that the Sheriff's Department uses clinicians for help with welfare checks or if there is a student on campus who needs immediate mental health support. Deputy Jimenez noted that in general, Sheriffs usually are trained above and beyond what is required at the state-level for racial sensitivity, equitable approaches, and uses of force, and de-escalation. He emphasized the need for better surveillance technology for Sheriffs and CAPS for both public safety and accountability.

The district also maintains Campus and Parking Services (CAPS) to assist with public safety and promote adherence to campus rules and regulations. According to an [interview](#) with GCCCD Director of Public Safety Nicole Conklin, CAPS has 15 employees who observe and report for campus safety concerns at both Grossmont and Cuyamaca Colleges around the clock. CAPS representatives engage in parking enforcement and ticketing, ensure that students are following campus rules and guidelines (for instance, around smoking, etc.), and support students, faculty, and staff with lockout services and lost and found. Additionally, Nicole Conklin is the liaison with the Sheriff's Department; CAPS specialists and the GCCCD-contracted Sheriffs share a radio system, campus/incident information, and work together closely.

In that interview, Nicole Conklin spoke of the need for more training for CAPS representatives, particularly high-quality, in-person training about how to deescalate situations and adopt equity-minded approaches. Nicole also spoke of the need for body cameras for CAPS specialists to support security, maintain accountability for both CAPS representatives and the students with whom they come in contact, and facilitate real-situation type training.

This Inquiry Group's review coincided with GCCCD's formation of the Public Safety Taskforce, a workgroup charged with seeking input from GCCCD constituents (students and faculty/staff) about public safety and law enforcement on campus, and making recommendations pertinent to GCCCD's then-approaching contract negotiations with the San Diego Sheriff's Department. Members of this Inquiry Group served on the Public Safety Taskforce, participated in its open forum(s) and other events, and shared information as relevant. The Public Safety Taskforce met throughout the spring 2021 semester, conducted a district-wide public safety survey among students and employees, and ultimately, the leaders of that Taskforce issued a report with recommendations. The Public Safety Taskforce's report and recommendations were resoundingly rejected by the Taskforce members, and it is unclear how or to what extent that group's efforts influenced the annual negotiations between GCCCD and the Sheriff's Department; Taskforce members and the GCCCD community were inadequately informed about the details of the most current contract, and to the knowledge of the members of this Inquiry Group, the Taskforce dissolved.

Student Safety & Campus Policing: Findings

- Use of force data compiled by the Director of Public Safety via Sheriff's Department records show that from 2013-2018, there were a total of 7 use of force incidents at GCCCD; 3-4 of those incidents involved GCCCD students; 3-4 of those incidents involved non-students who were on GCCCD property (note that for one incident, it is unclear whether the suspect was a GCCCD student).
 - Across the 7 use of force incidents listed, 3 involved suspects identified as Black while 4 involved suspects identified as white.
 - Demographic data across GCCCD suggest that approximately 6% of students identify as Black/African American; in the data above, up to 50% of use of force incidents against students involved students identified as Black.
 - **The data suggest that while use of force incidents are low overall, there may be a significant disproportionate impact in uses of force against students who identify as Black.**
- CAPS does not maintain records for their contacts with students, including for issues involving suspected student misconduct or for issues that might lead to student sanctions.
- In interviews with various student groups, many students praised our current active Deputy for being friendly, welcoming/approachable, and student-centered, but also simultaneously reported that seeing armed/uniformed Sheriff's Deputies on campus, particularly in contexts where it appears that the Deputies are surveilling the students, can create an atmosphere of fear, intimidation, and suspicion.

The students with whom we spoke were very interested in alternatives to uniformed/armed Sheriff's Deputies on campus, and noted that unarmed/plain clothes resource officers could be just as effective as regular Deputies at maintaining public safety, potentially more effective at

providing crisis support, and may facilitate a more welcoming and equitable campus atmosphere overall.

Students stressed that not all law enforcement employees are a good fit for working on a college campus (a sentiment that Deputy Jerry Jimenez shared in our interview with him); students often drew a distinction between the two Deputies most recently employed by GCCCD; students generally spoke of one favorably and the other unfavorably (Interviews with [Pathway Academy Mentors](#); [ASGCC](#); [Poli Sci Student Club](#); [Stats Class \(Umoja\)](#)).

- The GCCCD Public Safety Taskforce was not structured or facilitated in a way that would enable the group to make meaningful, equity-minded interventions in GCCCD's current public safety framework:
 - The group did not receive vital and foundational training in issues related to law enforcement and racial violence.
 - The Director of Public Safety has a close working relationship with the Sheriff's Department and has a vested interest in a continued relationship between GCCCD and the Sheriff's Department. Furthermore, the Director of Public Safety may not be the best representative to speak to issues of equity and law enforcement; when asked in an interview about equity issues, she noted class/economic need and disability, but did not mention race, even when prompted.
 - The survey conducted by the Public Safety Taskforce was not designed to highlight the voices/input of those with the most at stake in issues of inequity with policing and racial violence at the hands of law enforcement; instead, the survey was designed to maintain the status quo by reinforcing hegemonic interpretations of safety, etc.
 - The final report and recommendations issued by the Public Safety Taskforce did not come from the consensus of its group members. In the last meeting of that Taskforce, group members rejected many of the recommendations and offered suggestions for substantive revisions to the format and content of the report; the group never met again.
 - Other than budget, the Public Safety Taskforce and general GCCCD community did not receive any information about the details of the contract renewal with the San Diego Sheriff's Department, about which we were to give input/direction.

- CAPS and Deputy Jimenez both spoke of a need for more resources for public safety, including more Sheriff's and CAPS representatives, body cams for CAPS specialists, and thorough video surveillance technology for both college campuses. Should those requests come to fruition, those resources could facilitate further training (particularly for topics like de-escalation, bias in reporting and enforcement, etc.). Camera equipment for CAPS specialists may enable a system of record-keeping for CAPS - student interactions, which is a significant need.

Student Safety & Campus Policing: Recommendations

1. Contract with an outside vendor or organization to further GCCCD's work with equity and public safety. The vendor or organization should:
 - a. Have experience with guiding colleges, universities, or educational institutions toward more equitable models of public and student safety, including a clear expertise in histories of law enforcement and racial violence
 - b. Be responsible for designing and running more equity-minded surveys and/or focus groups among staff and students
 - c. Be charged with investigating current disproportionate impact and racial disparities in GCCCD use of force data and CAPS-student contacts
 - d. Recommend processes, policies and procedures to prevent disproportionate impact on students of color and racialized violence at the hands of law enforcement on campus.
 - e. Help create a culture of transparency around GCCCD decisions regarding public safety and law enforcement.
 2. Revise the charge and composition of the District Public Safety Council, particularly if the above recommendation regarding an outside vendor isn't feasible.
 3. Hire a full-time resource officer who is an expert in de-escalation and equity-minded interventions who can make first contact with students who are in distress or who are exhibiting challenging behaviors.
 4. Commit to adopting a restorative justice model across campus for all issues related to misconduct, campus safety, and policing
 - a. Create a team of dedicated faculty and staff representatives from instruction and student services who are trained in restorative justice who can lead that effort.
 5. Require and enable CAPS to keep records of contacts with students so that the College and District are better able to disaggregate and analyze data regarding campus safety and policing.
 6. Commit to making College and district decisions regarding campus safety and policing using clear equity-minded principles and guidelines, rather than majority opinion, as the people most potentially impacted by violence at the hands of law enforcement are not the majority in this district.
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Misc/Notes

- Create an overall recommendation for facilitating this work in a way that doesn't rely on current staffing structure; ie. ombudsperson to support students with misconduct and/or complaints and grievances.
- Create a recommendation to extend these efforts to areas beyond those few areas; include Greg's point about the letters that go out about academic probation
- Better communication to all constituent groups regarding college processes and procedures overall, particularly in student services with regard to financial aid, etc.