Portland Community College

2025 - 2028 STRATEGIC PLANNING

STUDENT & EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK REPORT

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STUDENT & EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2025-2028 Strategic Planning Feedback Summary Report for Portland Community College (PCC) encapsulates the collective insights and aspirations of our academic community. Over three months, we engaged faculty, staff, and students to gather their perspectives on our institution's future. This collaborative effort reflects our commitment to inclusivity and excellence, ensuring our strategic plan is visionary and grounded in the real experiences of those who shape PCC daily. The feedback has been instrumental in identifying key priorities and growth opportunities, identifying some more immediate and tactical opportunities for improvement, and aligning our goals with the evolving educational landscape and diverse community needs. This report synthesizes their contributions, laying the foundation for a dynamic and forward-thinking roadmap for the next three years.

METHODOLOGY

The engagement phase was marked by a robust solicitation effort, reaching out to faculty, staff, students, community-based organizations, and industry partners. Recognizing the value of diverse perspectives, we actively sought input from all stakeholders. During the winter term, 769 staff and faculty members and 649 students contributed their insights, emphasizing our commitment to transparency and inclusivity. The process aimed to address immediate concerns and build a strong foundation for future initiatives. Participants responded to five key questions regarding PCC's strengths, core values, eq-

uitable student success, aspects of belonging, and future challenges, opportunities, and priorities. Additionally, an optional sixth question on the survey allowed for further input. Data were analyzed using grounded theory to identify emergent themes.

AREAS OF EXCELLENCE

1. **Support and Resources:** PCC excels in providing resources to help students overcome barriers such as food insecurity, housing, childcare, mental health, and addiction. Comprehensive support includes counseling, career services, academic support, and libraries.

2. **Quality Education and Variety of Programs:** PCC offers diverse programs that meet current economic and job needs, with flexible modalities (in-person, online, hybrid). Small class sizes allow for individualized help.

3. **Dedicated Instructors and Staff:** Students and employees praised PCC's passionate, knowledgeable instructors and supportive staff, who are dedicated to PCC's mission.

4. **Community Focus:** PCC fosters a strong sense of community through clubs, events, resource centers, and successful outreach and marketing within the local community.

5. **Inclusivity and Accessibility:** PCC values diversity, equity, and inclusion, with multiple campus locations and flexible class options. The college is accessible and affordable compared to other options.

6. **Positive Work Environment:** Many employees appreciate flexibility, benefits, a sense of community, strong union organization, and clean, safe, well-maintained campuses.

CORE VALUES FOR TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE AND INNOVATION

1. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** Supporting a diverse population is crucial for PCC's future. Ensuring diversity and accessibility in innovations is essential.

2. **Student-Focused Supports and Services:** Expanding teaching resources, financial support, and services for distance learners is essential.

3. **Community Building:** Enhancing connections through social events, clubs, and resource centers.

4. **Integrity, Fairness, and Honesty:** Emphasizing transparency, respect, and honesty in all practices.

5. **Adaptability and Thoughtful Stewardship:** Emphasizing flexibility and sustainable practices.

6. **Excellence in Education:** Providing high-quality, student-focused education.

7. **Positive Work Environment:** Addressing employee morale through shared governance and equitable practices.

EQUITABLE STUDENT SUCCESS

1. **Supporting Students Through Resources:** Addressing disparities and providing comprehensive support (financial, academic, social) is key.

2. **Accessibility:** Ensuring ease of enrollment, flexible scheduling, and support for diverse student needs.

3. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** Fostering an inclusive environment with diverse faculty and staff, and equitable access to resources.

4. **Defining Equity:** Creating an environment that respects and empowers students.

5. **Innovation:** Providing access to necessary technologies and educational resources.

6. **Reducing Disparities:** Addressing barriers with advising, affordable education, universal course design, clear expectations, and guided pathways.

ASPECTS OF BELONGING IMPACTFUL FOR RETENTION AND COMPLETION

1. **Community and Connections:** Building a supportive and inclusive community through engagement and resource centers.

2. **Support and Encouragement:** Personalized support from faculty and staff enhances students' sense of belonging.

3. **Acceptance, Welcoming, and Inclusion:** Promoting an inclusive culture that supports diverse student groups.

4. **DEI and Accessibility:** Celebrating diversity and ensuring accessibility.

5. **Resources for Students:** Providing identity-based resource centers and comprehensive support.

6. **Safety, Connection, and Empowerment:** Creating a safe and connected environment.

7. **Value and Appreciation of Staff:** Ensuring staff feel valued to foster a sense of belonging for students.

FUTURE CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND PRIORITIES

1. **Class and Program Growth:** Expanding online, in-person, and hybrid options, and building school-to-job connections.

2. **Financial Struggles and Stability:** Addressing rising tuition and financial accessibility.

3. **Resource Expansion:** Meeting changing economic and social needs with comprehensive support programs.

4. **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Community:** Continuing to focus on DEI, accessibility, and community building.

5. **One College Reorganization:** Addressing concerns about management and communication.

6. **Retention, Recruitment, and Course Modality:** Balancing in-person and online class options to meet student needs.

7. **Digital Transformation and Technology:** Investing in up-to-date technologies and maintaining academic integrity.

8. **Sustainability:** Prioritizing sustainable practices in response to climate change.

CONCLUSION

The report contains rich, thoughtful feedback on PCC's values, programs, and opportunities for improvement. As we move forward in the Strategic Planning process, we must also remain mindful of the long-term viability and financial health of the college, while upholding educational quality.

INTRODUCTION

The 2025-2028 Strategic Planning Feedback Summary Report for Portland Community College (PCC) compiles the collective insights and visions of our students, faculty, and staff. This report brings together these valuable contributions, establishing a comprehensive and progressive roadmap to guide PCC for the next three years.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all faculty, staff, and students who participated in the Strategic Planning input sessions. Your honest and thoughtful feedback has been invaluable in shaping our vision for the future. Your insights and perspectives will play a critical role in informing the decisions and actions of our leadership as we move forward. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to the continuous improvement of our institution.

This report consists of three parts:

1. **Part One:** Results of In-person & Online Student Responses

2. **Part Two:** Results of In-person & Online Employee Responses

3. **Appendix: Tactical/Operational Feedback**

This report was prepared by Carrie Sillito and Heidi Esbenson, PCC Sociology instructors and experts in qualitative assessment. Kurt Simonds, the Vice President of Strategy, Policy, and Integrated Planning, and Sarah Rose Evans, the Strategic Planning Manager, contributed by separating larger themes, such as educational quality, from more specific tactical suggestions, like providing

trauma-informed training. While many solid suggestions were proposed in the feedback, we need to ensure equity by engaging in robust stakeholder engagement around each issue before drafting solutions. Given the anonymous nature of the feedback, it's essential to recognize that we may not have a full range of representation in the suggestions provided. Ensuring diverse feedback is critical before brainstorming possible interventions to consider the impact on all stakeholders. All suggestions that were made as part of this process will be available to the teams leading projects around these issues.

More immediate feedback has been provided to the appropriate divisions and departments, so that necessary actions can be addressed promptly.

Additionally, this report includes information on ongoing work at the college that respondents may not have been aware of. For example, while there were many suggestions about shared governance, the Policy Governance Administration Task Force is working on developing and implementing shared governance in the upcoming academic year. Other ongoing efforts, such as the Strategic Course Scheduling project and a new communications framework, are also highlighted in the report. This information aims to inform stakeholders about current initiatives addressing some of the suggestions made.

The final version was approved by the Strategic Planning Task Force.

METHODOLOGY

The Strategic Planning engagement phase for our 2025-2028 planning process was marked by a robust solicitation effort that reached a broad spectrum of our community, including faculty, staff, students, community-based organizations, and industry partners. The intent of this approach was to ensure active engagement of the college community and key partners ensuring that their voices were heard in the process. This active engagement aimed to reflect the collective vision and needs of our institution. This inclusive approach was designed to foster a sense of ownership and collaboration, laying the groundwork for a comprehensive and representative strategic plan.

During the winter term of 2024, 769 staff and faculty members and 649 students contributed their insights and ideas, underscoring our commitment to transparency and inclusivity. By incorporating the voices of such a diverse

group, the strategic planning process aimed to address immediate concerns and build a strong, united foundation for future initiatives.

Participants responded to the following five questions:

1. In what areas does Portland Community College excel?

2. What core values will serve as an anchor for transformative change and innovation at PCC?

3. What does equitable student success look like at PCC?

4. What aspect of BELONGING is most impactful for student retention and completion?

5. When you think of the next 3 - 5 years at PCC, what do you believe are the three utmost challenges, opportunities, and priorities?

Survey participants could also respond to a sixth question, "Is there anything else you'd like to share with us?" Data were collected and entered into spreadsheets for content analysis. Researchers used content analysis to examine the open-ended responses. Using grounded theory, researchers identified emergent themes reported in the results section.

LIMITATIONS

Survey response and participation in focus groups were not done by random sampling, which may result in skewed responses. Additionally, surveys and focus groups coincided with ongoing contract bargaining for both the Federation of Faculty and Academic Professionals (FFAP) and the Federation of Classified Employees (FCE). Understanding this timing can help contextualize some of the responses.

Another limitation is the limited external community feedback, with only 17 representatives from community-based organizations or industry partners sharing their insights. More extensive external feedback could have helped identify growth opportunities, new programs, and potential partnerships to inform the Strategic Plan.
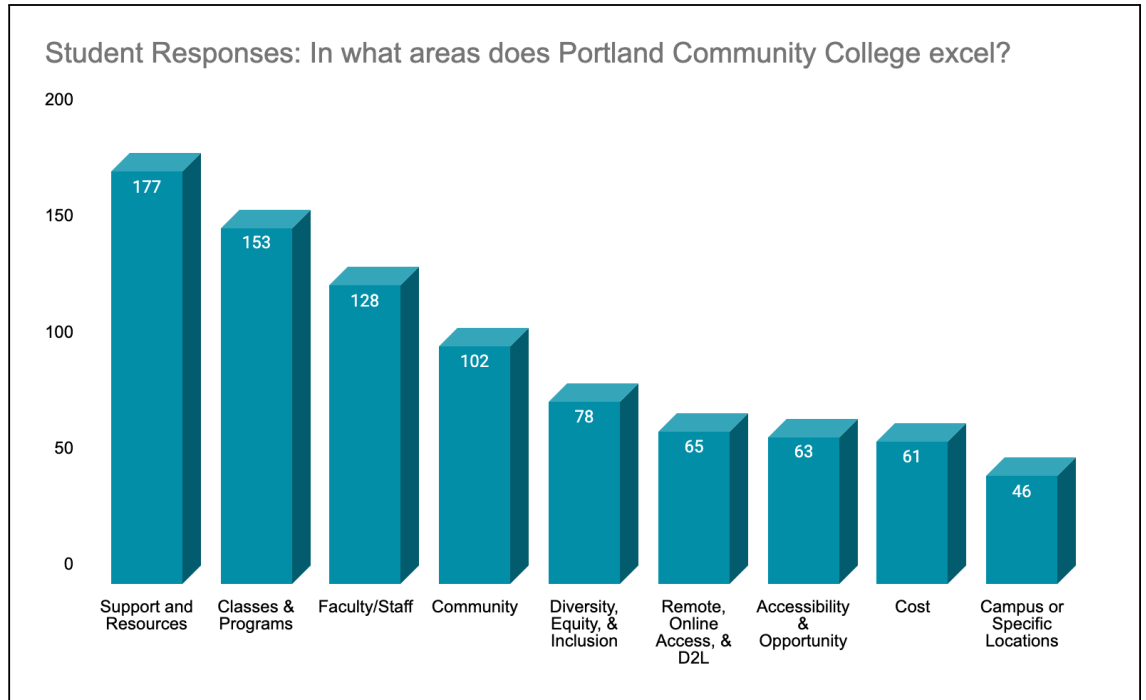
PART ONE: RESULTS OF STUDENT RESPONSES

Question 1: In what areas does Portland Community College excel?

> "Portland Community College stands out for its diverse programs, robust support services, community engagement, sustainability initiatives, and innovative teaching methods, making it a well-rounded community college for students seeking a quality education and supportive learning environment."

Student study participants reported several key areas where they believe PCC excels. Respondents highlighted PCC's support and resources for students, the variety of classes and programs, dedicated instructors and employees, community-focused activities, and accessibility for a diverse population. Some students also shared areas for improvement.

Student Responses: In what areas does Portland Community College excel?

Category	Responses
Support and Resources	177
Classes & Programs	153
Faculty/Staff	128
Community	102
Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion	78
Remote, Online Access, & D2L	65
Accessibility & Opportunity	63
Cost	61
Campus or Specific Locations	46

PCC Provides Resources for Student Success Many students face barriers to attending and graduating college, and respondents shared that PCC excels in offering resources to help students overcome these barriers. From academic support and tutoring to counseling and career services, PCC supports students both in and out of the classroom. Additionally, PCC provides help for students struggling with food insecurity, housing, childcare, mental health, and addiction. Libraries and library staff are also key resources. As one person explained:

> "[PCC excels in] offering a wide range of programs for people of all ages to become successful. Offering low-cost tuition in comparison for those not utilizing scholarships and/or financial aid. Offering an ABA-certified paralegal program that holds weight in the real world upon graduation. Offering technology training and assistance for its various programs (D2L, Google, etc.) through a Help Desk that is often available. Free counseling to students was a big help to me in the past term. Also, my academic counselor is available to me and has helped me choose the classes I'll enjoy while ensuring I have what's required, even after changing my mind repeatedly about what I'll take each term."

PCC Provides Quality Education With A Variety Of Classes and Programs Respondents felt PCC provides a variety of programs that meet current eco-

nomic and job needs. They appreciated the variety of course modalities, such as in-person, online, and hybrid options, making PCC accessible to people with various responsibilities. Respondents also discussed flexibility in course scheduling and support from academic advising.

PCC Excels with Quality Teachers and Staff Members Respondents believe PCC has dedicated and passionate instructors and staff:

> "Portland Community College attracts and retains passionate, highly knowledgeable teachers. The enthusiasm these teachers bring to their classrooms motivates and inspires students to participate in, and feel connected to their educational experience."

They felt instructors were engaging and inclusive, showing genuine care for student success. Staff were also described as friendly, supportive, and welcoming, contributing to PCC's excellence and student retention.

PCC is Community-Focused Respondents believe PCC builds a strong community through clubs, events, resource centers, and class engagement, adapting to the diverse needs of students and staff. Students appreciated the various events and activities that helped them connect with others outside the classroom.

> "I believe they excel in student centers that include space and snacks. It helps students feel like they are not alone, and also provides a space where they can meet friends. I like how they provide activities and resources."

PCC is Inclusive & Accessible Respondents praised PCC's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, noting the clubs, resource centers, and inclusive practices that foster a sense of belonging and respect. Accessibility was also highlighted, with multiple campus locations and various class modalities making education more accessible.

> "Portland Community College excels notably in fostering an environment of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The commitment to ensuring that every member of the community feels heard and valued is a testament to PCC's dedication to creating an inclusive educational environment. This ethos is embedded across the curriculum, within student organizations, and through faculty and staff training programs, making it a fundamental part of the PCC experience."

Question 2: What core values will serve as an anchor for transformative change and innovation at PCC?

Respondents listed several core values they believe will anchor transformative change and innovation at PCC. These include diversity, equity, and inclusion; student-focused supports and services; community; and integrity, fairness, and honesty.

Student Responses: What core values will serve as an anchor for transformative change and innovation at PCC?
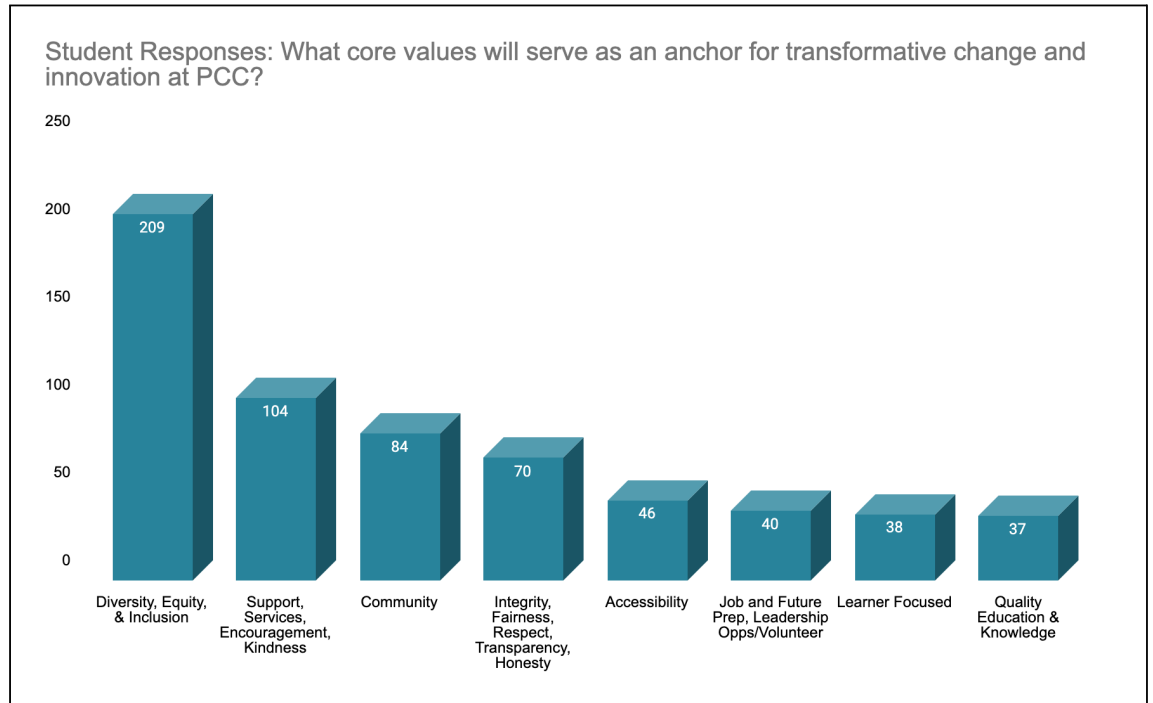
DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION AT PCC

> "At PCC, the core values that serve as an anchor for transformative change and innovation are equity, inclusion, and social justice. These values guide their commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students."

Many respondents felt that supporting an increasingly diverse population would strengthen the college. They emphasized the importance of financial support, clubs, and resources such as the food pantry, IT support, and advising to maintain equity and accessibility.

> "Core values that can serve as an anchor for transformative change and innovation at PCC may include equity and inclusion: ensuring equitable ac-

cess to education and fostering an inclusive campus environment where all students feel valued and supported is essential for transformative change. PCC can prioritize equity in its policies, practices, and decision-making processes to address systemic barriers and promote social justice. Also student-centeredness. Placing students at the center of all initiatives and decisions can drive transformative change. By prioritizing student success, well-being, and empowerment, PCC can create a culture that supports holistic student development and fosters a sense of belonging."

Community Community building and partnerships were suggested as core themes. Students defined community as connecting with others on campus through social events, clubs, and resource centers.

> "Unity/Community is a key core value that will bring change and include everyone regardless of background. [...] [It] will pave the way for others and provide opportunities."

INTEGRITY, FAIRNESS, RESPECT, AND HONESTY

> "Equity will serve as a core value, so that a solid, robust education for anyone who needs it is made accessible to all. And the second core value is integrity. Doing the right thing, even when it's not always recognized or noticeable is so important, and does more to foster growth, change, and success than any self-serving action ever could."
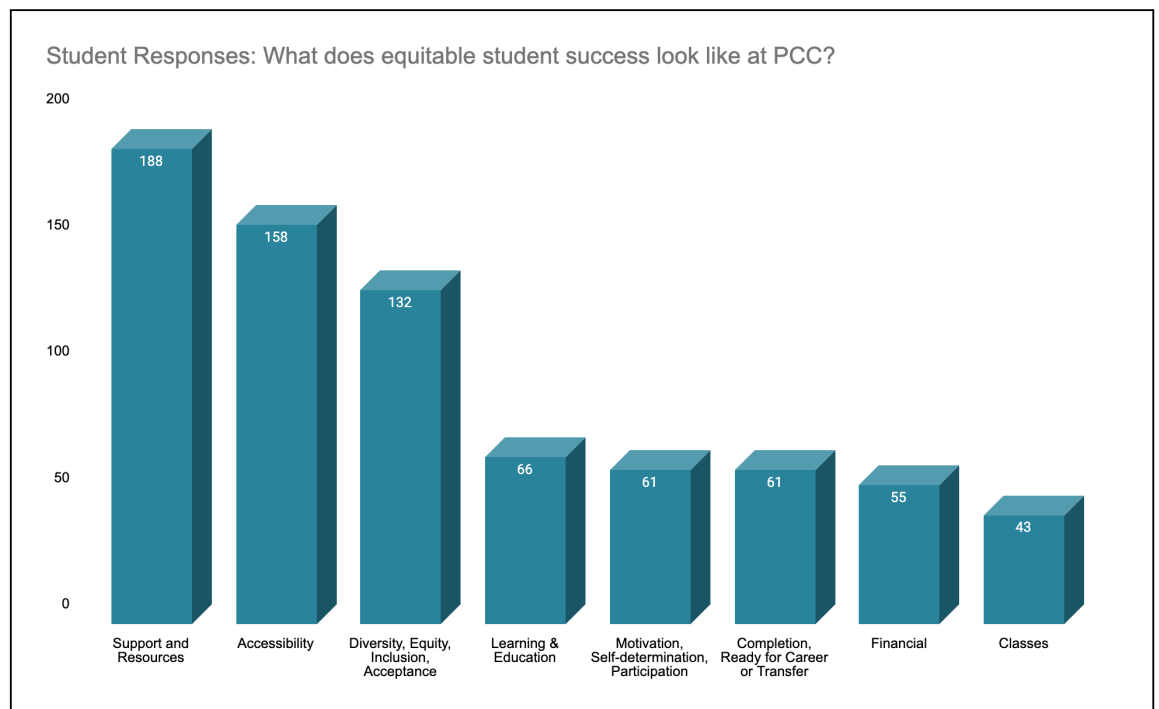
Respondents mentioned integrity, honesty, transparency, and respect as essential values for PCC. They emphasized respecting all staff and students equally, being transparent and inclusive within the campus organization, and maintaining honesty in academic, social, and organizational practices.

Question 3: What does equitable student success look like at PCC?

> Equitable Student Success means having "[e]vening class options, loanable computer equipment and printing capability. Diversity reflected in student make-up. [A] requirement of a social justice course or diversity-related course with all programs. Proportional and consistent homework load among all courses that coincides with the number of credits in a

course. Free/low-cost tutoring, food banks, business clothing drives, resume and interview assistance, etc."

Respondents were asked to focus on equity while describing how to enable students to be successful. They talked about student support and resources to 'level the playing field' and support each individual student's needs. Others spoke of accessibility broadly, discussing access in areas such as applying, choosing courses, paying for classes, locations of campuses, class modality, and offering what students need to transition to work. DEI was reflected in this area as well.

Student Responses: What does equitable student success look like at PCC?

Category	Value
Support and Resources	188
Accessibility	158
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Acceptance	132
Learning & Education	66
Motivation, Self-determination, Participation	61
Completion, Ready for Career or Transfer	61
Financial	55
Classes	43

Supporting students through resources Reducing disparities and barriers was key to equitable student success. Respondents highlighted financial support, food pantries, clothing closets, and community connections as critical resources. Advising and tutoring were also important for equitable success.

> "[Equitable Student Success looks like] encouraging students that are doing well in their classes, [as well as] looking at students who are struggling and understanding what factors are contributing to that, be it teaching methods or economic struggles. [PCC should] provide easier resources for those struggling to get by."

ACCESSIBILITY

> "Every student regardless of background, culture, or financial ability can have access to learning and receive support to accommodate whatever obstacles may be affecting them."

Respondents mentioned accessibility as foundational for equitable success, citing ease of enrollment, scholarship applications, low admittance requirements, and flexible class schedules and modalities.
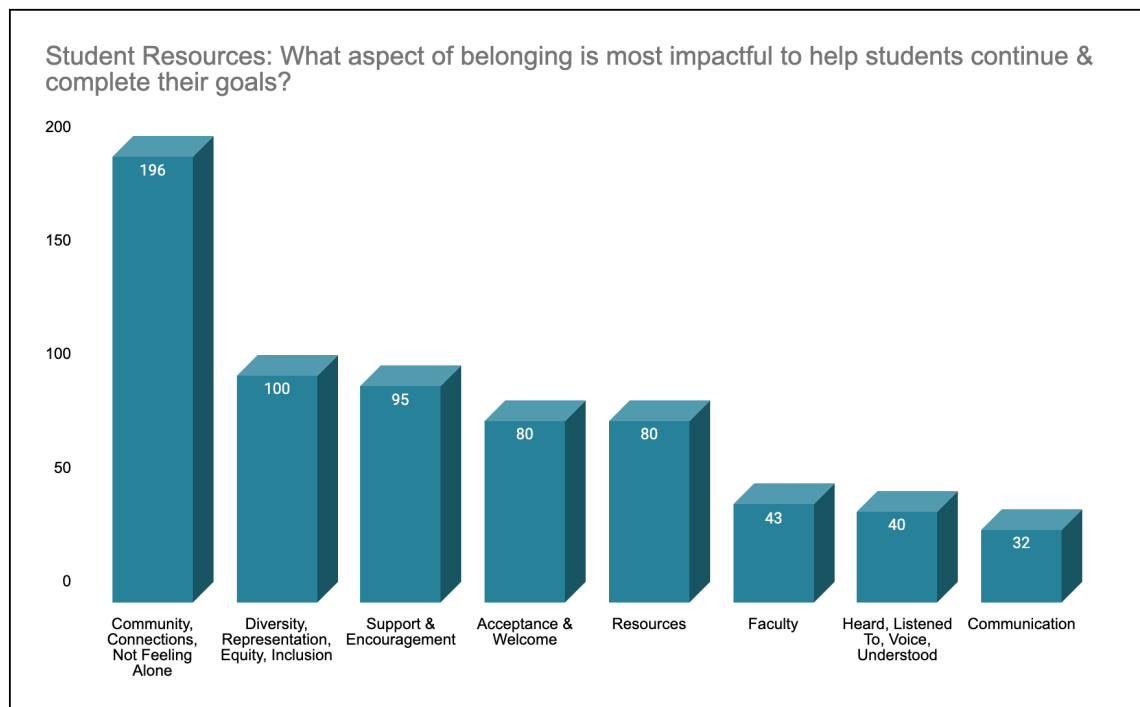
DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI)

> "Equitable student success at PCC means every student has equal access to resources and support, regardless of background. It involves addressing barriers like racial disparities and income inequality to ensure all students can achieve their academic goals."

Equitable success is also based on DEI at PCC. Respondents emphasized having a diverse teaching and staff population, DEI-based curriculum, and inclusive support systems.

> "Provide access to high-quality educational resources, such as well-trained teachers, up-to-date curriculum materials, and modern facilities, regardless of student's location or socioeconomic status. Implement policies and practices that promote inclusivity, diversity, and cultural responsiveness in schools."

Question 4: What aspect of BELONGING is most impactful for student retention and completion?

This question addresses what it means for a student to feel like they belong at PCC. Many students felt that having connections to others and being accepted, welcomed, and included fostered a sense of belonging. They also discussed being supported and encouraged by those around them and connected with resources makes them more likely to feel they can complete their goals at PCC.

Student Resources: What aspect of belonging is most impactful to help students continue & complete their goals?

Category	Value
Community, Connections, Not Feeling Alone	196
Diversity, Representation, Equity, Inclusion	100
Support & Encouragement	95
Acceptance & Welcome	80
Resources	80
Faculty	43
Heard, Listened To, Voice, Understood	40
Communication	32

Community, Connections and Not Feeling Alone Most respondents mentioned community or connections with others, including staff, instructors, community partners, and peers. They felt belonging meant not feeling alone, allowing them to feel supported, accepted, and respected in their learning spaces. They discussed the importance of events and connections made through resource centers and campus events.

"The aspect of belonging that is most impactful in helping students continue and complete their goals is creating a supportive and inclusive community. When students feel like they belong and are valued members of the college community, they are more likely to persist in their studies and reach their goals. This sense of belonging can be fostered through initiatives such as mentorship programs, affinity groups, and inclusive policies and practices. By creating a welcoming and supportive environment, colleges can help students overcome challenges and stay motivated to achieve their goals."

SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT

"[The most impactful aspects are] personable check-ins by teachers, admins, and peers, [as well as] genuine engagement and interpersonal encouragement."

Respondents felt support and encouragement from faculty and staff were crucial for belonging, advisors and reception staff, to librarians and instructors. Engaging pedagogy and class interaction from instructors, as well as personalized support, were emphasized.

> "Students feeling like they belong within their classes [means] teachers engaging with them in a positive way and offering help, if needed. This will show students that they aren't just a "filler-in" student and that their success matters."

Acceptance, Welcoming, and Inclusion PCC's accepting, welcoming, and inclusive culture supported students' feelings of belonging. Resource centers and support for diverse student groups were essential for inclusion.

> "When it comes to helping students continue and complete their goals, a sense of belonging is crucial. Feeling connected to the college community, having supportive relationships with peers and faculty, and being part of a welcoming and inclusive environment can greatly impact student success. It creates a supportive network that encourages students to persist and achieve their goals."

Question 5: When you think of the next 3 - 5 years at PCC, what do you believe are the three utmost challenges, opportunities, and priorities?

> "[The biggest challenges, opportunities, and priorities] are rising tuition costs, not enough in-person classes being offered, [and] not enough diversity in faculty."

As respondents look forward to the next three to five years at PCC, they identified challenges, opportunities, and priorities. These include financial struggles, student aid, class options and program growth, stability, and meeting job market needs.

Student Responses: When you think of the next 3 - 5 years at PCC, what do you believe are the three utmost challenges, opportunities, and priorities?
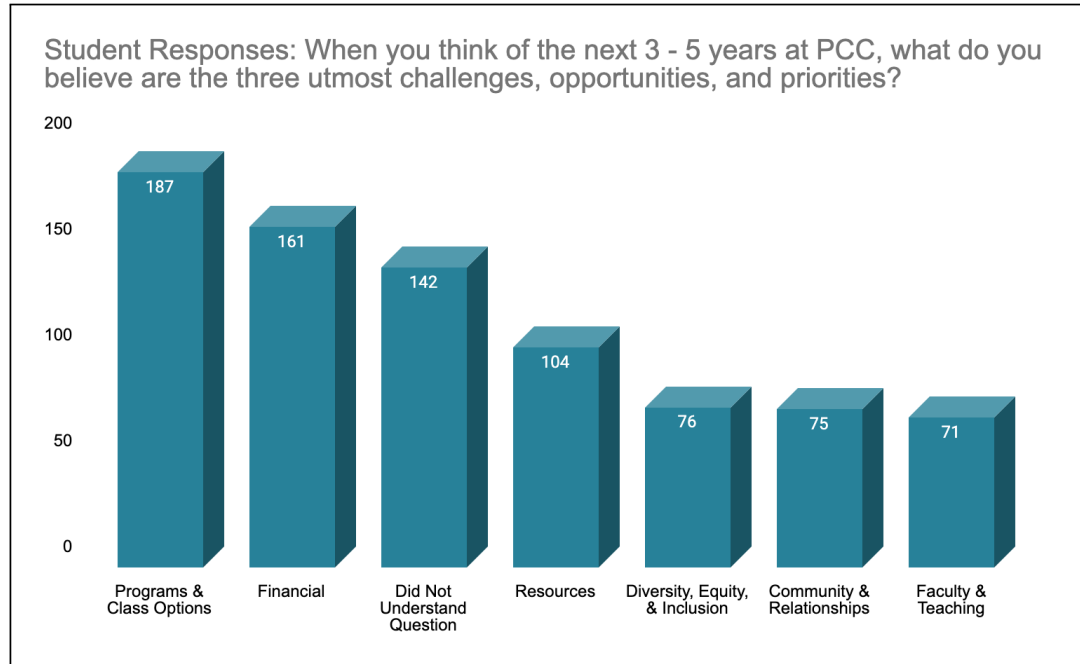
Workforce Connections and Class Modalities Respondents highlighted the importance of building real-life school-to-job connections through job fairs, internships, and community partnerships.

> "Partnerships with Industry: Collaborating with local businesses and industries can provide students with valuable hands-on experience and improve job placement rates."

The most spoken about concept was expanding either online and/or in-person classes, depending on the respondent, to support enrollment, success, accessibility, and completion for non-traditional students. Respondents mentioned that their employment can keep them from finding classes that work for their schedule. Many suggested that they would like more options of in-person classes in the late afternoon and evening so that they could access them around their schedules, as well as more online options.

> "[O]ffering enough online courses that aren't tailored to a narrow time frame within the week, so that working people can complete courses."

> "Return to campus and onsite engagement, consider offering courses as hybrid options. [...] Hosting events that will bring students from multiple principles to establish some on-campus culture. It feels like an institution-al ghost town most visits."

FINANCIAL STRUGGLES, AID, AND STABILITY

Respondents mentioned challenges related to the cost of attending college, tuition rising with inflation, and financial accessibility. Several students shared:

"PCC faces challenges as new technologies emerge amidst rising inflation and escalating costs. Ensuring equitable access to digital resources (required/ non-required books to help with self-tutoring in particular) amid the digital divide and addressing financial strain on low-income students are very important. [...] Additionally, addressing computer-related/financial stresses among students is a relevant focus that has been overlooked in the past and is something many of my peers (myself included) have openly expressed. Strategic investments in networking event-planning, financial aid, digital inclusion, and faculty development are central to effectively tackling these challenges."

"Challenges & priorities are overwhelmingly economic and on a granular level to boot: economic stability is eroding one student/student's family at a time and from the community in general. PCC is a de facto human services provider as it is, and the coming years provide an opportunity for PCC to further its reach into the community and help more people."

"Continuing to address student and teacher financial and educational needs. And I think that staying at the forefront of a changing financial and social frontier is a challenge, opportunity, and priority all at once."

Respondents highlighted the strength of PCC's resources and support programs. They suggested expanding childcare, financial aid, day-to-day support, and resources to meet changing economic and social needs.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Community Respondents emphasized the need for continued focus on DEI, accessibility, and community building. Lack of diversity in faculty and staff, and representation on campus for certain populations was mentioned. They suggested more events, safe spaces, and community connections to enhance campus vibrancy and inclusion.

TECHNOLOGY

Some respondents highlighted the need for the college to respond to the changing technological landscape, while being mindful of how these costs impact students:

"Balancing technological advancements with affordability and supporting digital literacy is essential, especially in regards to updating online teaching methods for maintaining student engagement, particularly in remote classes that require significant screen time."
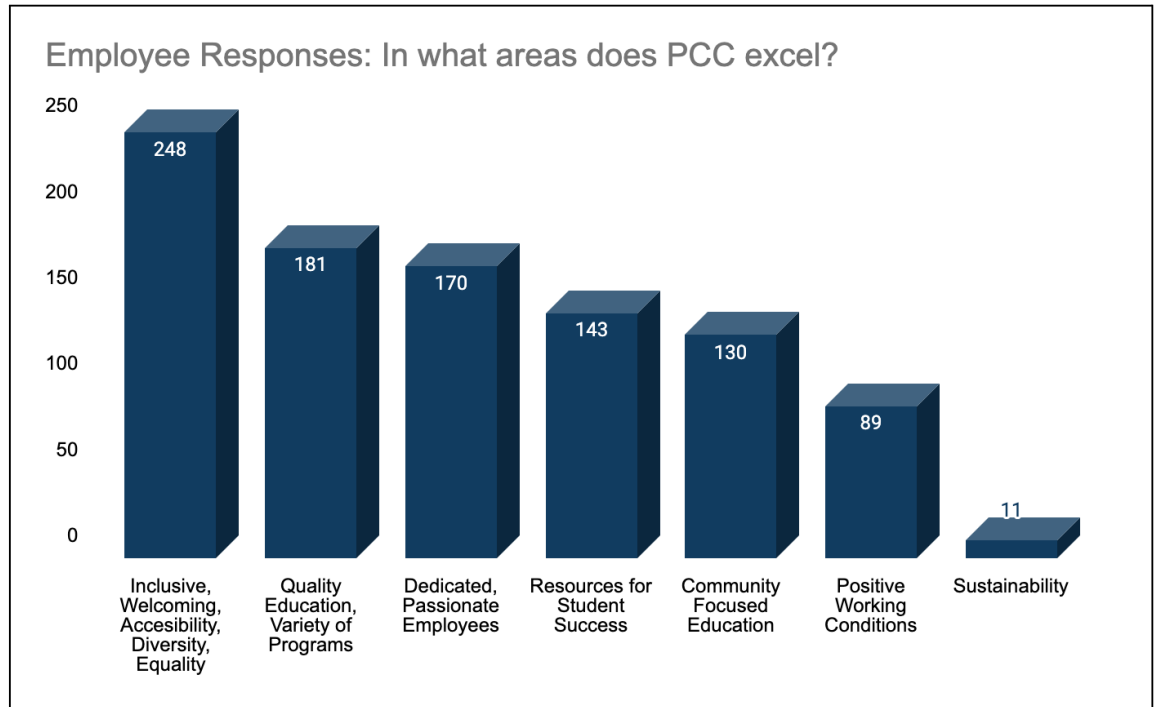
"One of the foremost challenges is the need to adapt to the evolving landscape of higher education, particularly in integrating technology and online learning to enhance accessibility and engagement. This encompasses enhancing student services from mental health support to financial aid, ensuring that all students have the resources they need to succeed."

PART TWO: RESULTS OF IN-PERSON & ONLINE EMPLOYEE RESPONSES

Question 1: **In what areas does Portland Community College excel?**

Study participants reported several key areas where they believe PCC is excelling. Respondents believe that PCC is inclusive and accessible, has dedicated and passionate employees, is community-focused, provides resources for student success, and is a positive work environment. Additionally, PCC provides quality education with a wide range of programs and supports sustainability. Some shared what they felt PCC was not doing well in response to this question.

Employee Responses: In what areas does PCC excel?

Category	Responses
Inclusive, Welcoming, Accessibility, Diversity, Equality	248
Quality Education, Variety of Programs	181
Dedicated, Passionate Employees	170
Resources for Student Success	143
Community Focused Education	130
Positive Working Conditions	89
Sustainability	11

46 Respondents replied 'PCC is not doing well'. See page 26 for more information

Inclusive & Accessible Respondents expressed that PCC is a welcoming and accessible college that values diversity. It is a place where students face low barriers to register, and is affordable compared to other options. Respondents appreciated having multiple locations that are geographically accessible, and noted how important it is that PCC offers courses in multiple modalities to reach the needs of students. One respondent succinctly summarizes this by explaining that PCC is "inclusive for all genders, ages, and learning styles."

Dedicated Passionate Employees Respondents also believe that PCC has dedicated and passionate employees.

> "Our people, the faculty and staff, many have specifically chosen to be here rather than another institution because of a belief in our mission of accessibility or like me the belief that we can participate in change for the greater good."

Community-Focused Portland Community College has a strong focus on the local community. Respondents believe that PCC builds and maintains strong community partnerships and adapts to the needs of the local community. PCC has a recognizable and respected brand within the community. Because of this, outreach and marketing are successful within the local community.

Resources for Student Success Many students at PCC face barriers to attending and graduating from college. One place PCC excels is in offering resources to students and helping students overcome these barriers to college success. From academic support and tutoring in writing to counseling and career services, PCC wants to help students do well in the classroom and beyond. Additionally, PCC provides help for students who struggle with food insecurity, housing, childcare, and addiction. PCC has an environment that is focused on students. As one person explained:

> "PCC demonstrates a profound commitment to the well-being of the PCC community by providing students with internal resources such as childcare support, external referrals, and scholarships. The college offers affordable academic support to help students excel in their studies, access resources within the college, and establish external connections. Dedication to student success is evident in a proactive approach to understanding and meeting the needs of individual students."
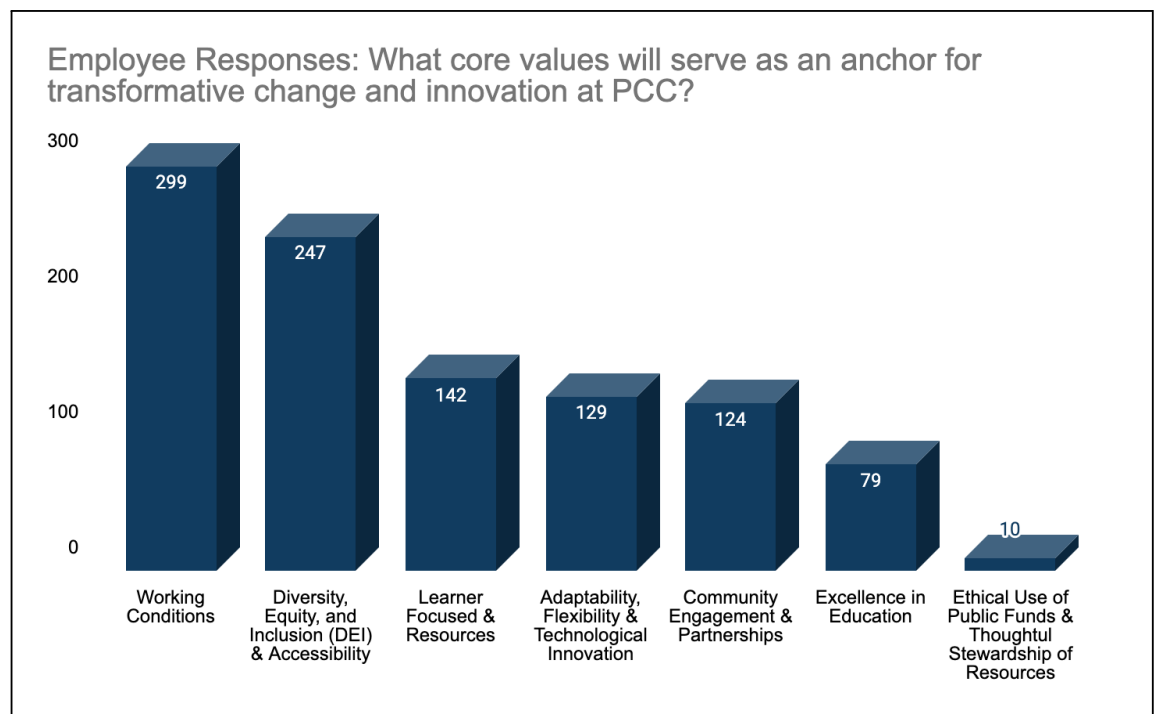
Quality Education With A Variety Of Programs Portland Community college provides students with a quality education in a variety of program areas. Respondents feel that Guided Pathways are a useful resource for student success, and appreciate that PCC keeps the class sizes small so students can receive individualized help. Strong trade programs, CTE, and tech programs are just a few examples of areas where PCC is growing to meet the needs of students and the community.

Positive Working Environment & Supports Sustainability In addition to being a good place for students, PCC provides a positive working experience for many employees. PCC employees are pleased with flexibility, benefits (including healthcare), and a sense of community. PCC employees appreciate the strong union organization, a sense of teamwork, and good relationships with co-workers. Additionally, PCC has clean, safe, and well-maintained campuses. Respondents feel that it is important to work in an organization that supports sustainability and cares about the environment.

Not Excelling Not all respondents feel that PCC is excelling, and used the strategic planning survey to express concern with the direction of the college, PCC leadership, the One College Reorganization, and other specific issues. Further information about these concerns is detailed in the Appendix: Tactical/Operational Feedback.

Question 2: What core values will serve as an anchor for transformative change and innovation at PCC?

Respondents listed several core values that they believe will serve as an anchor for both transformative change and innovation at PCC. Several themes emerged indicating the values respondents perceive as the most essential for future change and innovation. These include adaptability and thoughtful stewardship, inclusion, and excellence in education through a focus on students. Additionally, respondents cite concerns and suggest changes to improve employee morale and student services.

Employee Responses: What core values will serve as an anchor for transformative change and innovation at PCC?

Category	Value
Working Conditions	299
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) & Accessibility	247
Learner Focused & Resources	142
Adaptability, Flexibility & Technological Innovation	129
Community Engagement & Partnerships	124
Excellence in Education	79
Ethical Use of Public Funds & Thoughtful Stewardship of Resources	10

Adaptability & Thoughtful Stewardship in Innovation Respondents value adaptability and flexibility; these will help PCC to be resilient and adapt to the needs of changing industries. Respondents value community partnerships engaging with community members. This includes adapting programs and services to meet the needs of the communities PCC serves. Adaptability also includes adopting sustainable practices and environmentalism as core values. Thoughtful stewardship of resources and ethical use of funds should guide decisions for change and innovation.
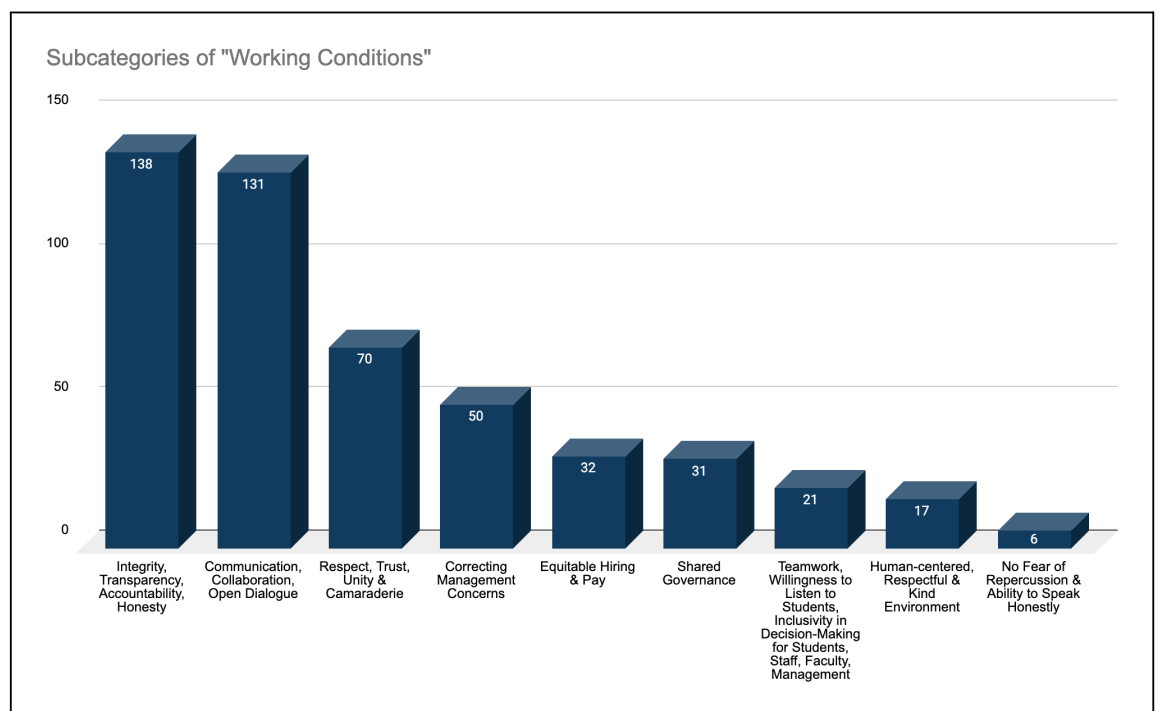
Inclusion Innovation should be affordable, accessible for students, and support diversity. Students from diverse communities and backgrounds should

feel safe and welcome. Many respondents feel that PCC values diversity and inclusion. As one respondent explained, here at PCC, "Diversity, equity, and inclusion are lived values for both students and faculty/staff—not just buzzwords."

Excellence in Education through Student-Focused Innovations Providing students with access to high-quality education is essential. This includes providing students with access to professionals who are proficient in their subject areas, providing employees with training on students with diverse needs as well as professional development opportunities. PCC should offer flexible modalities for both students and employees. Change and innovation should be student-focused and provide quality education.

Desire For Positive Work Environment Respondents value a positive work environment to better serve students, but some employees report being dissatisfied with the current working environment. Respondents feel that it is essential for PCC to have a "human-centered," respectful, and kind environment. They feel that integrity, transparency, accountability, and honesty are essential values that will improve PCC. They would like to have a work environment built on trust, unity, and camaraderie.
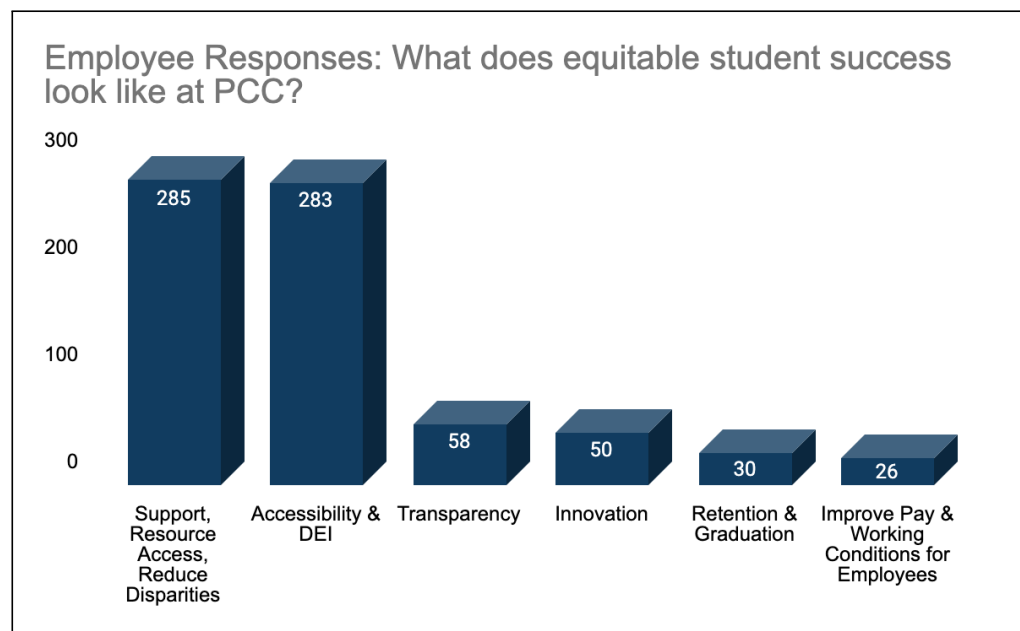
The following (Figure 5) chart shows how the category "working conditions" was broken down in this question.

Subcategories of "Working Conditions"

Integrity, Transparency, Accountability, Honesty	138
Communication, Collaboration, Open Dialogue	131
Respect, Trust, Unity & Camaraderie	70
Correcting Management Concerns	50
Equitable Hiring & Pay	32
Shared Governance	31
Teamwork, Willingness to Listen to Students, Inclusivity in Decision-Making for Students, Staff, Faculty, Management	21
Human-centered, Respectful & Kind Environment	17
No Fear of Repercussion & Ability to Speak Honestly	6

Question 3: What does equitable student success look like at PCC?

Respondents talk about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) throughout the responses to questions in this survey. DEI is something PCC values and strives to implement in working with students and faculty. In this question, respondents were asked to focus on equity to describe how that looks for students at PCC. Responses fall into several themes. Some respondents explain their definitions of equity, while others mention innovation as part of equity. Many respondents talk about reducing disparities and breaking down barriers. Respondents cite the importance of modeling equity in how employees are treated.

Further information about specific suggestions respondents made are detailed in the Appendix: Tactical/Operational Feedback.

Employee Responses: What does equitable student success look like at PCC?

Category	Value
Support, Resource Access, Reduce Disparities	285
Accessibility & DEI	283
Transparency	58
Innovation	50
Retention & Graduation	30
Improve Pay & Working Conditions for Employees	26

Defining "Equity" in Equitable Student Success Student equity includes many factors. For equity to exist, students need to feel like they belong. They should see themselves represented among a diverse faculty; One respondent explained:

> "The base requirement for this is an environment that respects our students. Rather than trying to mold our students to an agenda or dominant perspective or identity, we should strive to empower them as the unique people they are."

When education is equitable, students feel like they can reach their goals. Registration and onboarding should feel equitable, with access to language and cultural resources. Finally, students should feel physically and emotionally safe on the campuses.

Innovation in Equitable Student Success Equitable student success means that students have high quality education, as well as access to the technologies and educational resources they need to thrive. The college should keep up with new technologies to prepare students for careers.

> "[One of PCC's challenges is] keeping up with changes and developments in technology with campus technology, access to new technologies for students, and how those technologies are reflected in curriculum."

Reducing Disparities for Equitable Student Success An essential part of equity is recognizing educational barriers students face. For equitable educational success, students need access to advising, affordable education, universal course design, clear expectations, and Guided Pathways. Access to certificate programs, skill programs, and internships can also improve equity at PCC.

Students may face barriers because they lack food, housing, childcare, or clothing resources. Equitable student success will consider these factors and provide resources for students struggling in these areas. If students are in crisis, immediate needs should be addressed so that the students can move forward. For this to happen, employees need to know about services that exist so they can point students toward the resources that will most help them. One respondent expressed:
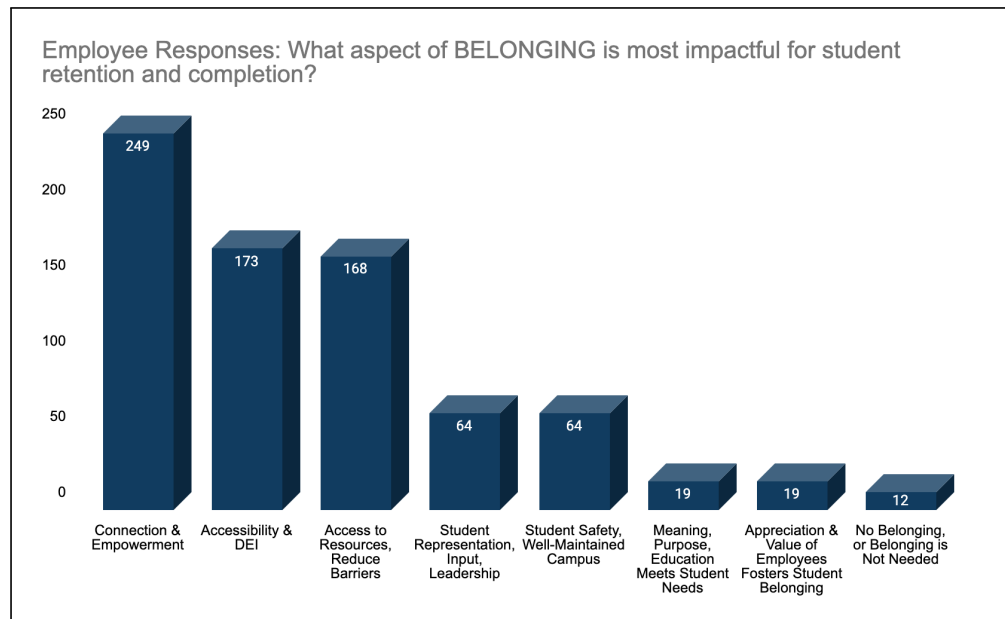
> "PCC has so many support services for students—do students know they are there? Are faculty members and advisors able to appropriately refer students when needed? Can there be more ongoing effort to highlight these services throughout the year? [...] Student success and retention are imperative and figuring out how to address success shortages will help make improvements for future students [...] I think early college programs do a good job of meeting the needs of students who come from underrepresented backgrounds [...] All faculty may not be aware of the plethora of services for students, it may be helpful to train faculty and advisors on all the different support programs so they can more effectively refer students who have a challenge to address."

"I think that transparency and widespread, accessible communication regarding resources PCC has to offer a variety of students from different life situations is very important."

PCC can ensure that learner-centered flexibility is reflected in policies and practices to meet these students' needs; success can be measured in PCC's retention and graduation rates. Examining the students who are not successful in their goals may help PCC to identify areas of inequity.

Question 4: What aspect of BELONGING is most impactful for student retention and completion?

This question addresses the basics of "belonging" and what it means for a student to feel like they belong at PCC. Belonging can be reflected in student enrollment and program completion. Respondents report that for student retention and belonging, DEI and accessibility is essential. Others believe that a student is more likely to feel they belong when their needs are met through resources. Feeling safe, connected to the community, and empowered can help students feel that they belong. Finally, respondents expressed that showing the value and appreciation of staff can foster student belonging.

Employee Responses: What aspect of BELONGING is most impactful for student retention and completion?

Category	Responses
Connection & Empowerment	249
Accessibility & DEI	173
Access to Resources, Reduce Barriers	168
Student Representation, Input, Leadership	64
Student Safety, Well-Maintained Campus	64
Meaning, Purpose, Education Meets Student Needs	19
Appreciation & Value of Employees Fosters Student Belonging	19
No Belonging, or Belonging is Not Needed	12

DEI and Accessibility Students feel like they belong when the college values diversity, inclusion, equity, and accessibility. While some respondents feel that

PCC is doing well in this area, others have specific suggestions on how PCC can improve, noted in the Appendix. Some respondents wrote:

> "[Most impactful is that] each student is respected no matter their origin or identities—actually to be valued for diversity."

> "Accessibility. You cannot complete a goal if the barriers in access are insurmountable."

> "True belonging happens in the classroom, [on a] nuts and bolts level. The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion offered early on in the pandemic was helpful, but it can only be a start, not an end. And again, true belonging also focuses on class issues, not only on race."

MEETING ALL STUDENTS WHERE THEY ARE

Respondents explain that students will feel like they belong (and will be more likely to complete programs), when staff and faculty are willing to work with students where they are at. As part of this, students seeking non-credit or professional-development opportunities should also have a sense of belonging.

Safety, Connection & Empowerment When students feel safe and connected to other people, they feel like they belong. A sense of safety can be created by having physical spaces on campus that are clean and well-maintained.

Feeling connected can empower students and help them build connections with other students and with staff. One respondent explained:

> "Increasing peer support and mentoring at PCC will enhance students' feeling of belonging as they build meaningful and nurturing relationships with classmates and instructors." Another wrote, "When students have positive educational experiences with professors and classmates, they are more likely to continue their education when things get tough."
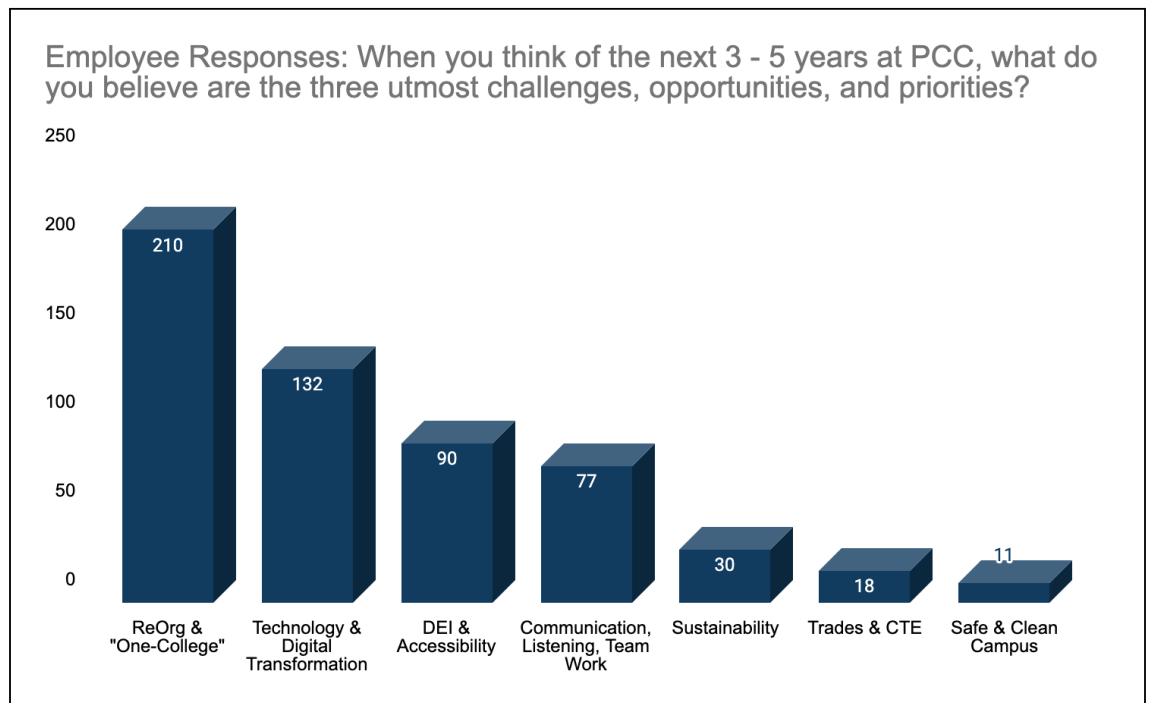
Value & Appreciation of Staff Fosters Student Belonging Respondents also report that it is necessary for employees to feel valued and appreciated. When employees have a sense of belonging at PCC, they are able to foster a sense of belonging for students. One respondent explains:

"To have impactful student retention, address staff and faculty retention and attract resources, in all modalities."

This sense of community can be achieved when both students and staff feel that they are valued and appreciated.

Question 5: When you think of the next 3 - 5 years at PCC, what do you believe are the three utmost challenges, opportunities, and priorities?

As respondents look forward to the next three to five years at PCC, there are a variety of opinions on what the challenges, opportunities, and priorities are. Most respondents do not specifically delineate among challenges, opportunities, and priorities in an organized way, but lumped them together within the responses. With this in mind, the issues that came up the most often for the college to address in the next few years fall into the categories of the "one college" reorganization, retention & recruitment, digital transformation, diversity, and sustainability.

Employee Responses: When you think of the next 3 - 5 years at PCC, what do you believe are the three utmost challenges, opportunities, and priorities?

Category	Value
ReOrg & "One-College"	210
Technology & Digital Transformation	132
DEI & Accessibility	90
Communication, Listening, Team Work	77
Sustainability	30
Trades & CTE	18
Safe & Clean Campus	11

The "One College" Reorganization Respondents have many concerns related to the reorganization of the college and their feelings of disconnect between administration and student-facing employees. Many respondents

express desire for greater administrative support and employee engagement. Several employees provided examples of these concerns:

> "We need campus-based leadership that can support faculty and staff on the ground [...] Power has been over-centralized, college leaders are too busy to be able to respond to everything, so we need more distributed power—not more managers, but more empowerment of existing leaders and clear communication and reporting pathways that allow us to work across academic affairs and operations to serve students and the community."

> "We just went through the dramatic changes of the pandemic while entirely structurally reorganizing. Of course, we are still struggling. Let's own it and work together to try to fix it [...] I am truly hopeful that we can start figuring out how this new structure will work better to support students, but if we aren't thinking about this as a post-reorg strategic plan that needs to be communicated often and clearly to every single person who works at this college, then I think we're going about it the wrong way [...] I've heard some managers say that their employees are just angry because the budgets are tight and the managers have to say no. That's not it at all. It's about needing more clear communication. If you are able to tell someone WHY you're saying no, that goes a very long way towards them understanding, respecting and being willing to support the decisions you have made."

A lack of appreciation or understanding of the value of employees is cited as one reason behind low employee morale. Actively involving staff and faculty in decision making is seen by respondents as a viable long-term solution to address these problems of top-heavy organizations, lack of trust, and lack of transparency. These sentiments are summarized in the following response:

> "Shared governance - You don't have to do this alone. We can all work together to figure out solutions to some of these challenges. In fact, if we work together on everything, you are much more likely [to] have buy-in from staff and faculty. If we work together and communicate together, managers can rely on their staff to help communicate with each other."

Respondents believe that in order for PCC to improve, administrators need to enhance and provide more opportunities for cooperation, teamwork, active listening, robust communication and engagement.

Retention, Recruitment & Course Modality Respondents are concerned about recruitment of new students and retention of current students now and in the future. Having a learner-centered approach to education (with access to resources for struggling students) is seen as essential for retention and recruitment. Respondents also believe it is important to have Guided Pathways that meet the needs of both the community and of the students.

Respondents express mixed opinions of how to retain and recruit students, suggesting a range of online, hybrid, and return-to-campus suggestions. This is summarized with the following quotes:

> "We are at this wonderful interchange where we are set up for complete online degrees and support. I hope we do not backtrack and force students or faculty to return fully to campus, which costs them all more money and time, with gas, childcare & time off work."

> "Modernizing the curriculum and classroom facilities for student needs in the 21st century. We need classrooms that can optimize accessibility by allowing students to attend remotely or f2f simultaneously. Meet students where they are, not where we wish they were."

> "[A challenge is] how to get students to be on campus physically, physical campus engagement, and how to transition into a hybrid format for the future."

Digital Transformation & Technology Respondents are concerned about education in the digital age. With artificial intelligence (AI) and other technological changes, academic integrity is seen as an issue. PCC also has the challenge of keeping education both relevant and innovative. One respondent shared:

> "Academic integrity is rapidly going out the window with generative AI being used by a sizable number of students—how are faculty supposed to respond? We need clearer policies and better resources for managing this incredibly frustrating issue as more and more students keep using this tech for dishonest purposes (not more "optional training" either [...] we need college-wide or at least pathway-wide solutions and we needed them yesterday). Please note that this isn't to say that most or even 50% of students ARE doing this [...] but enough of them are to make me question why I'm spending dozens of hours each week grading output

that some students definitely didn't create on their own [...]. PCC desperately needs to invest more in better technology. Whether it's Turnitin (PLEASE!!!!!!), classroom tech equipment that isn't from the Stone Age, more reliable wi-fi, functional laptops for faculty who request them."

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility Respondents want to see PCC continue to focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the coming years. This can be done in many ways, but some respondents believe it should include trauma-informed practices and should "support neurodivergent students in meaningful ways with adaptive instructional methods and modalities." Continuing to provide training opportunities and professional development for employees can help PCC continue to work toward the goal of supporting DEI and accessibility.

Sustainability Respondents are concerned with climate change, with climate refugees, and with needs the college will face in changes to infrastructure as we have more extreme weather in the future. Changes at PCC should prioritize sustainable practices that are healthy for the environment.

CONCLUSION

Despite the identified limitations, this report contains a depth of rich, thoughtful, and constructive feedback about the values, programs, and opportunities for improvement at PCC. It is important as we go through the next phases of the Strategic Planning process, and embark on a comprehensive integrated planning process in the coming year, that we also attend to issues of sustainability, long-term viability, and the financial health of the college.

APPENDIX: TACTICAL/OPERATIONAL FEEDBACK

This section captures the essential operational and tactical feedback gathered during the Strategic Planning feedback session. Many of these specific suggestions—including on the overall direction of the college, PCC leadership, the One College Reorganization, and other specific issues—will be considered from a more tactical and operational perspective. While some of these tactical/operational suggestions may contribute to the longer term district-wide strategy and will be included in the Strategic Plan, some specific practical actions and interventions may be taken more immediately or may already be underway. For many of these suggested interventions, feedback will be referred to the respective divisions or departments for action and consideration, any may also be incorporated into higher-level strategic themes. ***Administrative responses and referrals to Division or Department leads are highlighted in BOLD.***

In this section, we present a series of suggestions respondents made aimed at enhancing the college's overall effectiveness. Student support and engagement were key themes, such as a call for trauma-informed training for employees and faculty. Accurate placement of students in reading and math classes to ensure equitable success was also raised. Participants stressed the importance of implementing equitable grading practices and providing access to tutoring and digital literacy training. Ensuring non-credit students and instructors receive equal treatment is another priority. Enhancing student engagement through clubs, identity centers, and vibrant physical spaces on campus was highlighted as necessary for fostering a sense of belonging.

Issues of college-wide training are often addressed through People Strategy, Equity, and Culture, often in collaboration between Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, or other departments. College-wide training in trauma-informed practices could rise to the level of a strategic initiative. More specific training, on something such as grading practices, would more likely be addressed through the Centers for Teaching and Learning Excellence,

in Academic Affairs. Enhancing student engagement through clubs is in the area of responsibility of Student Affairs. These recommendations have been referred to appropriate departments.

There were varied opinions on the best educational modalities and accessibility. While some advocated for bringing students back to campus to create a vibrant community, others emphasized the need for flexible modalities to accommodate nontraditional students. Both groups recognized the necessity of physical gathering spaces to foster a sense of belonging.

Inclusivity and accessibility were identified as critical, with participants calling for the extension of inclusion to staff requiring captioning and accessibility in training, meetings, and professional development. More community activities for distance learners, extended hours for tutoring, libraries, and gyms, and enhanced financial support and services for distance learners were requested. Investing in relevant technologies was also suggested.

These issues are all within the scope of responsibilities of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and/or People Strategy, Equity, and Culture and could rise to the level of strategic initiatives. They have also been referred to appropriate departments for more immediate consideration.

Financial support and affordability were recurring themes, with participants prioritizing funding for scholarships and affordable education. Expanding free and affordable textbooks and materials was also emphasized.

Keeping tuition and fees affordable is a stated priority of PCC's Board of Directors. The college is pursuing the goal of textbook affordability through its Textbook Affordability Plan and will continue to fund development of OERs.

Retention and recruitment strategies included marketing and forming partnerships with community employers and local high schools. Participants highlighted the importance of a robust advising staff and adequate faculty to support struggling students.

These issues are within the scope of responsibilities of College Relations, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Marketing. They are addressed in the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan.

The feedback highlights the importance of shared governance and inclusion in decisions about innovation and change at PCC. Participants emphasized the need for better collaboration between administration and staff/faculty and expressed concerns about the disconnect and mistrust between faculty, staff, and administration. There is a strong desire for administration to work more closely with unions and other representative bodies.

The President is working closely and collaboratively with a cross-section of PCC faculty and staff, including EAC leadership, to develop a policy governance framework through the work of the Policy Governance, Administration Task Force (PGAT). This PGAT process is an early example of collaborative work. As the PGAT implementation team moves forward in the next year, it will showcase the foundations this taskforce has created and actively communicate how the PCC community will be involved in developing new policy-development structures. In addition, the College President will be leading a process in the coming year to review, document, and enhance governance processes across PCC.

Equitable hiring practices and competitive wages were identified as critical areas. Concerns were raised over perceived disparities in pay between administrators and other employees, with suggestions to reduce administrative positions in favor of more student-facing roles.

The College is engaged in a college-wide review of job classifications and compensation, with recommendations to be available in the coming months. The College, with coordination and support of PSEC, will share these recommendations with the entire College community in addition to FFAP and FCE leadership.

The need for open dialogue and better communication channels across all levels was frequently mentioned. Many participants felt that managers and administrators lack a clear understanding of departmental concerns, leading

to a sense of disconnect and a perception of corporatization within the college. Concerns were raised about the loss of collaboration and focus on student-centered goals. Participants expressed a desire to clarify communications around initiatives like Guided Pathways and called for greater transparency and achievable, time-sensitive goals.

A new internal communications strategy is being developed by our new Chief Communications Officer, Khylie Gardner. This plan involves frequent updates and clear, consistent messaging to keep all stakeholders informed and engaged. By building a culture of openness and trust, the initiative seeks to strengthen connections within the college community and beyond.

Suggestions were made for improving campus facilities, such as food services and shuttles between campuses.

Facilities Maintenance Services has been made aware of the suggestions for more responsiveness to reports of facility concerns. Transportation and Parking has heard the call for greater shuttle service. Food Services has been made aware of the suggestions for improved and expanded food services. Responding to this feedback will be the responsibility of PCC's reconfigured Operations Team and newly formed Operations Council.

There were mixed opinions on the effectiveness of in-person versus remote class offerings, but the consensus was on the need for universal scheduling that prioritizes student needs. Some PCC employees may not yet be aware of the work in this area.

PCC has aspired for years to create a course scheduling model that holistically helps students plan and to integrate data and analysis into the course schedule decision making process. A Strategic Course Scheduling Design Team was formed and charged in Fall of 2023 with establishing and presenting a set of recommendations around structure and processes necessary to develop a robust proactive annual schedule and a student-centered, data-informed schedule planning system.

The Design Team convened from December 2023 through the Spring 2024 term to produce recommendations are divided into three separate, but related (and sometimes dependent) projects:

> » *Improving the Business Workflow in the Scheduling Process*

> » *Optimizing the Ad Astra MAP data & technology*

> » *Annualizing the Course Schedule*

These recommendations have been approved and are scheduled to be implemented in phases between 2024 and 2027. More specifics about these recommendations can be found in the Strategic Course Scheduling Recommendations document.

Survey respondents were given an opportunity to express anything else they wanted the college to know. In this section, many explain their concerns with management and reorganization, or identify needed supports for students and employees. Concerns about administration and the reorganization prevailed in this area.

Some respondents want to see accountability, specifically in changes related to DEI and accessibility. Some respondents feel that there is a campaign toward inclusion, but no real measurable actions. One respondent wrote:

"People of color [have expressed] a fervent desire for genuine inclusion and a meaningful 'seat at the table.' Managers' dismissive response—'this is your table'—reeks of insincerity and tokenism. It not only trivializes the structural barriers and systemic injustices faced by marginalized communities but also underscores the managers' complicity in perpetuating the status quo. Their failure to acknowledge and address these entrenched inequities further underscores their culpability in upholding a system that prioritizes their comfort and privilege at the expense of frontline workers' dignity and agency."

Participants expressed a need for inclusion in governance and decision-making processes, a reduction in the use of outside consulting, and greater transparency and collaboration.

PCC recognizes equity as a paramount issue. The administration acknowledges that the implementation of the Equity Plan identified in our 2020-2025 Strategic Plan was delayed due to internal reorganization and staffing changes. Despite these setbacks, we are committed to a comprehensive, college-wide equity plan to tackle entrenched inequities and systemic barriers. In the coming year, the President has prioritized the development of an Equity Framework for the College. This framework will: (1) define what equity means at PCC, (2) establish the guiding principles for equity at PCC, and (3) define an equity centered approach in decision making, policies, and procedures. Our college community is committed to identifying and dismantling entrenched systems of oppression, and we hope all members of the PCC community, especially those representing historically marginalized communities, will continue to advocate and join us in these crucial efforts.