



March 2, 2023

**TO:** THE DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF VALENCIA COLLEGE

**FROM:** DR. KATHLEEN PLINSKE  
President

**RE:** REPLACEMENT OF WORD “EQUITY” IN STRATEGIC IMPACT PLAN

The Valencia College District Board of Trustees approved Valencia College’s 2030 Strategic Impact Plan at its December 16, 2020, Regular Meeting. The four major goal areas in the plan are related to College Access, Graduation, Transfer Success, and Career Credentials.

The plan was described as a way for the College to “hold itself accountable for achieving equity at a level not yet reached by other open access institutions.” Further, we indicated that we would measure our success in meeting the goals through an additional cross-cutting lens of “Advancing Equity.”

In recent months, “equity” has become a charged term. It has been suggested that “equity” may signal efforts to lower standards and limit academic freedom and free expression. To more clearly and precisely express our work related to improving our students’ learning and outcomes, it is advisable to update the language used in our 2030 Strategic Impact Plan to replace the term “equity.”

Valencia College has long held the Big Idea that “Anyone can learn anything, under the right conditions.” Our work has been grounded in efforts to identify and to create the conditions that each one of our students needs to be successful in their learning while holding all of our students to the same high standards of excellence.

Since the use of the word “equity” may allow room for misinterpretation of our goals and commitments to mean lowering standards for students, we propose to replace “Advancing Equity” with: “Creating the Right Conditions” — language that underscores our Big Idea.

Although our language may change, our commitment to our community and to our students and their learning has not and will not change.


Through the goals outlined in the 2030 Strategic Impact Plan, and by identifying and creating the conditions that each student needs to be successful in their learning, Valencia College will continue to work to be the first community college in the country that does not see disparities when we disaggregate our data, **while holding each and every one of our students to the same high standard of excellence.**

The four major goal areas included in the plan are:

- **College Access** – Valencia College will work with community partners to ensure that, by 2030, 80% of Orange and Osceola County high school graduates of each race and ethnicity will attend a post-secondary institution – including vocational or technical school, college or university – in the year following high school graduation.
- **Graduation** – By 2030, the five-year graduation rates for degree-seeking students of each race and ethnicity will exceed 50%, so that more than half of all degree-seeking students of each race and ethnicity who enroll at Valencia College in the 2025-26 academic year will complete an associate degree from Valencia by summer of 2030.
- **Transfer Success** – By 2030, 65% of students of each race and ethnicity who earn an A.A. or A.S. degree from Valencia College and enroll in a baccalaureate degree program at the University of Central Florida or Valencia College will earn their bachelor’s degree within four years of starting a baccalaureate degree program.
- **Career Credentials** - By 2030, Valencia College students will earn 12,000 high-quality workforce credentials each year. These credentials will include A.S., B.A.S., and B.S. degree completions, accelerated skills training and postsecondary adult vocational certificate (PSAV) completions, and qualifying technical certificate completions. To move toward equity parity in educational attainment and factoring in expected changes in demographics, we would expect at least 50% of these credentials to be awarded to Hispanic students and at least 25% to be awarded to Black students.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The President recommends that the District Board of Trustees of Valencia College approve the replacement of “Advancing Equity” with “Creating the Right Conditions” and the edit to the Career Credential goal in Valencia College’s 2030 Strategic Impact Plan as presented. Further, the President recommends the explicit inclusion of our long-standing commitment to holding all of our students to the same high standards of excellence in our 2030 Strategic Impact Plan materials.

  
President