



Civil Rights Principles for Higher Education

Winter 2018

The Civil Rights Principles for Higher Education were developed collaboratively by the members of the Higher Ed Civil Rights Coalition. That coalition, convened by The Leadership Conference Education Fund and The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, sought to identify fundamental elements of a higher education system that advances equity and protects students' civil rights.

The coalition continues to engage and educate diverse stakeholders and policymakers in pursuit of a higher education system that offers meaningful equal opportunity and success for all of the nation's students, especially those who have been historically marginalized.

PRINCIPLE #1: CIVIL RIGHTS ENFORCEMENT Ensure robust implementation and enforcement of civil rights laws across all postsecondary institutions that accept federal funds and ensure federal funds only go towards institutions that do not discriminate based on race, color, national origin (including religion, language, ethnic characteristics, and immigration status), sex (including pregnancy status, family status, sexual orientation, and gender identity), disability, or age.

PRINCIPLE #2: ACCESS Remove barriers to enrollment and promote meaningful access for historically marginalized students (including students of color, Native students, low-income students, English learners, students with disabilities, adult learners, pregnant and parenting students, opportunity youth, immigrant students, LGBTQ students, homeless students, youth in or exiting foster care, currently incarcerated individuals, and individuals who have had prior contact with the justice system), including by providing for quality educator preparation so that students are prepared for success after K-12, and address barriers in access to a post-secondary education caused by historic and present-day race-based exclusionary policies and practices.



PRINCIPLE #3: PERSISTENCE AND COMPLETION Increase student persistence in and completion of a quality, racially equitable postsecondary education, such that students who enroll will have meaningful access to all aspects of student life and the support they need to succeed. Increase culturally competent wrap around support services such as academic advising, counseling, mental health services, and child and family care services.

PRINCIPLE #4: AFFORDABILITY Make college affordable for low-income students and ensure that federal student aid takes into account the totality of a family's economic circumstances and full college cost, which may include child care, transportation, and housing, and prioritize investments in grant aid first to reduce the disparate student loan debt burden placed on low-income students, first-generation students, women, and students of color.

PRINCIPLE #5: DATA Provide for the collection and reporting of higher education data that is disaggregated, crosstabulated, and broadly available without personally identifiable information and ensure that students and families have meaningful access to figures about programmatic quality, affordability, student borrowing, attendance costs, measures of student success, campus safety and climate, and investigations of the institution regarding fraudulent, abusive, and deceptive practices.

PRINCIPLE #6: ACCOUNTABILITY Design accountability systems to ensure students receive value from their higher education, and not in a way that limits opportunity for or disincentivizes enrollment of low-income students or other students who might face greater barriers to degree completion. Create incentives to improve institutional quality by requiring that a majority of federal financial aid is spent on instruction and student supports and provide additional resources to non-profit and public institutions that serve large shares of low-income and historically marginalized students and that are actively working to provide the supports necessary to improve student outcomes. Ensure accountability is differentiated and takes into account an institution's history, mission, and resources.

PRINCIPLE #7: FOR-PROFITS Exclude for-profit colleges, including covert for-profit colleges masquerading as non-profit, from federal financial aid programs unless they have demonstrated their value to students through increased student earnings and they rely, at least partially, on non-federal sources of funding.



PRINCIPLE #8: BORROWERS Protect student loan borrowers from abusive and fraudulent practices and exploitation in the federal and private student loan servicing and debt collection markets and provide access to accurate and complete information about their loans, access to affordable repayment options, access to administrative loan discharges, and access to legal remedies if they need further relief.

PRINCIPLE #9: CAMPUS CLIMATE Ensure safe and inclusive campus climates free of harassment and violence, including sexual harassment, gender-based harassment and violence, and other forms of harassment and violence based on race, national origin, religion, disability, or any combination thereof, and ensure that campus programs, policies, and practices are inclusive, equitable, fair, and advance the safety and well-being of all students.

PRINCIPLE #10: HBCUs and MSIs Invest in and support institutions that serve high populations of traditionally underrepresented students, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-serving Institutions (ANNHIs), Native American-serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTIs), and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs).

Signed By (as of August 2023):

The Leadership Conference on
Civil and Human Rights
The Leadership Conference
Education Fund
AACTE
AFSCME
American Association of University
Women (AAUW)
American Atheists
American Federation of Teachers
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination
Committee
Anti-Defamation League
The Arc of the United States

Asian Americans Advancing Justice |
AAJC
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance
Association of University Centers on
Disabilities (AUCD)
Augustus F. Hawkins Foundation
Autism Society
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Center for Law and Social Policy
(CLASP)
Center for Responsible Lending
Children's Defense Fund
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Council of Parent Attorneys and
Advocates

Disability Rights Education & Defense
Fund

Education Law Center - PA

The Education Trust

Equal Justice Society

Feminist Majority Foundation

Girls Inc.

GLSEN

Hindu American Foundation

Hip Hop Caucus

Hispanic Federation

Human Rights Campaign

Impact Fund

Institute for Higher Education Policy

Judge David L. Bazelon Center for
Mental Health Law

Lambda Legal

LatinoJustice PRLDEF

Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights
Under Law

Lawyers for Good Governance

League of United Latin American
Citizens (LULAC)

NAACP

NAACP Legal Defense and Educational
Fund, Inc.

National Alliance for Partnerships in
Equity (NAPE)

National Association of Councils on
Developmental Disabilities

National Association of Social Workers
(NASW)

National Bar Association

National Center for Learning Disabilities

National Center for Lesbian Rights

National Center for Transgender
Equality

National Consumer Law Center (on
behalf of its low-income clients)

The National Council of Asian Pacific
Americans (NCAAPA)

National Council of Jewish Women

National Disability Rights Network

National Down Syndrome Congress

National Education Association

National Indian Education Association

National LGBTQ Task Force

National Urban League

National Women's Law Center

New Leaders

OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates

People For the American Way

Poverty & Race Research Action Council

Service Employees International Union
(SEIU)

Southeast Asia Resource Action Center

Southern Poverty Law Center

TASH


The Institute for College Access &
Success

UnidosUS, formerly NCLR

Union for Reform Judaism


Young Invincibles

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