

# **Compton Community College District**

## **Collaborative Governance Review & Recommendations Report**

**Submitted by**

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# INTRODUCTION

In February 2024, Dr. Ding-Jo Currie and Dolores Davison were asked by Compton Community College District Community College District to identify solutions for problems of practice with regards to Board Policy 2510, shared governance practices with the Academic Senate, classified leadership, administration, associated student organization and labor organizations. This report outlines the background, process, findings, and recommendations for Compton Community College District's shared governance process that impact the college's decision making and planning, campus culture, and operations.

The work began in February 2024 to review all the documents pertaining to collaborative governance at Compton Community College District Community College District including board policies and collaborative governance council descriptions. In April and May, six days of interviews and meetings were conducted, and virtual meetings were held. The term "collaborative governance" will be used throughout the report instead of shared governance as this is the terminology that is used in writing describing the shared governance policy and processes of Compton Community College District.

This report has been thoughtfully prepared using a thematic approach, highlighting findings that emerged across our interviews. We have focused on themes that reflect the sentiments of most participants, while excluding comments that were directed at specific individuals or expressed by only one or two people.

To ensure confidentiality, all examples are presented in a generalized context. While this approach safeguards individual identities, it does not dilute the authenticity of the concerns and feedback expressed. We also recognize that some of the content may be challenging to read, as it is intended to candidly reflect the sentiments of those we interviewed. It is important to prepare for potentially unsettling revelations, as the findings genuinely mirror the experiences and emotions shared by the interview participants.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Sylvia Barakat in the President/CEO office for her invaluable support in coordinating our interview schedules and ensuring our needs were met during the interview days. Most importantly, we wish to express our deep appreciation to all of those who took the time to speak with us and share your experiences at Compton Community College District. Their trust and sincerity were integral to this process of discovery, and we are truly grateful.

The following report offers a comprehensive overview, from background, assessment, findings, to recommendations, as presented to all constituencies during the open forum on May 23, 2024. Please note that any contextual or factual changes that have occurred since then are not included. This report was initially submitted to the Office of the

President/CEO on June 27, 2024, for distribution, and was subsequently revised for factual accuracy and clarification in areas such as accreditation history, following a meeting with President/CEO Curry on August 19, 2024.

## **BACKGROUND CONTEXT**

### **Loss of Accreditation Status**

Accreditation status is critically important to a college, serving as a benchmark for quality standards of instructions, services, and governance. Having accreditation revoked is not merely an administrative setback; it signifies profound deficiencies within the institution and can be devastating for both the internal and external college community, especially the students. When a college is stripped of its accreditation, it triggers a crisis mode, necessitating immediate and substantial corrective actions.

In August 2006, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) removed Compton Community College's accreditation, citing fiscal instability and corruption on the governing board. Assembly Bill 318 was passed by the California Legislature to allow the Compton Community College District to enter into an agreement with El Camino College District. Immediately, the institution became the El Camino College Compton Community Educational Center, making it possible to continue providing accredited educational and student support services to the residents of Compton Community College District.

Over the next 11 years, the Compton Community Educational Center worked with the California Community Colleges' Chancellor's Office (CCCCO), the ACCJC, and other organizations to regain its accreditation. ...” In 2018, the ACCJC approved returning control of the center to the Compton Community College District, allowing the college to again stand-alone under local control. The college officially became independent from El Camino on June 7, 2019.” (<https://edsources.org/2019/after-regaining-its-independence-compton-college-sets-ambitious-path-for-future/614386#:~:text=The%20Accrediting%20Commission%20for%20Community,corruption%20on%20the%20governing%20board.>)

While the Compton Community College District regained control over its operations, services, and governance structure, the CCCD board has not yet fully regained most of its autonomy, and a special trustee remains assigned to the board. This ongoing oversight indicates that while progress has been made, the institution is still in a phase of recovery and rebuilding credibility.

### **Transitions of Accreditation Restoration**

Since 2019, Compton Community College District has been navigating the complex process of transitioning back to its own governance and operational structures. This period of adjustment to newfound independence has been marked by efforts to repair

the college's reputation and trust with external communities, while also leveraging new opportunities that come with restored accreditation. The transition has been anything but straightforward, characterized by significant challenges that demand quality leadership, strategic planning, and adaptation. The initial loss of accreditation thrust the college into crisis mode, necessitating a shift towards more directive leadership styles aimed at addressing immediate deficiencies, minimizing damage, and ultimately restoring accreditation. This period required intensive planning and operations management, focused on rectifying issues and stabilizing the institution. The current transition phase involves not only operational changes but also a critical process of healing and redefining the college's identity and path to a healthy and sustainable governance and operational mode. This journey underscores the importance of resilience, strategic leadership, and the commitment to continuous improvement in the face of adversity.

### **Vote of No Confidence**

In 2021, the governance bodies of Compton Community College District, including the academic senate and faculty and classified unions, unified in casting a vote of no confidence against President/CEO Keith Curry and vice president of academic affairs Sheri Berger. This decisive action sent shockwaves throughout the institution, as a vote of no confidence in a President/CEO is a profound indictment of leadership. Despite this overwhelming sentiment from nearly all constituencies, the Board chose to stand with the President/CEO, reaffirming his role at Compton Community College District. This scenario inevitably created significant tension and discord between the President/CEO and the various constituencies, exacerbating an already challenging situation. The vote of no confidence highlighted significant concerns and has raised further challenges for the college's reputation and overall well-being. Although the vote of no confidence did not directly address collaborative governance, it has nonetheless adversely impacted the campus climate and dynamics of collaborative governance, leading to diminished morale, eroded trust, and challenges in the overall functioning of the institution.

### **Pandemic Disconnect**

In March 2020, Compton Community College District faced a significant crisis, shared by institutions nationwide: the COVID-19 pandemic. This global event profoundly disrupted college operations, instruction, and student services. Over the subsequent three years, virtually all activities transitioned to online or hybrid platforms, presenting significant challenges in maintaining engagement and effective communication. The reliance on Zoom meetings led to gaps in engagement and connectivity, negatively impacting governance and campus culture. This created a sense of isolation and diminished the sense of community among faculty, staff, and students. The lack of in-person interaction hindered collaborative efforts and strained the college's ability to foster a cohesive and dynamic educational environment.

While the Compton community worked towards normalizing operations after regaining accreditation, the pandemic and subsequent shutdown particularly affected the college. The challenges in maintaining engagement and communication within a community that was just starting to restore its operations were substantial.

Currently, the residual effects of these disruptions are evident on the Compton Community College District campus. While many campuses have returned to mostly in-person meetings, the college continues to hold many of its governance meetings online, perpetuating the siloing and isolation that occurred during the shutdown. This ongoing reliance on virtual meetings prevents the full restoration of campus community, underscoring the lasting impact of the pandemic on institutional well-being and the need for ongoing efforts to rebuild and strengthen community ties.

## **METHOD OF ASSESSMENT**

### **Document Review**

We reviewed the shared documents provided to us, including Board Policy 2510 on Participation in Local Decision Making, Board Policy 2520 on the Academic Senate, and Administrative Regulation 2511 on Council and Committee Structure, and the college's Collaborative Governance Handbook. Despite this review, we were unable to decipher how the collaborative governance structure is organized, nor could we understand the process or the relationships among the various committees and councils involved in the decision-making process.

### **Interviews**

We worked closely with the President/CEO office to issue an open invitation to the campus community to hear from as many Compton employees and students as possible. We stressed the importance to listen to not only from those directly involved in collaborative governance, but also those who were not. To this end, we conducted forty-four separate interviews over 6 days, with a mixture of in person and Zoom meetings. Most of the interviews were conducted in person with a few over Zoom. During that time, we met with the following.

- Three Executive Boards: The Classified Professionals Union, the Faculty Union, and the Academic Senate.
- Leaders from the Classified Union, the Faculty Union, and the Academic Senate, including the president and the president-elect of the Academic Senate.
- Constituents from the following groups
  - The Board of Trustees.
  - The College President/CEO.
  - Students.

- Managers.
- Classified Supervisors.
- Classified Professionals.
- Faculty
  - Full time
  - Part time
  - Tenured
  - Untenured
- Confidential; and
- President's Cabinet.

We also attended the first hour of an Academic Senate meeting to be able to hear directly from the faculty engaged in that collaborative governance body.

### **Approach to Data Collection and Analysis**

We wanted to be certain that what we heard from those that we interviewed was their honest opinion. To ensure that, we did the following:

- ***Utilized Multiple Lens Analysis***

We wanted to be certain that we were not hearing from just one set of voices (i.e., not just faculty who served on the Academic Senate), and so we requested that appointments were made with as wide a variety of individuals as possible. All told, we interviewed more than fifty people, and in all cases interviewed at least two people from each constituency.

- ***Maintained Strict Confidentiality***

We assured the people that we interviewed that we would keep what they said to us in strict confidentiality; while we each took notes during the meeting, we did not record people speaking (either in person or on Zoom), and will not refer to anyone in this report by name or position other than the president.

- ***Use Thematic Approach and NOT individualized perspectives.***

In keeping with the promise of confidentiality, this report presents perspectives that were shared that are groups thematically, rather than individually. If we heard a perspective from multiple people, it will be found in the report. If we heard only from a single individual, we could not be certain if the perspective expressed was an outlier or was more widely held and as a result did not include those perspectives in this report.

- ***Respect Authenticity***

We knew that this could be emotional for many of the people we talked to, and that a variety of emotions would potentially be expressed. We recognized that authenticity and have tried to capture it in the report.

# KEY FINDINGS

## THEME#1: DEDICATED COMPTON WORKING PROFESSIONALS

One thing that was abundantly clear is that the people working at Compton are, by and large, dedicated professionals who are doing their best work for the college. Several major ideas were stated repeatedly, and across constituencies:

- ***Love for Compton Community College District***

Many people, from all constituent groups, expressed their love for Compton Community College District and for the students that attend the college.

- ***Instructional Faculty dedicated to teaching/learning.***

We heard repeatedly that the instructional faculty are dedicated to their craft and to their students, and that they go above and beyond for the students that they are working with, including seeking out professional development opportunities in their fields and engaging with other colleagues both at the college and in the wider community.

- ***Student Services dedicated to support student success.***

We also consistently heard that the groups in Student Services are doing everything in their power to support student success, at all different levels and in a wide range of activities, counseling services, and other methods of support.

- ***Administrative staff doing their best in background support.***

The administrative staff is doing their best in supporting the other constituent groups, and that whenever possible, their small teams work together to get their jobs done.

## THEME #2: COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES

The challenges of collaborative governance at Compton Community College District have been a significant concern expressed by all constituencies, indicating key issues in the institution's collaborative governance structure, process, membership, and representation. Each of these areas warrants detailed examination to understand the underlying issues.

The structure of collaborative governance at Compton Community College District refers to how governance bodies are organized, and the specific charges or responsibilities assigned to each group. If there are inefficiencies in this structure, it hampers effective governance.

The process aspect of collaborative governance pertains to the flow of the decision-making process and the interconnections among governance bodies. This includes the sequence of decision-making, the authority each body holds, and the roles they play. Additionally, it encompasses how recommendations and decisions flow directionally through the system.

Membership in collaborative governance bodies involves considerations of the number of members, their appointments, and the duration of their terms. Ensuring that these factors are balanced and well-regulated is crucial for maintaining a functional governance system.

Representation refers to the constituency groups each member represents, their roles on the committee or council, and their responsibilities in representing their constituencies.

Overall, our assessment uncovered that each of the above areas showed significant concerns and challenges at Compton Community College District. It is important to also note that throughout all the interviews, the only individual who consistently referred to the term “collaborative governance” is the President/CEO. It appears to be a term that is not commonly used or understood by constituencies. Instead, shared governance is used by most of those with whom we interviewed.

### **Lack of Governance Structure and Process**

One of the first things we discovered in reading the collaborative governance documents was that there were changes that had occurred to the collaborative governance structures at the college. For example, the collaborative governance handbook points out that all faculty committee appointments are made jointly, by the Academic Senate and the Faculty Union, a structure that neither of us had seen before, and which presents complications when the two organizations have different viewpoints.

We also heard from a number of Academic Senate members who indicated that the challenges to the composition of its executive board and their roles were made based on their own assessment of the situation and responding to the limited reassigned time allocated to the Senate. This lack of sufficient reassigned time was attributed as a significant challenge in adequately distributing responsibilities among executive board members and necessitated the combination of positions in some cases.

In most of our interviews, those being interviewed could not describe the structure of collaborative governance, where committees reported to, who was involved, and what the structure and responsibilities of those committees was.

The two existing committees that were mentioned the most often were the Planning and Budget Committee (PBC), and the Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IE), although how reporting and decision-making was made in either of those committees was not clear. It was also noted multiple times that the feedback loop around why certain things

were not approved was not closed, and that people felt that decisions were being made without following any kind of process.

It was clear from the interviews that there is a need for a more formalized structure, more organized processes, and clearer roles. The lack of training for committee members was mentioned, as was the need for clarification of who the committee members were representing (themselves, their department, division, etc.)

## **Membership and Representation**

There were a number of concerns and challenges mentioned about committee membership and representation. Some of the themes that emerged included the following:

- **Representation issues in governance committees**

Numerous interviewees mentioned that the same few people were on every committee; that there were not opportunities for other people to engage because the same individuals were always appointed; and that there was a lack of diversity of voices being selected for committee, taskforces, and other collaborative governance groups.

- **Inclusivity and diversity in decision-making**

As mentioned above, the lack of diversity of voices was repeated consistently. There also were concerns that the constituent governance organizations (the Classified Union, the Academic Senate, and the Faculty Union) often did not look outside of the membership of their own executive boards for volunteers.

- **Gaps in participation and voice**

The lack of diversity of representation also meant that there were limited in terms of participation and voice. Some committees were comprised of the exact same members repeatedly. There also did not seem to be consideration of institutional knowledge; however, on other occasions, the membership of committees seemed stagnant, with an absence of more recently hired members.

Since Compton Community College District does not have a Classified Senate, the Classified Union is the only representative constituency to deal with all issues pertaining to Classified Professionals, which presents a lost opportunity for the Classified Professionals to have a greater voice in governance at Compton. We heard from many classified professionals as well as managers pointing out the lack of diverse classified professional appointments on the collaborative governance bodies and their representation in the processes.

When we posed the question regarding forming Classified Senate to increase classified professionals' representatives and voices, the Classified Union

leadership as well as some classified professionals responded with interest in such an initiative. Some classified professionals interviewed pointed out that their participation in the Caring Campus program may be a good source and breeding ground for future Classified Senate leadership to emerge. In consultation with the Classified Union, there was strong interest raised about establishing the Classified Senate.

- **Clarity of faculty representation – Academic Senate and Faculty Union**

The lack of separation between the Academic Senate and the Faculty Union raises some significant concerns. These two bodies are distinct and should be representing separate interests – the Academic Senate has purview over the academic and professional matters at the college while the Faculty Union represents the faculty in working conditions, compensation, and benefits. While there is always overlap between the two groups (in tenure evaluation processes, for example), they should be working as separate entities rather than as a single group, which it appears they have largely been doing for the last few years.

There were also concerns expressed about overstep into the purview of each group. For example, the Union president sits on the Academic Senate as a voting member, a structure that does not exist at most, if any, colleges in the CCC system. Having these two groups act as a unit means that any issues that might lead to disagreement in normal circumstances cannot be represented as such.

### **THEME #3: CAMPUS CULTURE**

Another major concern at Compton Community College District is the pervasive campus culture, which has been overwhelmingly described by constituents as “toxic, retaliatory, disengaged, and demoralized.” This sentiment is particularly pronounced in two critical descriptions used by a significant majority of those interviewed: the toxic and retaliatory environment, and the overall disengagement and demoralization affecting campus morale.

#### **Toxic and Retaliatory Environment**

In terms of the toxic and retaliatory environment, numerous interpersonal conflicts are reported, significantly impacting the college’s atmosphere. These conflicts are especially prominent and impactful when they occur at leadership levels among and between constituency leaders, highlighting an imbalance in power structures.

A distinct and prominent sentiment shared by the majority is the fear of retaliation among faculty and staff. This fear is not limited to a few individuals but is a widespread perception among many who were interviewed. The prevalence of this fear is so significant that many individuals sought assurances of confidentiality before speaking honestly. Although there are only a few cited instances of retaliatory actions, the pervasive fear validates its perception as a reality at Compton Community College

District. This fear has a devastating and chilling effect on campus morale, deterring individuals from participating in collaborative governance and speaking up. Even when individuals do participate in committees, their engagement is low, with meetings often characterized by report presentations rather than engaged discussions.

Without jeopardizing confidentiality of specific instances, we have examples from across all constituencies. Some classified professionals mentioned feeling that they are excluded in the calls for volunteers because of their past instances of being outspoken and that instead the Classified Union chooses its own internal candidates repeatedly. Those who want to participate but feel excluded do not perceive themselves to have any recourse because their union makes the appointments.

When referencing the perception and experiences of retaliation and toxic environment, some faculty members expressed that especially when faculty are not tenured, they cannot voice concerns, while others expressed fears that they would be denied participation in committees and other activities, resulting in being marginalized when they speak with opposing views from their faculty colleagues or from administration. In addition, the severity of fear of retaliation for some faculty have prevented them from engagement with other faculty members as well as administrators.

More stakeholders, administrators, classified, and faculty alike, expressed that all decisions are top down, and that their voices are ignored, leading them to apathy or resignation, or fear where people may withdraw from engaging further.

This toxic culture has far-reaching implications, stifling open communication and collaborations. The environment of fear undermines the effectiveness of collaborative governance, as individuals are reluctant to voice their opinions or challenge the status quo. The lack of engaged discussions in committee meetings further exacerbates the problem, as it prevents meaningful dialogue, inclusive participation, and collaborative problem-solving.

### **Disengagement and Demoralization**

The campus sentiment at Compton Community College District regarding disengagement and demoralization is stark and concerning. Interviews reveal a pervasive sense of burnout among those who have frequently participated in governance and committee activities. This small, dedicated group feels overburdened, as they are continually called upon to serve, while a low participation rate from the broader community exacerbates their exhaustion. Many respondents noted that the same individuals often serve on multiple committees, while others reported never being contacted or invited to participate. This creates a dichotomy of over-participation burnout, fear of involvement due to potential repercussions, and disappointment from those who feel excluded from governance processes.

## **Disengagement and Demoralization**

Additionally, there is a widespread feeling of being undervalued and overworked among faculty and staff. Some of those who feel overworked have jobs that encompass responsibilities across several different areas. Some have picked up additional duties when attrition of other positions occurred but have done so without receiving additional pay. This sentiment is not solely linked to financial compensation, although many noted that Compton Community College District's pay scale is lower than that of comparable institutions. In addition to compensation, the primary grievance lies in the lack of non-monetary recognition, supportive attitudes, and adequate release time for fulfilling many campus roles. There was particular concern raised about the compensation of those engaged in the academic senate's roles and responsibilities. Comparative studies highlighting the insufficient release time granted for various faculty leadership roles have been forwarded to the consultants, illustrating not only the low rate of reassigned time compared to colleges statewide but also the inequitable allocation for the various roles, which has at times, fostered internal conflict among members who are required to allocate release time based on personalities and special conditions. Faculty leadership indicated that they have submitted those comparative reports to the President/CEO. Additionally, an examination of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges survey results of local senates across the state indicates that Compton College's reassigned time falls well below the state average.

The vote of no confidence against the President/CEO two and a half years ago has further exacerbated the negative campus culture. This action has had a chilling effect, amplifying the sense of distrust and low morale. The negative energy is palpable, with expressions of discontent and frustration shared widely among interviewees. The cumulative effect of these issues has led to a significant further decline in employee morale, and according to many interviewees, contributing to the departure of valuable employees each year and presenting an ongoing challenge for employee retention.

### **THEME #4: TRUST**

The major descriptor that the interviewers heard repeatedly was that trust at Compton is either completely broken or, at best, fragile. This was repeated by multiple interviewees in every constituent group.

#### **The trust issues can be divided into specific categories:**

- There is a lack of trust in leadership and the decision-making processes on campus. As mentioned above, people feel that there is a lack of communication around decision making, that justifications for decisions are not made public, and that the same group of people (or in many cases, the same person) makes all of the decisions and either does not seek or ignores the input from the constituent groups. The President/CEO's weekly newsletter provides updates on decisions that have been made, but multiple interviewees across different constituencies

expressed concerns about the decisions-making process itself. They questioned how these decisions were reached and by whom, and they felt that critical information was not adequately communicated to stakeholders.

- There are significant communication gaps and misunderstandings about how decisions are made, who is allowed to make them, and how those decisions are reported out. Additionally, when committees are asked to give input or provide recommendations, committee members feel that the input is ignored, making the committee members feel that their work is useless, and their opinions are undesired.
- The interviewers repeatedly heard that there is a need for greater transparency and accountability from the district and from administration at all levels, as well as from the leadership of some of the constituent groups. It was remarked that the Academic Senate has done a good job of reporting out from their committees, and that their model might be one that other groups seek to use for their own reporting out.

## **THEME #5: LEADERSHIP**

The major issue of leadership at Compton Community College District is characterized by imbalanced power dynamics, limited and incomplete communications, and a transition in leadership styles from a crisis mode to a more consultative approach. Additionally, there are significant challenges related to coordination and collaboration among the leadership teams.

### **Power Dynamics and Leadership Styles**

A primary concern expressed by interviewees is the centralized nature of decision-making. Decisions are perceived to be made predominantly by the president and the president's cabinet, rather than through a distributed model that involves broader input. According to the President/CEO, the cabinet reviews decisions, especially when decisions have budget implications. It is unclear to many where the ideas originate, but there is a common perception that most decisions are ultimately made by the President/CEO. This centralization has led to concerns about favoritism, with interviewees reporting that those in good standing with the top leader are more likely to have their ideas accepted and executed. Despite this, there is a unanimous agreement among those interviewed that the president is quick to act on ideas that directly benefit students, reflecting a clear prioritization of student welfare.

Furthermore, there is a strong desire across all groups for more inclusive and participatory leadership. Constituents feel that their voices are not adequately heard or considered in the decision-making process. A significant majority of those interviewed expressed their desire to have the collaborative governance policy and practices that

are spelled out in print to be practiced in reality with much more engagement, broader participation by diverse membership, and to have the process with clarity and transparency. This sentiment underscores the need for a shift towards more collaborative and consultative leadership styles that engage the entire college community.

Another significant issue is the lack of coordination among the leadership teams. The leaders of various constituency groups need to improve their coordination and collaboration efforts. The effectiveness of collaborative governance at the college is heavily impacted by the ability of these leaders to work coordinated. Without better coordination, the collaborative governance process suffers, leading to inefficiencies and a lack of cohesive direction.

Overall, the leadership at Compton Community College District faces critical challenges that need to be addressed to foster a more balanced, transparent, and inclusive governance environment. By moving towards a more distributed decision-making model, improving communication, and enhancing coordination among leaders, the institution can work towards a more effective and united governance structure.

## **THEME #6: COMMUNICATIONS AND COORDINATION**

Concerns around communication and coordination were also mentioned repeatedly by members of all constituent groups. While virtually everyone mentioned the weekly emails sent out by the college President/CEO, many commented on the extensive length of his communication and the need for shorter, clearer, and more relevant information such as how, why, and who were involved in the decisions.

- Gaps in communication between administration, staff, and faculty were mentioned frequently. Challenges included lack of communication and feedback regarding decisions made by the administration, especially around funding and financial issues.
- The need for better coordination among different constituencies was also mentioned. Part of this includes the above-mentioned lack of separation between the Academic Senate and Faculty Union, as well as the lack of a Classified Senate resulting in limited classified representation and voice in the collaborative governance processes. The exploration of establishing a Classified Senate was discussed with the Classified Union leadership. They expressed the frustration in the lack of interest and engagement from classified professionals. And there were classified professionals engaging in the new Caring Campus program hence expressing that adding classified professionals' participation and leadership may be accomplished by the development of Classified Senate. Discussion with Academic Senate leadership regarding the challenges in representing academic interest vs work conditions by Academic Senate.

- The importance of building trust within leadership teams cannot be overstated. Concerns were expressed about the lack of communication in some of the leadership teams and the importance of being able to trust that leaders are making decisions that have the best interests of their constituencies as well as the students at their core.

## **THEME#7: OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES**

The operational challenges at Compton Community College District are significant and multifaceted, stemming from dysfunctions in the collaborative governance process and a lack of coordination. These issues have led to noticeable impacts on the college's operations, resulting in efficiency frustrations, disorganization, and a pressing need for accountability.

### **Efficiency Frustrations, Disorganization and Accountability**

Staff have expressed considerable frustration over the inefficiencies that hinder their ability to perform their jobs effectively. There appears to be a pervasive level of disorganization that exacerbates these efficiency issues. This disorganization can be attributed to several factors: overloaded roles, lack of accountability for individuals not fulfilling their responsibilities, and some delays caused by a top-down decision-making approach. The dysfunctions in collaborative governance and the strained campus cultural climate are clearly impacting the operational side of the college. When communications and decisions do not flow smoothly and orderly, disorganization ensues, affecting the entire institution.

Several basic operational issues further contribute to the disorganization. Staff have reported lacking necessary equipment, such as reliable internet and standard work tools like computers. This issue was notably experienced during the interview process, where unreliable internet and inadequate facilities in the building and interview rooms were prevalent. These logistical shortcomings highlight the broader disorganization symptoms affecting daily operations and the coordination of activities, including the interviews themselves.

Another significant issue is the perceived inequity of workload among classified professionals and the allocation of release time for various faculty leadership roles. There is a consistent sentiment that the workload is not distributed equitably, leading to feelings of unfairness and despair. Additionally, there are concerns about the lack of accountability for management and classified professionals regarding work performance. This lack of accountability further undermines operational efficiency and effectiveness, creating a cycle of frustration and demoralization.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Implementing the recommended improvements at Compton Community College District will necessitate a collective commitment from the entire college community. This effort requires an unwavering dedication to change and action, starting from the highest levels of leadership and extending to every member of the campus.

### **Commitments**

The commitment to change must be embraced by all, with a particular emphasis on the leadership. It is especially crucial that the president and the president's cabinet lead by example, demonstrating their dedication to the recommended improvements. This commitment must also be mirrored by the leadership teams of various constituency groups, including the academic senate and the faculty and classified unions' executive committees. Their active engagement and support are essential for driving the change forward and setting a standard for the rest of the campus community.

### **Action**

Action is imperative. There must be observable and measurable steps taken to implement the recommendations. Without concrete action, trust cannot be built or maintained. The college community needs to see some tangible progress quickly in addressing the issues and moving towards a more effective working environment.

### **Accountability**

Accountability is vital. All leadership teams and campus participants must be held accountable for their actions. This means ensuring active participation in the new processes and adhering to the newly developed procedures. Accountability should be integrated into the fabric of the institution, with mechanisms in place to monitor, evaluate, and report on the adherence to and effectiveness of the implemented changes.

In summary, the path to improvement at Compton Community College District hinges on a campus-wide commitment, decisive action, and robust accountability. By fostering a culture of dedication, transparency, and responsibility, the college can work towards overcoming its challenges and building a stronger, more cohesive institution.

## **RECOMMENDATION #1: IMPROVE COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE**

- 1. Formalize governance structures, processes, and roles especially in implementation and documentation.**
  - Governance structures need to be clearly delineated, and that structure needs to be easily accessible.

- Governance processes need to be clearly delineated, including feedback loops and responsibilities for reporting out, and that information needs to be easily accessible.
- Roles within governance structures need to more clearly spelled out, again in terms of whose responsibilities including but not limited to:
  - reporting out decision making.
  - opportunities for comments or suggestions both prior to and following decisions.
  - how those decisions are made.
  - who is making the decisions.
  - whether or not there is a process for appealing decisions; and
  - timelines for decision making.

**2. Increase inclusivity and diversity in committee representation with open invitations and appointments.**

- More members of the constituent groups want to be involved, and more invitations need to be issued to members beyond the executive boards or meeting participants.
- Invitations need to be issued by multiple means – not just a blanket email to the campus community. Many people expressed their gratitude when they were personally reached out to about serving on a committee or doing other work.
- All groups should look at their current committees for not only for the regular measures of diversity (i.e., racial/ethnic/gender diversity), but diversity in terms of role at the college, length of time at the college, assignments, and disciplines, and the like.

**3. Provide training and clear guidelines for committee/council members**

A repeated message was that committee members did not know their roles or responsibilities within the committee and back to their constituents. Consistent and structured training, with materials that committee members can refer to, will help this.

**4. Hold Committee Leadership and Members Accountable to report to their representative constituencies**

The lack of communication and the absence of closing the feedback loop was also a consistent theme. Many interviewees mentioned not knowing about what had happened with requests or suggestions, and not being able to get timely information from the leadership of the various constituent groups and administration about what had happened or was happening with their suggestions or requests.

Training committee members about their responsibilities and holding them accountable if they do not report back, should help this.

## **RECOMMENDATION #2: CAMPUS CULTURE CHANGE**

Changing campus culture is a complex and challenging endeavor, especially when deeply rooted sentiments and behaviors have taken hold. It requires conscientious efforts, thoughtful design, and consistent actions to initiate and sustain a meaningful shift. The following recommendations are proposed to address key areas and foster a healthier, more inclusive campus culture at Compton Community College District.

- 1. Address Interpersonal Conflicts and Power Struggles:** Resolving interpersonal conflicts and power struggles is critical for cultural change. All personal and professional differences from past history need to be addressed and resolved among the leadership team members of all constituency groups. Open dialogues with the president regarding the vote of no confidence issues should be initiated and facilitated to foster transparency and reconciliation. Developing a robust collaborative governance structure and process can help mitigate power dynamics and struggles in decision-making, such as budget development. This structure should ensure that all voices are heard and considered, promoting a more balanced and equitable decision-making environment.
- 2. Combat Retaliatory Culture:** The retaliatory culture at Compton Community College District is a serious issue that must be addressed formally and comprehensively. A campus-wide policy on anti-retaliation should be developed to deter such behavior and outline clear consequences for retaliatory actions. This policy should demonstrate the institution's commitment to a culture shift. Additionally, appointing an ombudsman during the initial period of building trust can provide support and mediation, helping to resolve conflicts and protect individuals from retaliation. This will create a safer environment for open communication and participation.
- 3. Foster a Supportive and Inclusive Community:** To cultivate a supportive and inclusive community, a mindful design of a supportive work environment is essential. Initiatives like the Caring Campus initiative can be a starting point, developing various mechanisms and expressions of care for all college personnel. Dismantling favoritism and exclusive participation are also crucial. Implementing open invitations for collaborative governance participation and establishing a mechanism or process for all personnel to express their voices will ensure inclusivity. Encouraging diverse participation in decision-making processes and recognizing contributions from all members will help build a sense of belonging and value across the campus.

## **RECOMMENDATION #3: REBUILDING TRUST**

### **1. Forgive and Forget Past Errors**

The 2021 vote of no confidence against the president is still fresh in some peoples' minds, but unless people can move past that and focus on improving the culture and the processes at Compton, no action is going to be workable. While a vote of no confidence is a difficult event to move beyond, it is essential that the constituent groups and leadership try to focus on moving past it.

### **2. Increase transparency and respect in decision-making processes**

Decision-making processes need to be made more transparent and more public. Committee members need to know that their work matters and that their suggestions and ideas are taken into consideration. At the same time, committees need to realize that their recommendations cannot always be accepted; when that is the case, clear communication as to the reasons why, especially when those decisions are made at the higher levels of administration, needs to occur.

### **3. Regular and clear communication from and among leadership teams**

The Executive Boards of the constituent groups and the administrative leadership need to be in more consistent communication. Regular meetings between the various groups would help with this, along with more in-person meetings.

### **4. Establish accountability mechanisms**

It is clear that there are limited mechanisms for accountability in the current structure. More clear processes and communication structures will assist in establishing accountability mechanisms.

### **5. Implement regular community building activities**

Many interviewees commented on the silos that exist at the college, and the fact that they have become even more pronounced since the pandemic and shutdown in 2020. Regular community building activities for the college community, held during working hours so that everyone can participate, would go a long way in bringing back the sense of community that appears to have been damaged due to the events of the last few years.

### **6. More in-person activities/meetings/gatherings**

All the above-mentioned suggestions require participation from all constituent groups along with consistent interaction. The fact that so many meetings have continued to be held online has contributed to the absence of a sense of belonging and cohesion within the campus community, as well as the continued siloing of constituent groups. More in-person activities, meetings, and gatherings,

both formal and informal, will help build a greater sense of community and comradery among the members of the campus community.

## **RECOMMENDATION #4: LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES**

### **1. With Board's support - Encourage the President to delegate more and trust staff with accountability.**

The current president does far more than most senior administrators in similar positions, which is commendable but also not sustainable. The President/CEO needs to delegate more tasks to other administrators, campus leaders, and classified professionals, with the understanding that some things might be done in a different manner than the president would do them. It should also be clear that this type of transition will take time, and it is possible that some things might be missed or dropped due to the transition. Campus leaders will need to acknowledge that this could be the case, but the workload of the President/CEO should be focused on topics and areas that are not the minutia that the current president seems to have to deal with. Ultimately, the President/CEO begins to establish a culture and system of accountability.

### **2. Foster coordination and communication among leaders with regular and consistent meetings**

While some meetings (Academic Senate, Curriculum committee) are held consistently and are open (as required by the Brown Act), other meetings appear to be either inconsistent or not held at all; multiple interviewees mentioned being on committees that never met. Any committee that is created should meet regularly, have agendas and, if needed, minutes, and be open to visitors if viable. This would help not only define the structure on the campus but also to be more inclusive and more coordinated.

### **3. Implement intensive trust-building activities within leadership teams in the coming year.**

Events including but not limited to retreats, team-building activities, trust-building activities should be held starting in the fall (or even in the summer), both within the various leadership groups and amongst those same leadership groups, to help to build relationships and eventually trust among the leadership teams. If the campus community believes that the leadership teams trust each other and work with each other, including improving communication, it is likely that that sense of trust and communication will spread beyond the leadership into the campus community as a whole.

#### 4. Utilize Ombudsman or Team Coach for help

A neutral party, in the form of an ombudsperson or leadership/team coach, might assist in strengthening communication and relationship building among the leadership teams; having someone who is invested in the future of the college but who is not an employee may allow for a more nuanced and neutral approach to many of the concerns that have been expressed.

### RECOMMENDATION #5: IMPROVING OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

Improving operational efficiency at Compton Community College District is crucial for enhancing direct instructions and services to students, boosting employee morale and mental health, and maximizing revenues while reducing waste. The following recommendations outline key areas for enhancing efficiency and productivity across the institution:

1. **Enhance Technology Infrastructure and Access:** It is imperative to invest in and upgrade the college's technology infrastructure, including software platforms, to enhance operational efficiency. Addressing access issues is equally important to ensure that all staff members have access to the necessary technology to support their job functions effectively. By providing robust technology tools and improving access, the college can streamline processes and workflows, ultimately improving the quality of services provided to students.
2. **Streamline Administrative and Business Processes:** Conducting comprehensive business process reviews is recommended to identify bottlenecks and inefficiencies in administrative and business processes. Engage staff at the operational level to gather feedback and concrete suggestions for improvement. Their insights and experiences can be invaluable in streamlining processes, reducing redundant tasks, and optimizing workflows. By streamlining administrative and business processes, the college can enhance organization, reduce workload burdens, and improve overall efficiency.
3. **Ensure Accountability in Resource Allocation Usage:** Evaluate the equity of resource allocation and usage across the college to ensure fairness and transparency. Implement a more transparent process for resource allocation to build trust and accountability among stakeholders. It is crucial to track and monitor how resources are allocated and used, holding individuals and departments accountable for their resource management practices. This accountability not only fosters a culture of responsible resource usage but also maximizes the impact of resources, leading to cost savings and improved operational efficiency.

# CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this process of assessment of gathering authentic input and making recommendations for improvement at Compton Community College District has been open, inclusive, and participatory. We extend our sincere appreciation to everyone who participated, ensuring that all constituencies, from trustees to students, had a voice in shaping the future of the college. The authentic input, suggestions, and trust shared during this process have been invaluable.

What justifies optimistic outlook is the resilience and dedication of the people of Compton Community College District. Several encouraging signs have emerged as drivers for change.

## Drivers for Change

1. **Hope for Change:** Despite some doubts, the overwhelming sentiment expressed by those interviewed is a genuine hope for change. This hope serves as a powerful motivator to drive positive transformation.
2. **Love for Students:** The deep commitment and love for Compton Community College District students are evident across all levels of the institution. This dedication to meaningful and purposeful work underscores the importance of improving the college for the benefit of its students.
3. **Will from Leadership:** Leaders across constituency groups, including the president and past and incoming presidents of the academic senate and the faculty and classified unions, have made clear commitments to change during the Open Forum. This collective will from leadership is crucial for driving and sustaining meaningful change.
4. **Board Support:** The Board has also demonstrated its commitment to change by holding the president accountable for necessary changes as the CEO of the college. This accountability ensures that actions align with the shared vision for improvement.

Overall, the combination of hope, love for students, strong leadership will, and Board commitment provides a solid foundation for driving positive change at Compton Community College District. It is through this collective effort and commitment that we envision a brighter future for the college and its community.

## ACTION FOR CHANGE:

Both consultants believe that the college can engage in the changes that have been mentioned and make Compton a more open and communicative campus where people want to work. To this end, we recommend that the following actions occur:

## **1. Respect and Open-mindedness**

Everyone in the campus community has a role to play, and it is essential that those roles are recognized and respected. Simultaneously, it is crucial that those in the campus community remain open-minded to suggestions and changes, and that everyone is accepted.

## **2. Act On Recommendations**

Many of the recommendations listed above will be difficult and will not happen overnight, but if everyone is willing to put in the time and the work, transformation is possible.

## **3. Review Progress Regularly**

This is not intended to be a shelf document; it is intended as a roadmap to guide the changes that need to be made. It is possible that there are others that are not mentioned in this document, but whatever changes do occur, it is important that progress is reviewed regularly and that, if needed, changes are made to the recommendations or plans to ensure that the spirit of the recommendations is occurring.

## **4. Holding each other accountable**

Everyone has a role to play in these recommendations, regardless of their position at the campus. If people do not step up, or stop participating, then those individuals need to be held accountable. This is going to be a team effort, and it will be important that all the members of the team are engaged and involved.

## **5. Nurture positive leadership for all**

This work is going to be challenging and sometimes even painful, but it is necessary for the college to move forward and become the institution that it wishes to be. One of the most positive things that can occur moving forward is for everyone to assume good intent on the part of their colleagues; nurturing a positive leadership model will engage more people in the governance of the college and will impact the entire campus community in a positive way.

### ***Special Message to Compton Community College Faculty and Staff***

While it was challenging to hear many of the comments shared during the interviews because we empathize with your feelings, we deeply appreciate everyone's authenticity and trust in us to maintain confidence and reflect honestly on what we heard. We believe Compton Community College District has a lot of talents and very dedicated people who carry out the important work of serving students and need to be valued

and recognized. There were also many alignments in the feedback from the Board level to all employee groups validating what we heard across all groups. We firmly believe that positive change *can* happen at Compton Community College District through the collective and unified efforts of starting with top leaders, and to everyone involved. We extend our best wishes for the continued success of Compton Community College District and stand ready to assist further should we be called upon to support you.