



# 2024 - 2028 Strategic Plan



TheRPGroup

Research, Planning & Professional Development  
for California Community Colleges

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# Introduction

The RP Group began its 2024–2028 strategic planning process with intentional parameters to develop an innovative plan that integrates principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion as the foundation for setting organizational goals to grow, support, and promote the organization’s advocacy and influence for institutional research, planning, and effectiveness (IRPE) professionals and the California Community Colleges system.

The Board of Directors and staff created space for all voices in the planning process that honored and validated the humanity we bring to the organization and to our work. The staff voice was essential to ensure a balance between what we want to do and what we are able to do as an organization. This iterative process allowed us to maximize expertise in all aspects of the organization to establish collaborative pathways for the development and implementation of activities in support of goals and strategies.



# Introduction

The Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) is charged with leading the organization's strategic planning efforts. This committee is chaired by the Board President and Executive Director and composed of Board and staff members along with one external constituent representing the larger IRPE community.

The SPC began with two overarching questions to guide the development of the new plan:

- *What would it look like if The RP Group were antiracist?*
- *What would it look like if The RP Group were student-centered?*

Promoting self-reflection and creating space for authentic engagement through workshops and discussions with the Board of Directors and staff, as well as feedback sessions with the IRPE community and key organizational partners, we established thematic overarching organizational goals that integrate principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion in how we represent and serve the IRPE community through advocacy, planning, research, and professional development.



# Developing Our Plan

The mission, vision, and core values were developed through a process that intentionally allowed for authentic self-reflection and the inclusion of all voices in defining who The RP Group is today and how The RP Group can grow as an agent of change in policies and practices that are antiracist and centered on supporting student success.

Additional work from The RP Group committees to identify how each committee can support, uplift, and/or contribute to the achievement of the overarching organizational goals provided a framework for strategies that demonstrate The RP Group's commitment to live our mission, realize our vision, and honor our core values.

We begin by sharing our mission, vision, and values, followed by the goals and strategies that will serve as the foundation for our work over the next four years. In the appendices, we describe the process we used to develop this strategic plan and how we will hold ourselves accountable by tracking, documenting, and evaluating our progress.



# Mission, Vision, and Values



# Our Mission

The Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges (The RP Group) is a leader that supports equitable outcomes for minoritized and marginalized students through race-conscious, equity-minded research, planning, and professional development. We uplift student voices and empower researchers and planners to improve institutional effectiveness by dismantling systemic barriers and injustices.

# Our Vision

The RP Group envisions itself to be a change agent at local, state, and national levels that addresses longstanding injustices to ensure that students' demographics do not predict their postsecondary success.



# Our Values

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## Championing Equity and Antiracism

Illuminating and eradicating racial injustice and inequities in both the outcomes and experiences of systemically minoritized and marginalized students.



## Centering Student Voice

Validating and uplifting student voice and lived experience to guide our data collection and research analysis, creation of professional development for the IRPE community and system partners, and support of institutional planning and policymaking.



## Leading Transformational Change

Leading efforts at the local and system levels to transform how students experience and succeed in California's community colleges through race-conscious research, planning, and professional development that is designed to impact policy and practice.



## Demonstrating Integrity and Quality

Developing, producing, and providing high-quality research and professional development that are thoughtfully conducted, thoroughly vetted, and broadly informed to drive systemic change and advance equity for racially and other minoritized students.



## Working Collaboratively and Building Community

Empower our constituents and clients to lead their own meaningful inquiry and evidence-based decision-making in support of the educational success of minoritized and marginalized students by engaging in intentionally inclusive, action-oriented, and race-conscious approaches that draw on the collective wisdom of our system.

# Goals and Strategies

# Goals

## GOAL 1

### Inclusion of Student Voice



Validate and uplift student voice and lived experience within the organization and in local, regional, and statewide planning and policy development.

## GOAL 2

### IRPE as Change Agents



Empower IRPE professionals to advocate for improvements that advance student-centered institutional and systemic change at the local, regional, and statewide levels.

## GOAL 3

### Growing and Sustaining the IRPE Community



Actively engage the California Community Colleges system in the recruitment, retention, and advancement of a diverse and inclusive field of research and planning professionals that intentionally reflects our students.

## GOAL 4

### EDI-centric Research, Planning, and Professional Learning



Serve as a leader at the state and national levels in the design, production, and delivery of professional development, research, and planning in higher education that is centered in principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI).

# Goal 1: Inclusion of Student Voice

Validate and uplift student voice and lived experience within the organization and in local, regional, and statewide planning and policy development.



## Strategies

1. Involve students in the organization's research, professional development, planning, and advocacy.
2. Collaborate with the Student Senate for California Community Colleges to get research into students' hands in ways that help them make informed decisions about their education.
3. Advocate to and serve as a model for colleges on how they can integrate and elevate student voice into policy, process, and organizational decision-making.

# Goal 2: IRPE as Change Agents

Empower IRPE professionals to advocate for improvements that advance student-centered institutional and systemic change at the local, regional, and statewide levels.

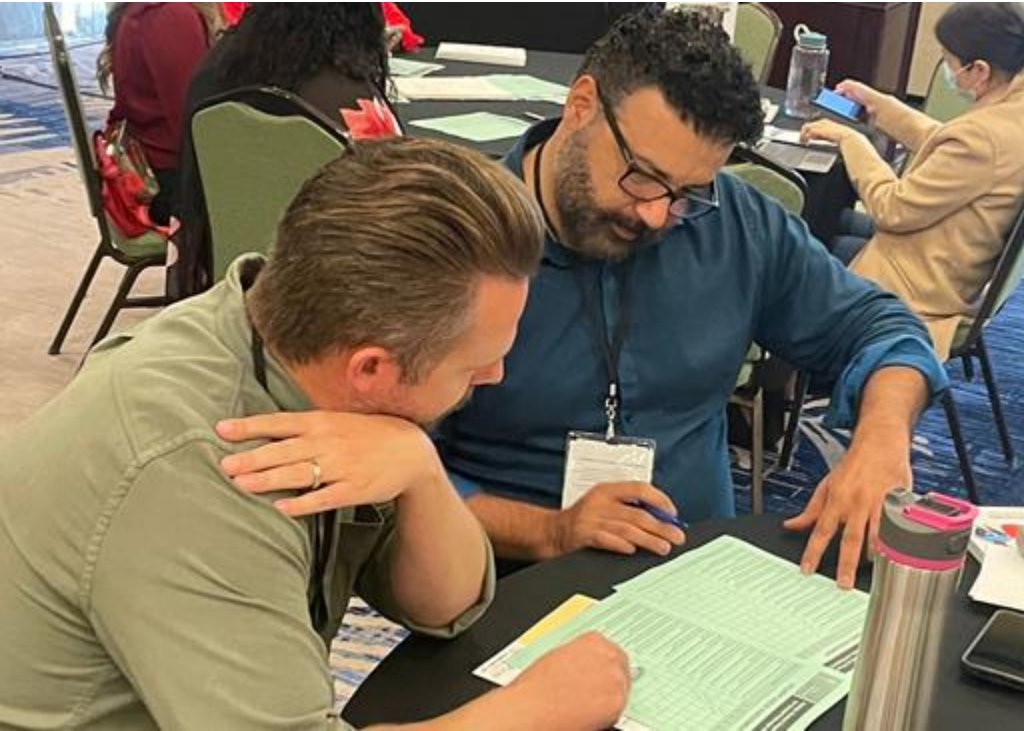


## Strategies

1. Model advocacy by publicly taking bold positions related to evidence-based practices that advance student success and equity.
2. Demonstrate how colleges can benefit from positioning IRPE professionals as campus/district leaders who impact cultural change that improves institutional effectiveness and student outcomes.
3. Provide specific professional and leadership development that supports and addresses the needs of IRPE professionals in leading their local colleges/districts through student-centered institutional effectiveness.
4. Build and sustain communities of practice in which IRPE professionals can learn from and assist each other in their advocacy for improvements to student success and equity.

# Goal 3: Growing and Sustaining the IRPE Community

Actively engage the California Community Colleges system in the recruitment, retention, and advancement of a diverse and inclusive field of research and planning professionals that intentionally reflects our students.



## Strategies

1. Develop and sustain a robust and diverse pipeline of future researchers among California community college students.
2. Provide professional development that supports IRPE offices in their employee retention and advancement efforts.
3. Grow and transform our collective culture and personal mindsets to move away from centering whiteness or upholding white supremacy to create a more equitable community of IRPE professionals.
4. Prepare IRPE professionals to advance into positions with increasing levels of leadership and responsibility.

# Goal 4: EDI-centric Research, Planning, and Professional Development

Serve as a leader at the state and national levels in the design, production, and delivery of professional development, research, and planning in higher education that is centered in principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI).



## Strategies

1. Uncover and collate an evidence-based set of practices that (1) have had known positive effects for minoritized and marginalized students, faculty, and staff and (2) establish universal design principles that better support all constituencies.
2. Create, curate, and disseminate professional development specifically about antiracism and the role that IRPE professionals have in dismantling racist and other inequitable systems in education.
3. Ensure organizational processes and procedures have equity, diversity, and inclusion principles woven and visible throughout and represent proactive solutions to combat the negative impacts of racism and other inequities.
4. Incorporate equity-conscious practices into the design, implementation, analysis, and dissemination of research results.
5. Position the organization as an expert on integrated, holistic, student-centered, equity-conscious planning that can support colleges in bridging research, planning, and effectiveness.
6. Explore and expand ways to further establish the organization as an expert in equity-conscious community college research.

# Closing Summary

The guiding principles for this strategic planning process were to develop an innovative strategic plan for The RP Group that sets organizational goals and drives growth with principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion embedded.

It is our hope that through this thoughtful and inclusive process, we have established the building blocks to grow as IRPE professional service providers and practitioners.

Our forward-thinking and aspirational plan is the responsibility of the Board and staff, and it is important that we see our whole selves as creators and stewards of our strategic plan.



# Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge and thank Karla Kirk for leading us through the year-long process as well as our **Strategic Planning Committee** for their service:

- Co-chairs: Dr. Pam Mery, Dr. Darla Cooper
- Board Members: Amil Gehrke, Bri Hays, Jake Kevari, Dr. Mily Kudo, Dr. Elaine Kuo, Dr. Daniel Miramontez
- Staff: Dr. Katie Brohawn, Adore Davidson, Jenica Lancy, Alyssa Nguyen, Sandra Morales, Andrew Olding, Brad Trimble
- IRPE Community Representative: Dr. Daylene Meuschke

We also want to express our gratitude to Connie Tan for her artistry, to all of the people who we interviewed and solicited feedback from who supported the process of the creation of this plan.

- Dr. Aisha Lowe, CCCCO
- Dr. Wendy Sedlak, Lumina Foundation
- Shawn Whalen, College Futures Foundation
- ASCCC Executive Committee
- IRPE Community Members
- The RP Group Board and staff



# Appendices

# Appendix A: Strategic Planning Process

Over the course of a year, The RP Group Board of Directors and staff participated in workshops and discussions to establish a framework and overarching thematic goals that would focus on the intentional inclusion of student voice and participation in the planning, research, and professional development conducted by The RP Group, while also centering principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The plan was developed to serve as a broader framework to move the organization forward in a student-centered, antiracist direction.

The next page represents a summary of the timeline and process established to create this plan.



# Strategic Planning Timeline



**FEBRUARY**  
The Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) met to plan for the 2024–2028 strategic plan.

## APRIL

Gathered information from the Board and staff at the Board meeting and the IRPE field at the Annual Community and Member Engagement Meeting.

## AUGUST

At the Summer Board Retreat, the Board and staff developed a framework for integrating equity-centered processes within the strategic plan.

The SPC drafted mission, vision, values, and thematic goals with information from the Summer Board Retreat.

## SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER

The SPC members met with representatives from key partner organizations to gather feedback on the draft mission, vision, values, and goals.

## NOVEMBER

The Strategic Plan Planning Workgroup incorporated all feedback previously gathered to create the final draft mission, vision, and values.



## 2023

## MARCH

The consultant Karla Kirk was hired to guide the building of the new strategic plan.

## MAY—JUNE

The SPC met to prepare for the Summer Board Retreat.



## SEPTEMBER

The SPC reviewed a preliminary draft outline of the strategic plan and a one-pager with draft mission, vision, values, and thematic goals.

## OCTOBER

The Board reviewed a preliminary draft outline of the strategic plan and a one-pager with draft mission, vision, values, and thematic goals.

The organization held virtual “office hours” to solicit the IRPE community’s feedback on the draft mission, vision, values, and goals.



## DECEMBER

The Board approved the new mission, vision, and core values.

## 2024

## FEBRUARY

The SPC drafted goals and strategies and gathered feedback from the Board and staff.

The Board approved the goals and strategies.

## APRIL

The SPC reviewed the draft Strategic Plan and provided final feedback, reviewed a draft Strategic Plan KPI and Implementation Plan Template and Strategic Plan Matrix.



## MARCH

The SPC began initial discussions about the evaluation process under the new strategic plan.



## JUNE

The Board approved the Strategic Plan.



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# Appendix B:

## IRPE Community and Partner Input

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In our efforts to be inclusive and transparent, our process included outreach to the IRPE community and system partners in addition to our staff and Board of Directors.

It was important to engage with our IRPE network of professionals to ensure that our goals and strategy resonated with the field. We presented the larger IRPE community with the opportunity to participate in a discussion via Zoom about our draft mission, vision, values, and thematic goals.

Specifically, we queried the community with two main questions:

- *“Do these resonate with you?”*
- *“Is anything missing?”*

The community responded with comments and suggested edits that were integrated into the development of the mission, vision, and core values.



# IRPE Community and Partner Input (continued)



To obtain input from our partners, we selected the following five organizations with which we work closely:

- California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO)
- Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC)
- Student Senate for California Community Colleges (SSCCC)
- Lumina Foundation
- College Futures Foundation



We identified one individual from each organization and set up a 60-minute interview with them. These interviews were conducted by three SPC members.

Prior to each interview, we shared the following materials with each interviewee:

- Current strategic plan (public-facing version)
- Draft mission, vision, values, and goal areas
- Interview questions



# IRPE Community and Partner Input (continued)

We asked the interviewees the following questions:

1. What do you think of when you think of The RP Group?
2. What resonates with you about our draft mission, vision, values, and goal areas? What may not resonate as much?
3. Do they reflect well on The RP Group? Are they consistent with how you see The RP Group?
4. Do they clearly communicate who we are, who we want to be, what we do, and what we want to do? If not, what is not clear?
5. What, if anything, do you believe is missing?
6. As a valued partner, how can you see our organizations working together to achieve the mission, vision, values, and goals we are proposing?

After the interviews concluded, the three interviewers prepared a summary of the interviewees' affirmations, critiques, and suggestions.

This summary was reviewed by the SPC, and edits to the mission, vision, values, and goal areas were made accordingly.



# Appendix C:

## Implementation and Evaluation Process

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The creation of goals and high-level strategies to achieve those goals requires us to consider how we will hold ourselves accountable for implementing the plan and how we will monitor, measure, and share progress with the broader community.

The Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) has established an annual process for the development of action plans and reporting of activities by staff and Board committees.

In addition to documenting the achievement or occurrence of each activity, The RP Group commits to measuring and evaluating how our actions add value for the IRPE community and our partners.

Through quantitative and qualitative analysis, we will assess the quality and impact of the services and events delivered by The RP Group.



# About The RP Group

**Mission:** The Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges (The RP Group) is a leader that supports equitable outcomes for minoritized and marginalized students through race-conscious, equity-minded research, planning, and professional development. We uplift student voices and empower researchers and planners to improve institutional effectiveness by dismantling systemic barriers and injustices.

**Services:** Research, evaluation, planning, professional development, and technical assistance—designed and conducted by CCC practitioners

**Organization:** 501(c)3 with roots as membership organization

