

May 22, 2025

Subject: Racial Equity Commission December 19, 2024, Meeting Minutes
Reporting Period: December 2024-May 2025
Prepared By: Joyce Chiao, Consultant, Abundance
Reviewed By: Toya Davis, Operations Manager, Racial Equity Commission

Recommended Action

Approval of the December 19, 2024, Racial Equity Commission Meeting Minutes.

Racial Equity Commission December 19, 2024 - Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item #1: Welcome

A. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Wood called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM. Shared a reminder that the Commission condemns acts of hate and discrimination. Chair Wood shared the CA vs Hate resource line.

B. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

C. REVIEW OF THE AGENDA

D. REMARKS FROM DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

Chair Wood welcomed any distinguished guests in the room to address the Commission.

E. ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM: Quorum Met; 11/11 Commissioners Present

Commissioners Present:

1. Commissioner Dr. Luke Wood, Chair
2. Commissioner Simboa Wright, Vice Chair
3. Commissioner Candis Bowles
4. Commissioner Virginia Hedrick
5. Commissioner John Kim (Virtually)
6. Commissioner Gabriel Maldonado
7. Commissioner Traco Matthews
8. Commissioner Jolie Onodera
9. Commissioner Dr. Manuel Pastor
10. Commissioner Yolanda R. Richardson
11. Commissioner Angelica Salas

F. PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS

Public Comment

No public comment.

Agenda Item #2: Public Comment on matters not on the agenda

Evan Minton of Voices for Progress.

Agenda Item #3: ACTION: Consent Agenda

Commissioner Dr. Luke Wood, Chair

Dr. Larissa Estes, Executive Director, Racial Equity Commission

Chair Wood facilitated the discussion and approval of the consent agenda, consisting of two items: 1) Approval of September 18, 2024, Meeting Minutes and 2) Selection of Implementation & Technical Assistance Committee Lead.

Commission Discussion

No Commission discussion.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Motion to pass consent calendar by Commissioner Matthews and seconded by Commissioner Wright.

Motion passes (11-0-0*). *Marks abstention or absence from vote.

Agenda Item #4: ACTION: Committee Reports and Discussion

Commissioner Dr. Luke Wood, Executive Committee

Commissioner John Kim, Implementation & Technical Assistance Committee

Commissioner Angelica Salas, Community Engagement Committee

A. IMPLEMENTATION & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

B. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Action item to elect Commissioner Salas to the office of Committee Lead for the Community Engagement Committee.

Commission Discussion: Implementation & Technical Assistance Committee Report

Pastor: Emphasized learning from efforts of other states and localities. Agreed with looking at class, gender, disability, and other dimensions. Noted that disability is highly racialized.

Chair Wood: Asked Commissioner Kim if there are any action items stemming from this report.

Kim: Received the comment by Commissioner Pastor. Added that the speaker thoughts from the November 21, 2024 Implementation & Technical Assistance Committee Meeting could also be applied to the broader Commission. Confirmed that there are no action items requiring a Commission vote as part of this report. Reiterated that much of the work of the Committee will happen later in the process. Expressed interest in discussions with the Framework Committee.

Commission Discussion: Community Engagement Committee Report

Pastor: Emphasized learning from efforts of other states and localities. Agreed with looking at class, gender, disability, and other dimensions. Noted that disability is highly racialized.

Chair Wood: Asked Commissioner Kim if there are any action items stemming from this report.

Kim: Received the comment by Commissioner Pastor. Added that the speaker thoughts from the November 21, 2024 Implementation & Technical Assistance Committee Meeting could also be applied to the broader Commission. Confirmed that there are no action items requiring a Commission vote as part of this report. Reiterated that much of the work of the Committee will happen later in the process. Expressed interest in discussions with the Framework Committee.

Pastor: Wondered about how to engage California tribes. Offered virtual consideration given geographical spread.

Estes: Provided update that Commissioner Hedrick noted to add this content to the Community Engagement Plan. Announced an upcoming digital engagement strategy, following the development and execution of a future contract. Noted the digital divide as a challenge and commitment to going to communities. Expressed plans to partner with the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation's recently-hired Tribal Liaison.

Maldonado: Suggested that staff provide support on community engagement activities. Suggested toolkit outlining how to poll attendees and questions to ask to aggregate data across all engagement activities for better insights on themes and trends.

Salas: Agreed. Also emphasized that community engagement events are also guided by the conversations that communities want to have.

Maldonado: Modified recommendation to be that staff collect a baseline of tools for standardizing collection of data that may be unique to each geography.

Estes: Noted that one way of capturing this information is through graphic notetaking. Reflected back the need to develop a standard practice in agenda structure and discussion questions.

Salas: Emphasized the need to have plain, accessible language included as part of the toolkit.

Motion to adopt Community Engagement Plan with amendments from Committee and Commission discussions and engage staff in developing baseline tools for standard intervention by Commissioner Matthews and seconded by Commissioner Maldonado.

Motion passes (11-0-0*). *Marks abstention or absence from vote.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Agenda Item #5: Executive Director's Report

Dr. Larissa Estes, Executive Director, Racial Equity Commission

Commission Discussion

Salas: Recommended that the proposed value of “addressing historical wrongs” include prevention. Offered a re-worded value of “addressing and preventing historical wrongs.”

Matthews: Affirmed list of proposed values. Expressed need to note power-sharing, whether as a value or somewhere else in the roadmap.

Estes: Encouraged discussion on this suggestion from Commissioners.

Bowles: Agreed with Commissioner Matthews. Highlighted a positive example from the Department of Developmental Services that revised rules for funding regional center services for people with disabilities so that people using the services now have more agency in determining how to spend the funds.

Onodera: Agreed with proposed values. Emphasized importance of transparency and accountability.

Estes: Asked for clarification on whether to add it as an additional value.

Onodera: Encouraged addition of transparency and accountability as another value.

Wood: Agreed with addition of transparency and accountability as another value.

Pastor: Reflected that power-sharing should be an intermediate outcome, even if it is also in the outcomes, to make sure that community voices are powerful and outcomes happen.

Estes: Expressed that Commissioner Pastor’s thoughts prompted questions and thoughts on how to actualize or demonstrate the action of power-sharing. Highlighted that there will be more reflection about how to shift that model for change based on decided values.

Kim: Noted that “racial justice” is only mentioned in 12% of racial equity plans. Expressed desire to not exclude that language. Expressed desire to keep values as a tight set. Pushed for more operational values. Seconded Commissioner Salas on editing “address historical wrongs” value to note prevention of wrongs. Agreed with Commissioner Onodera on adding transparency and accountability to the values.

Matthews: Expressed preference for power-sharing to be incorporated as an intermediate outcome. Agreed with Commissioner Salas on including language about the prevention of wrongs in the “address historical wrongs” value. Agreed with Commissioner Onodera on adding transparency and accountability to the values.

Estes: Summarized amendments, consisting of adding “transparency and accountability” collectively as one additional value and editing “address historical wrongs” to “address and prevent historical wrongs.”

Motion to approve proposed values with amendments by Commissioner Wright and seconded by Commissioner Salas.

Motion passes (11-0-0*). *Marks abstention or absence from vote

Commission Discussion

Salas: Recommended that Strategic Objective is edited to become “The Racial Equity Framework is used to advance equity, address structural racism, and shift power.”

Richardson: Affirmed that suggestion.

Matthews: Echoed that affirmation.

Kim: Agreed with suggestion. Noted need for more detail on meaning of power-sharing if included in such a prominent spot within the theory of change.

Wood: Asked for thoughts on recommended language.

Kim: Offered elaboration of shared power between government and constituents impacted by or served by state government.

Estes: Reminded Commissioners also have the option of directing staff to workshop the language outside of the meeting.

Matthews: Recommend workshoping outside of the Commission and bringing it back since it is the strategic objective.

Kim: Agreed with Commissioner Matthews.

Wood: Asked for other input on the model for change.

Bowles: Expressed desire to note power-sharing as a fourth intermediate outcome. Expressed interest in exploring what intermediate outcome represents a shift in power.

Matthews: Expressed desire to include power-sharing in the strategic objective too.

Bowles: Agreed with Commissioner Matthews. Noted recommendation that power-sharing appear in both intermediate outcomes and strategic objective.

Pastor: Agreed with incorporating power-sharing in intermediate outcomes and strategic outcome so that it is measured. Offered language of “democratizing” for the outcome. Brainstormed “democratizing power so that all residents in California have a voice in decisions,” with acknowledgement that this language needs further edits.

Maldonado: Noted that intermediate outcome reads more as strategy. Agreed with Commissioner Pastor that an outcome should have a number or measurable indicator.

Estes: Noted that activities are different from strategies. Raised consideration of plain language and “democracy” as being reported as not a bridging term. Noted that staff will continue editing. Emphasized need to talk about the model for change in plain language and holding ourselves accountable to that.

Hedrick: Expressed alignment with democracy using words such as “decision-making power,” specifically exploring where this power rests. Expanded on this idea with outcomes examples such as shifts in where money is held, who is deciding how the money is spent, land, land use, state resources, and what communities are being reached by those resources.

Pastor: Agreed with feedback from Commissioner Hedrick.

Richardson: Recommended defining power as authority, influence, and control.

Matthews: Noted that power may connect to money but that money is outside of the scope of the Commission.

Commission Discussion

Salas: Noted that “Community Engagement” should be a Community Engagement and Report Back.”

Estes: Clarified that this outline is primarily identifying the topic. Reflected back the importance of ongoing engagement. Encouraged action words to title these areas.

Salas: Agreed with framing of “Ongoing Community Engagement.”

Kim: Asked for clarification of whether the framework outline is coming from the Framework Committee.

Estes: Clarified that this framework is from staff. Described the outline as capturing contents of the Executive Order and a way of starting to organize ideas.

Kim: Asked for clarification on the process of content development and how the Implementation & Technical Assistance Committee should expect to engage with the material.

Estes: Invited conversation with the Implementation & Technical Assistance Committee to begin strategizing how recommended strategies might be applied and to advise other Committees as they develop the framework.

Kim: Agreed that Committee could engage with staff on developing a logic model before receiving more developed content. Suggested that other Committee recommendations be calibrated to a level of specificity to confirm that they are implementable.

Estes: Agreed with that suggestion. Noted that staff will explore how to facilitate that collaboration under the Bagley-Keene Act.

Bowles: Expressed desire to receive asset analysis to determine framework outline.

Salas: Asked a clarifying question about whether the outline approval would support staff in being able to continue in their work.

Estes: Confirmed that approving the outline would be helpful and could be treated as a starting point.

Maldonado: Suggested that the Commission discuss the intended outcome and goals of this framework, then work backwards to create the outline. Cautioned against creating an overly-academic, overly-aspirational, and overly-intellectual framework.

Motion to approve the draft framework outline by Commissioner Salas and seconded by Commissioner Richardson.

Motion passes (11-0-0*). *Marks abstention or absence from vote

Public Comment

No public comment.

Agenda Item #6: Commission Research Updates

Commissioner Dr. Luke Wood, Chair

Dr. Larissa Estes, Executive Director, Racial Equity Commission

Commissioner Dr. Manuel Pastor

Gabriela Torres, Ph.D. Candidate, Education, University of Southern California

Maiya Hotchkiss, Ph.D. Candidate, Social Work, University of Southern California

Clara Alvarez Caraveo, PhD. Candidate, Sociology, University of Southern California

Jordyn Patterson, Ph.D. Candidate, Sociology, University of Southern California

Dr. Amy Lerman, Executive Director, Possibility Lab at UC Berkeley

Julia Caplan, Executive Director, State of Equity

Holly Nickel, Racial Equity Strategist, State of Equity

A. GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH – EXPLORING RACIAL INEQUITIES AND DISPARITIES IN KEY TOPIC AREAS

- Gabriela Torres presented *Equity in Education: Racial Disparities in CA Community College Transfer Rates*.
- Maiya Hotchkiss presented *Equity in Safety: Disparities for Precarious Workers*.
- Jordyn Patterson presented *Equity in Disciplinary Practice: Controlling Images, Adultification Bias, and the Criminalization of Black Girls in Education*.
- Clara Alvarez Caraveo presented *Equity in Health: Uninsurance Rates and Unmet Medical Need Across Race and Space*.

Commission Discussion

Salas: Noted importance of visibility of data. Emphasized the difference between legalization and decriminalization. Highlighted importance of enrollment and outcomes.

Matthews: Discussed importance of knowing where to look for, interrogate, and ask questions of data. Asked presenters about their decision to choose these topics.

Torres: Shared about firsthand experience working with Black and Brown students at community colleges and witnessing the disparities in access and outcomes.

Patterson: Shared that this topic is the focus of their Master's program.

Hotchkiss: Shared experience as a research coordinator for a NIH-funded study on self-defense for trans women.

Alvarez Caraveo: Shared lived experience witnessing healthcare disparities as a recipient of Medicaid while undocumented parents did not qualify.

Matthews: Reiterated the value of lived experience when looking at inequities and disparities across society.

Maldonado: Asked Hotchkiss about correlations between race and income or other non-racial factors on second slide of presentation. Discussed the need to make the framework around race whereas the policy and investments recommendations not about race.

Hotchkiss: Hypothesized that there is likely a correlation since those who have a low income have faced barriers to employment and are facing homelessness.

Maldonado: Asked Patterson about underlying reasons for the prevalence of attitudes and stereotypes in predominantly Black communities.

Patterson: Hypothesized that one underlying reason may be that adultification bias impacts all people of color, including Black teachers, Black woman teachers, and Black girls.

Maldonado: Reiterated that the attitudes of white supremacy and the structures often become embedded in folks of color.

Wright: Encouraged that presenters continue their work.

B. ASSET ANALYSIS INITIAL FINDINGS

- Dr. Amy Lerman, Julia Caplan, and Holly Nickel presented initial findings from an asset analysis to support the development of the California Racial Equity Framework.

Commission Discussion

Maldonado: Asked for details about practical problems that agencies were trying to solve with their racial equity investments. Also asked about outcomes that resulted from these investments, with more anecdotal data and interviews about those outcomes.

Lerman: Discussed the cyclical relationship between capacity, rules, and the ability to do equity work. Named the positive effect of creating a community of practice that engenders exploration of deeper structures that prevent equity work and development of scalable solutions across departments and agencies. Highlighted the Strategic Growth Council as an example of an organization that provides a structure for departments and agencies to have a formal relationship with each other and engage in conversations about equity within and across their organizations. Noted that the main rationale behind racial equity investments for public-facing organizations was how to improve service delivery, as racial equity was often tied to the core mission.

Maldonado: Asked for concrete examples of practical problems and measurable outcomes to cultivate support from skeptics of racial equity investments.

Lerman: Highlighted the Labor and Workforce Development project on COVID workforce health and safety as an example of racial equity investments that led to clear outcomes in information dissemination, vaccine uptake, and census counts.

Matthews: Asked about whether racial equity plans articulated any desired outcomes and greater power-sharing racially within their organizations.

Lerman: Shared an example of reviewing promotion and retention data in addition to broader workforce diversity data.

Hedrick: Shared positive reaction to tribal relations as the top key program. Connected this positioning to the Executive Order requirements under Governor Brown and Governor Newsom. Encouraged the Commission to consider how Executive Orders and policies might influence other areas.

Lerman: Emphasized that many levers are available for framework implementation. Encouraged accountability.

Salas: Reflected on workforce capacity to conduct racial equity work and the need to incentivize racial equity capacity as a skill in the workplace. Asked for information about incentives to train, learn, and implement racial equity in the day-to-day work.

Lerman: Agreed with the importance of this point.

Nickel: Agreed that capacity is a major priority. Raised the issue that capacity as a priority is sometimes used as a reason to not take action. Noted that exploration of incentives for bilingual language skills or certificates for racial equity surfaced in interviews but that this exploration is still ongoing.

Kim: Requested the range of departments and programs that did respond as a follow-up to explore any trends in response quality by institution. Asked for case studies on challenges using data from internal and external perspectives.

Lerman: Confirmed that analysis is currently being conducted on whether systematic differences exist between responsive and non-responsive organizations. Discussed exploration of case studies related to power-sharing with communities and perceptions of this work by folks within community.

Estes: Acknowledged that this presentation consists of initial findings with more data to come. Cautioned the Commission about the limitations around providing a participants list due to research protections for participants. Noted that staffing and funding capacity may be limited for a 360°-type of review. Expressed interest in exploration but noted that it may need to be later in the future.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Agenda Item #7: 15-Minute Recess

Commissioner Dr. Luke Wood, Chair

Dr. Larissa Estes, Executive Director, Racial Equity Commission

Chair Wood called a recess at 4:52 PM.

Chair Wood called the meeting to order at 4:57 PM.

- Chair Wood called for a five-minute recess to adhere to schedule.

Agenda Item #8: DISCUSSION: Commission Discussion

Commissioner Dr. Luke Wood, Chair

Dr. Larissa Estes, Executive Director, Racial Equity Commission

Joyce Chiao, Consultant, Abundance

A. KEY THEMES AND REFLECTIONS FROM 2024 MEETINGS

Commission Discussion

Maldonado: Themes for Budget Equity include accountability and outcomes. Accountability needs to be embedded in outcomes. “Carrot and stick” concept surfaced across multiple categories. Create incentive and correction structure. Budget equity tool for agencies to understand the outcomes they are trying to achieve and the specific communities that they are impacting. Decision-making authority over the use of resources and money in the consumer’s control.

Salas: For community engagement, trends that emerged include accessible language. Simplicity. Invitation. Dedicating resources to be added into budget line items. Many departments do not have resources. Focusing on under-supported regions and lived experience. Community engagement needs to be ongoing and include those with lived experience. Financial incentives for community participation. Focus on tribal engagement.

Pastor: For data, responses boiled down to two themes. First is data disaggregation. Second is accountability, or using the data to measure whether outcomes are being achieved. Some responses around storytelling. Commissioners were concerned about who received the orange dot stickers. Noticed that the idea of how to help state agencies acquire tools to do the work has been part of conversations but did not seem to emerge under the Implementation & Technical Assistance responses.

Hedrick: May be captured as part of the response about finding customized support for departments. Most loved response was about state agencies needing mandates, not just goodwill. Technical assistance provided by experts from Black, Brown, and Native communities. Shared power by intentionally incorporating community partners. Accountability.

Chiao: Results from Other category. First is implementation of a State Office of Racial Equity. Second is legal. Interpreting tribes as sovereign nations and therefore not subject to Prop 209. Third is asset survey should have required 100% participation.

Richardson: Refreshing to see alignment and shared agreements.

B. REVISITING THE AIM STATEMENT AND COMMISSION CHARGE

- Moved to a future opportunity to conduct this discussion.

Public Comment

Monica Madrid of CHIRLA, Cynthia Gomez of CHIRLA, Elena Santamaria of NextGen CA, and Ronald Coleman Baeza of California Pan-Ethnic Health Network.

Agenda Item #9: Next Steps for Staff Action

Commissioner Dr. Luke Wood, Chair

Dr. Larissa Estes, Executive Director, Racial Equity Commission

Commission Discussion

No Commission Discussion.

Agenda Item #10: Meeting Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:43 PM.