

We've Been Waiting And Are Ready For You:

A Framework for Creating a Climate and Culture of
Equity & Inclusion for Black Students

February 25, 2021

Rogéair D. Purnell, MSW, PhD

RDP Consulting



What Are Our Objectives

To create/maintain a culture and climate that supports Black student success by...

1. Understanding and grounding our work in Black students' experience (**Listen**)
2. Identifying what we're doing that is and is not working and what we need to change to effectively support black students' success (**Learn**)
3. Considering a framework to inform institutional transformation (**Learn**)
4. Outlining aspects of climate and culture that support Black student success (**Level Up**)



What Do We Mean By Culture & Climate

The following table was developed by Steve Gruenert and Todd Whitaker and is drawn from their books, *School Culture Rewired* and *School Culture Recharged*, respectively.

CULTURE	CLIMATE
...is the college's personality	...is the college's heart and soul
...provides for a limited way of thinking	...creates a state of mind
...takes years to evolve	...is easy to change
...is based on values and beliefs	...is based on perceptions
...can't be felt, even by administrators, faculty, staff, and students	...can be felt when you enter a room
...is "the way we do things around here"	...is "the way we feel around here"
...determines whether or not improvement is possible	...is the first thing that improves when positive change is made

Understanding and grounding our work in **Black students' experience**



Student Voices and Stories...



souleymane yattara



Jesse Taylor

Factors Negatively Affecting Black Students' Experiences

- **PREJUDICE**: incorrect, overgeneralized, or inflexible belief about a group associated with negative affect.
- **RACIAL DISCRIMINATION**: unequal treatment of individuals or groups based on race or ethnicity.
- **IMPLICIT BIAS**: refers to unconscious attitudes, reactions, stereotypes, and categories that affect behavior and understanding. In higher education, implicit bias often refers to unconscious racial or socioeconomic bias towards students.
- **INSTITUTIONAL RACISM**: structures, policies, practices, and norms that result in differential access to goods, services, and opportunities for participate racial groups.
- **SYSTEMIC OPPRESSION**: the intentional disadvantaging of groups of people based on their identity while advantaging members of the dominant group, such as gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and language.
- **MICROAGGRESSIONS**: intentional and unintentional slights, snubs, or insults which communicate negative, hurtful messages (Equity in the Center, 2020).



Students Tell Us That They Don't Feel We Are Waiting or Ready for Them

AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL:

- Isolation
- Invisibility
- Bias - racism, prejudice, microaggressions

AT THE CULTURAL LEVEL:

- Lack of caring
- Lack of transparency
- Lack of accountability

AT STRUCTURAL LEVEL:

- Unclear paths
- Inability to access or lack of needed resources
- Mixed messages



What Some Research Suggests...

- STEM faculty who **believe ability is fixed** have **larger racial achievement gaps** and inspire less student motivation (Canning et al., 2019).
- Faculty-student interaction, exposure to diversity, and usage of support services were **significant predictors of sense of belonging for Black men** attending community colleges (Wood & Harris, 2015).
- Students perceive **classrooms as sites of bias**-more so than faculty, and saw faculty's attempts to address it as a mixed bag (Boysen et al., 2009)
- Black male students who had **greater interactions with diverse peers increased their odds of being “very likely” to transfer** and increase sense of belonging (Wood & Palmer, 2013).



Identifying what we're doing that is and is not working and what we need to change to **effectively support black students' success**



How Do We Create a Culture & Climate for Black Students at the structural, cultural, & individual levels that is...

- **FAIR:** Personal and social circumstances do not prevent students from achieving their academic potential,
- **INCLUSIVE:** Basic minimum standard for education that is shared by all students regardless of background, personal characteristics, or location, and
- **PERSONALIZED:** Educational experiences and supports offered to address the distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, or cultural backgrounds of individual students

<https://www.thinkingmaps.com/equity-education-matters/>



We Need To Shift Our Thinking...

NOT STUDENT-CENTERED

Students are the subject and we are the object
(student blaming, college ready, deficit mindset)

- Why aren't Black students not being successful?
- Why are Black students not taking advantage of available supports?
- Black students are a monolithic group
- Black students have achievement gaps

STUDENT-CENTERED

We are the subject and students are the object!
(focus on practice/policy, strength/asset based, student ready, growth mindset)

- What are we doing to advantage white students?
- What are we doing that is not supportive to Black students?
- There is diversity among Black students that we need to recognize
- Black students are experiencing equity gaps

Factors Positively Affecting Black Students' Experiences

- **EQUITY:** dismantling of oppressive systems (structural, cultural, and individual) and creating a college community where success is not predictable by race.
- **RACE EQUITY:** the condition where one's race identity has no influence on how one fares in society (Equity in the Center, 2020).
- **GROWTH MINDSET:** most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point (Dweck, 2015).
- **STUDENT-CENTERED:** nurture and address students' learning needs, interests, aspirations, or cultural backgrounds.
- **VALIDATION THEORY:** upholds students as creators of knowledge and as valuable members of our college learning community.
- **CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY:** teaching that acknowledges, responds to, and celebrates fundamental cultures offers full, equitable access to education for students from all cultures (The Education Alliance, Brown University).





Umoja has 18 practices organized around these 7 values

1. **Students Are Our Highest Priority** (serving to promote student success for all students)
2. **Touching the Spirit** (using a holistic approach to reach each student—Body, Mind, and Spirit)
3. **Building Community** (creating an environment that encourages students to be accountable to each other's learning)
4. **Connections to the African Diaspora** (expanding students' cultural awareness of the diaspora and articulating their place in that experience)
5. **Ethic of Love** (expressing compassion and care in the learning community)
6. **Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Practices** (developing curriculum relevant to the students' lives for learning)
7. **Ritual** (engaging in cultural practices rooted in African traditions to strengthen the community and the people within the community)

Learn about our events on our website: Umojacomunity.org/events

Umoja is a 501c3 nonprofit organization.

MISSION

Umoja, (a Kiswahili word meaning unity) is a community and critical resource dedicated to enhancing the cultural and educational experiences of African American and other students. We believe that when the voices and histories of students are deliberately and intentionally recognized, the opportunity for self-efficacy emerges and a foundation is formed for academic success. Umoja actively serves and promotes student success for all students through a curriculum and pedagogy responsive to the legacy of the African and African American Diasporas.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook: @UmojaCommunity
Instagram: @UmojaEdu
Twitter: @Umojaedu



CONTACT US

P.O. Box 188067
Sacramento, CA 95818
Umojacomunity.org
916.661.6455



theRPgroup
Research • Planning • Professional Development
for California Community Colleges

Umoja Makes a Positive Difference in Students' First Year (leading indicators)

Umoja students vs. Non-Umoja students...

- Enrolled in an average of 3 more units
- Earned an average of 2 more units
- Successfully completed their first-year coursework at a rate that was 3.4 percentage points higher

Umoja Students Outperform Peers on Certain Intermediate-term Outcomes (lagging indicators)

Umoja students vs. Non-Umoja students...

- Completed transfer-level English in one year at more than double the rate
- Completed transfer-level math within three years at a rate 7.6 percentage points higher
- Completed both transfer-level English and math within three years at a rate that was 7 percentage points higher

Umoja Students Outperform Peers on Certain Long-term Outcomes (lagging indicators) - *cont.*

Umoja students vs. Non-Umoja students...

- Earned a Chancellor's Office-approved award within four years at a rate that was double
- Earned an associate degree at a rate that was double
- Earned an Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) at a rate that was more than three times
- Became transfer ready at a rate that was more than double

Umoja Builds a Sense of Community for Students

Shared specific ways program had:

- Sparked their motivation and focus
- Nurtured their personal growth
- Boosted their academic success

Reported most important Umoja program elements as...

- Supportive faculty, staff, and student relationships and bonds
- Sponsored courses that provide safe, supportive space to share, with focus on relevant curricula and assignments

The Importance of Belonging and Acceptance to Black Student Success (2020)-

https://rpgroup.org/Portals/0/Documents/Projects/Umoja_Evaluation/Resources/umojaBrief_digital_final.pdf?ver=2020-03-08-132907-650

The Ethic of Love Infographic (2020)-

https://rpgroup.org/Portals/0/Documents/Projects/Umoja_Evaluation/Resources/UmojaInfographic_digital_final.pdf?ver=2020-03-08-132910-127

Once Black Students Reach Key Milestones, They Are Most Likely to Transfer... But Too Few Get This Far

Findings:

- 75% Black students who make it near or at the gate ultimately transfer — *highest among any ethnic group*
- Yet, many Black students do not make it past 30 units in six years

Question for Reflection:

- What can the college do to get more Black students near or at the gate?

https://rpgroup.org/Portals/0/Documents/Projects/ThroughtheGate/TransferStoriesAndStrategies_FINAL.pdf?ver=2020-10-08-164202-620

Considering a framework to inform institutional transformation



Guided Pathways and Equity 2.0 Framework at Foothill



CONNECTION

From interest in college enrollment to application

ENTRY

Enrollment to completion of first college-level course

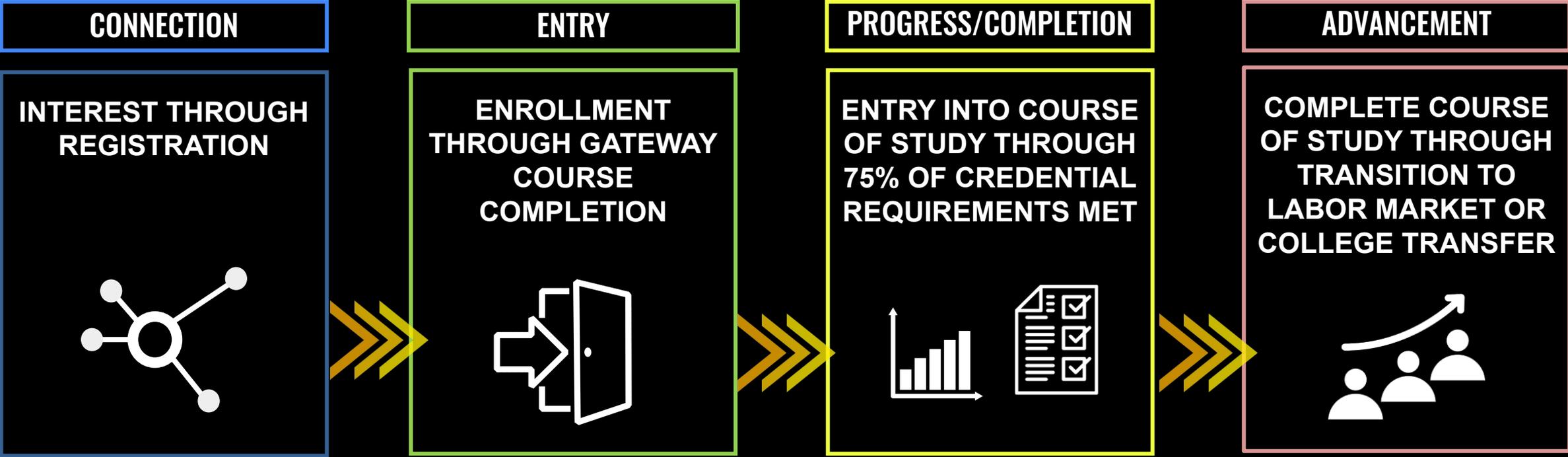
PROGRESS

Entry into program of study to 75% of requirement completion

COMPLETION

Complete program of study to credential with labor market value

LOSS/MOMENTUM FRAMEWORK



- ← Leadership focused on completion and successful student outcomes →
- ← Proactive student engagement →
- ← Technology to support student engagement →
- ← Local and state policies that support student progress →

How We Can Serve Our Black Students Better?*

* From Equity Strategic Plan

CONNECTION

- Broader outreach
- More effective onboarding
- Attention to ensuring applicants register and attend classes

ENTRY

- Address students' basic needs
- Expand access to and limit eligibility requirements for programs
- Consider how current spaces serve students
- Examine where services are located and how that affects access



How Well Do We Serve Black Students?*

* From Equity Strategic Plan

PROGRESS/COMPLETION

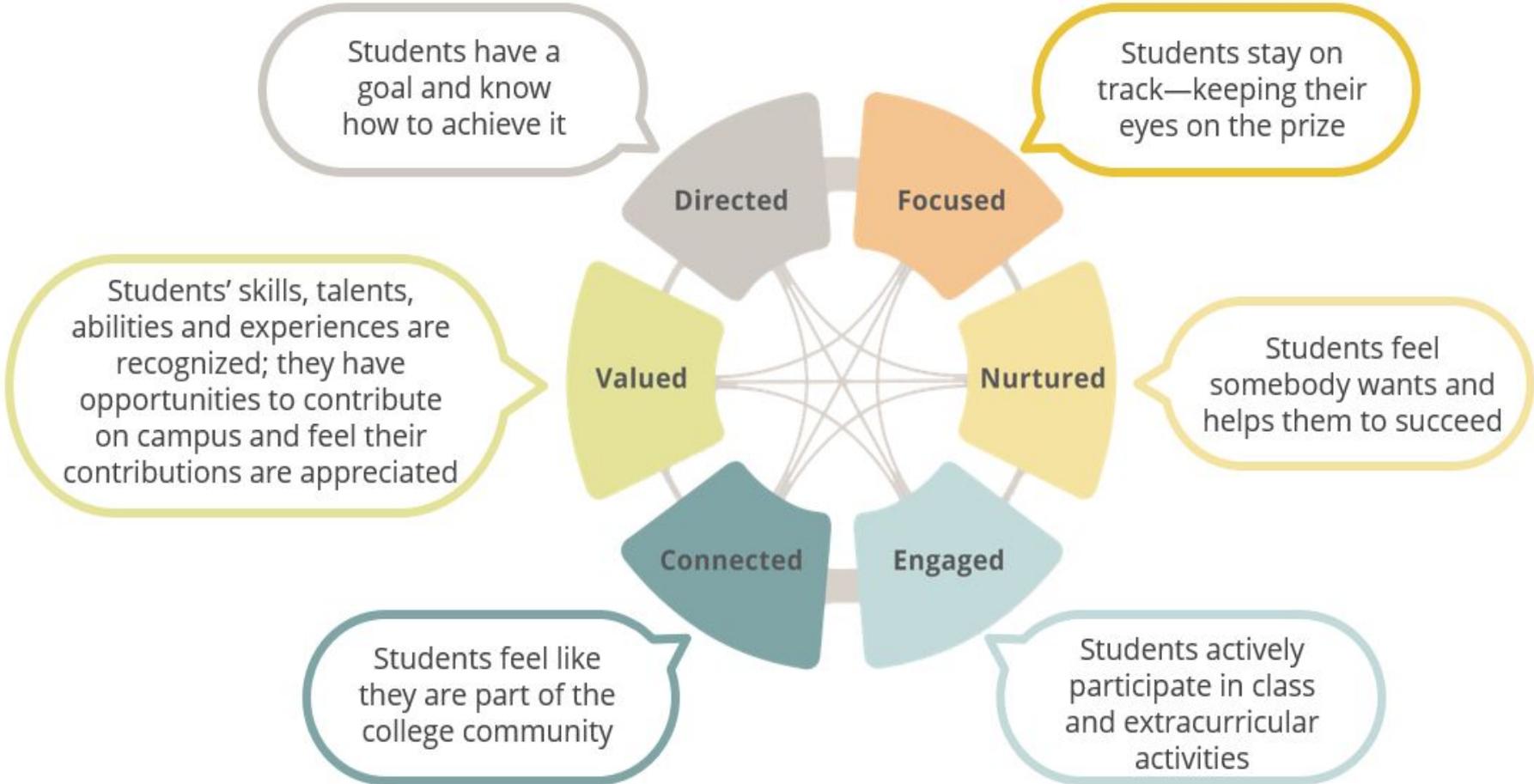
- Offer programs that are focused, streamlined, flexible, and accelerated
- Examine demos and enrollment patterns of students who take courses online to id needed resources
- Recognize and address implicit bias, stereotype threat, racism, tokenism, etc.
- Prioritize Black student retention
- Expand access to and eligibility requirements for programs
- Diversify faculty - who teaches a course affects who and what is taught -
- Insist on culturally responsive pedagogy / curriculum
- Focus on structural changes as part of equity efforts that will improve culture and climate
- Promote peer-to-peer interactions

ADVANCEMENT

- Demand accountability to equity strategies and their successful implementation
- Prioritize Black student persistence and completion with attention to closing equity gaps



Six Success Factors

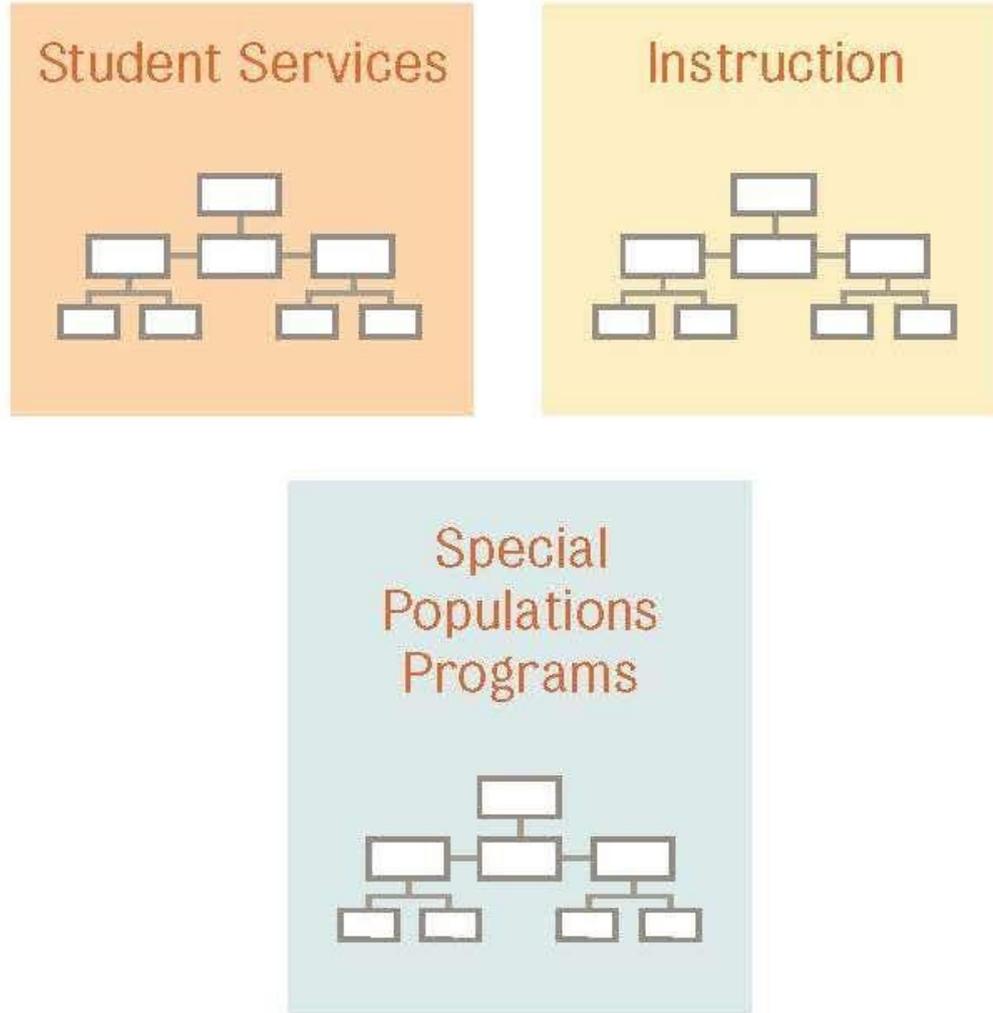


Student Support (Re)defined Focus Groups: Student Quotes by Success Factor
https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/0B3H_pY9T2ulbfmtBM29GR2p2RU5kOGNkaHRjeGtRWHVQOTZPMXdFSU9zRmFpNUE5amowVFK

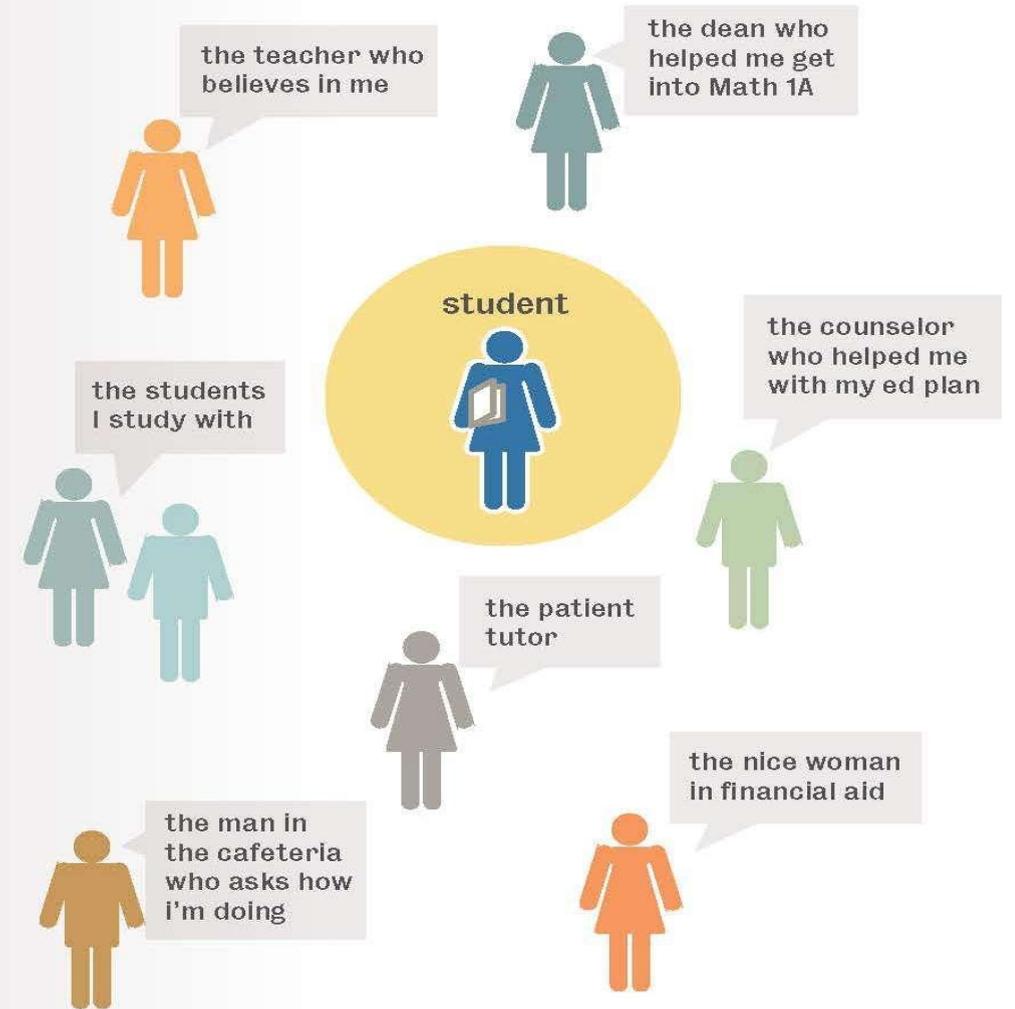
Key Themes

1. Colleges need to foster student motivation.
2. Colleges must teach students how to succeed in the postsecondary environment.
3. Colleges need to structure support to ensure all six success factors are addressed.
4. Colleges need to provide comprehensive support to historically underserved students to prevent the equity gap from growing.
5. Everyone has a role to play in supporting student achievement, but faculty must take the lead.

What we see...



What the student experiences...



Differing Perspectives on the Student Experience

Directed and Focused: Key Findings for African-American Students

DIRECTED

- African-American students were more likely to cite the importance of **having programs and services available to help them successfully navigate college**

FOCUSED

- African-American students were more likely to indicate that **not passing a class** as a very important reason not to re-enroll

Engaged and Connected: Key Findings for African-American Students

ENGAGED

- African-American students were more likely to indicate that **working with diverse groups of students** positively affected their learning and that they **learn best when working with others**

CONNECTED

- African-American students were more likely to be report **spending their time outside of class on campus alone**

Nurtured and Valued: Key Findings for African-American Students

NURTURED

- African-American students were more likely to say that **having someone at the college who cared about them** was a key motivating factor in their decision to return to the college the following semester

VALUED

- African-American students were more likely to indicate that **feeling valued was important to their success**

What Welcoming and Readiness Looks Like...

“I went to a predominately white school and it was really hard to find my identity. But once I got here at Foothill I made many **friends in the BSU** [Black Student Union], I was really able to find my identity and explore myself.” - African American student

“The counselors here are super **nice and understanding** and helped me find my way at Foothill.” - African American student/DRC student

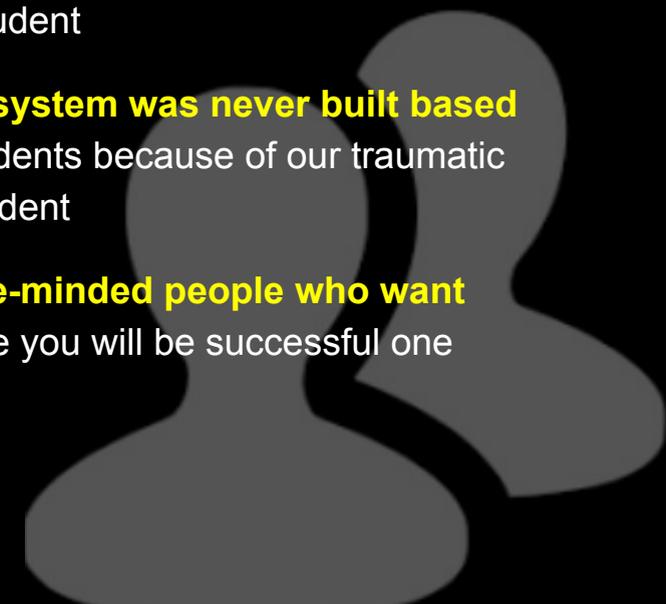
“Having a Black male as a **role model** has changed my perspective of Foothill. It has been a game changer for me.” African American student

“When Foothill released the **Black Lives Matter statement**, I felt like I belong here. One should be proud, head held high, and embrace every aspect of their “blackness” and know where they came from.” African American Student

“ In order to be successful, I need the colleges that I attend to realize that **Americans education system was never built based on the needs of African American students**. We need a different support system than other students because of our traumatic experiences.I would like to be able to meet black professionals in my field.” African American Student

"In order for me to be successful, I **need to be pushed by others and surround myself with like-minded people who want success just as much as me**. I highly believe that if you surround yourself with successful people you will be successful one day.” African American Student

Sources: Student Town Hall 2/17/21 & Equity Ambassador Dialogue Session November, 2020.



Outlining aspects of climate and culture
that supports **Black student success**

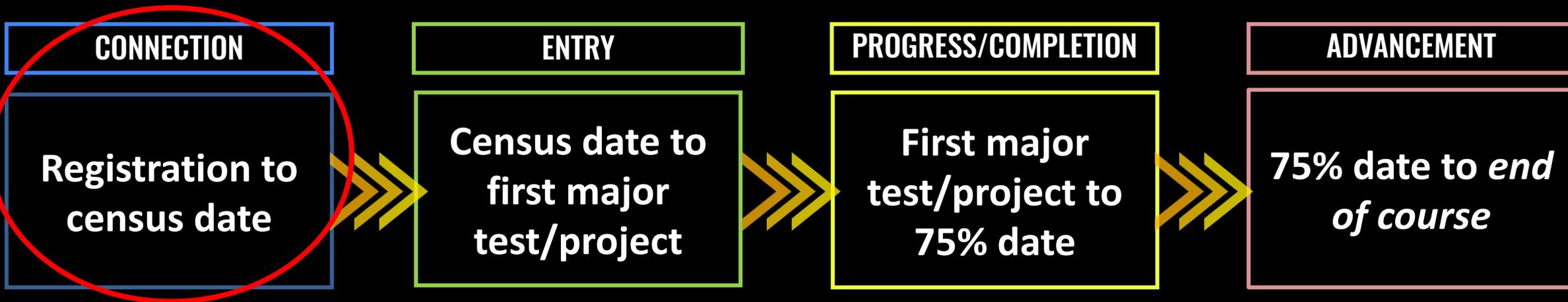


Climate and Culture of Equity & Inclusion



WHEN COLLEGES...	THROUGH COLLEGE EFFORTS SUCH AS...	THEN STUDENTS...
<p>FAir INclusive Personalized</p> <p>CUltural Individual Structural</p>	<p>[Strategies, activities, approaches, policies, processes]</p>	<p>Directed Focused Nurtured Connected Engaged Valued</p>

Climate and Culture of Equity & Inclusion



WHEN COLLEGES...	THROUGH COLLEGE EFFORTS SUCH AS...	THEN STUDENTS...
<p>Demonstrate to students how taking specific courses and completing key actions and milestones will lead them to their goal. (P, INC, I)</p> <p>FAir, INclusive, Personalized CUltural, Individual, Structural</p>	<p>Educational plans – contextualized general education courses – student-centered course scheduled</p>	<p>are more willing to take the necessary steps to reach their goal. (F)</p> <p>Directed Focused Nurtured Connected Engaged Valued</p>

Breakout Activity

1. Which strategies and activities will ensure that Black students know / feel that Foothill College has been waiting for and is ready for them? How and why?
 - Fair, (FA), inclusive (INC), and personalized (P) at individual (I), cultural (C), and structural (S) levels
2. What outcomes do we desire for Black students at the stages of connection, entry, progress / completion, and advancement?
 - Students are Directed (D), Focused (F), Connected (C), Engaged (E), Valued (V), and Nurtured (N)

**** 25-minutes for group activity and 20-minute report out ****

Google spreadsheet:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1eZ2sC9Vg4KXoQxkvWagq05x8Q4CUTB1jvZE5kaBFHZU/edit?usp=sharing>



Breakout Rooms:

- Rooms 1 & 2: CONNECTION
- Rooms 3 & 4: ENTRY
- Rooms 5 & 6: PROGRESS/COMPLETION
- Rooms 7 & 8: ADVANCEMENT



Joining Breakout Rooms...

Breakout Rooms: Report out

1. What is one strategy or activity you outlined to support a culture and climate that is fair, inclusive, and personalized at the individual, cultural, and structural levels for Black students? How and why?
2. How will this strategy or activity ensure that Black students are directed, focused, connected, engaged, nurtured, and valued?

**** 20-minute report out ****

Google spreadsheet:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1eZ2sC9Vg4KXoQxkvWagq05x8Q4CUTB1jvZE5kaBFHZU/edit?usp=sharing>



Recommended Readings

What is Student Support (Re)defined?

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5834c1702e69cfabd9617089/t/5a834d1cf9619a6bdee14dc1/1518554397382/Student+Support+%28Re%29defined+Project+Description+-+Summer+2014.pdf>

(Re)designing for Student Success: Applying Lessons and Resources from Student Support (Re)defined and Completion by Design

<https://rpggroup.org/Portals/0/Documents/Projects/StudentSupportReDefined/Redesigning-For-Student-Success-Oct2014.pdf>

What students say they need to succeed: Key themes from a study of student support

<https://rpggroup.org/Portals/0/Documents/Archive/StudentPerspectivesResearchBriefJan2013.pdf>

Student Experience Crosswalk: Where Student Support (Re)defined and Guided Pathways Meet

https://rpggroup.org/Portals/0/Documents/Projects/StudentSupportReDefined/Resources/SSRD_GP-Crosswalk-UPDATED-June2020.pdf?ver=2020-06-04-101820-507



References

Boysen, G. A., Vogel, D. L., Cope, M. A., & Hubbard, A. (2009). Incidents of bias in college classrooms: Instructor and student perceptions. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 2(4), 219.

Brown, S. (2020) Auditing injustice: Banding Together to Fight Racism. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. 66 (33). p. 6.

Canning, E. A., Muenks, K., Green, D. J., & Murphy, M. C. (2019). STEM faculty who believe ability is fixed have larger racial achievement gaps and inspire less student motivation in their classes. *Science advances*, 5(2), eaau4734.

Cooper, D.M., Nguyen, A., Karandjeff, K., Purnell, R., Kretz, A., Rodriguez-Kiino, D., Chaplot, P., and Nguyen, K. (2020) Students Speak Their Truth about Transfer: What They Need to Get Through the Gate, The RP Group.

Collymore, K.V. (2020, July 1) Colleges must confront structural racism: Here are steps they should now. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Crandall, C. S., & Warner, R. H. (2005). How a prejudice is recognized. *Psychological Inquiry*, 16(2/3), 137-141.

Felix, E. R., & Castro, M. F. (2018). Planning as strategy for improving Black and Latinx student equity: Lessons from nine California community colleges. *education policy analysis archives*, 26, 56.



References - *cont.*

Felix, E. R., Bensimon, E. M., Hanson, D., Gray, J., & Klingsmith, L. (2015). Developing agency for equity-minded change. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 2015(172), 25-42.

Harper, S. R., & Kuykendall, J. A. (2012). Institutional efforts to improve Black male student achievement: A standards-based approach. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 44(2), 23-29.

Harris, F. & Wood, L., (n.d). Addressing Unconscious Bias to Create an Inclusive Campus Community.

Iloh, C., & Toldson, I. A. (2013). Black students in 21st century higher education: A closer look at for-profit and community colleges (Editor's Commentary). *The Journal of Negro Education*, 82(3), 205-212.

Ramirez, J. (2019). Building an Adaptive Transfer Culture in California. *Peer Review*, 21(3), 19-25.

Staats, C. (2016). Understanding Implicit Bias: What Educators Should Know. *American Educator*, 39(4), 29.

Wood, J. L., & Harris III, F. (2015). The effect of academic engagement on sense of belonging: A hierarchical, multilevel analysis of black men in community colleges. *Spectrum: A Journal on Black Men*, 4(1), 21-47.

Wood, J. L., & Palmer, R. T. (2013). The likelihood of transfer for Black males in community colleges: Examining the effects of engagement using multilevel, multinomial modeling. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 82(3), 272-287.



Thank you!

Rogéair D. Purnell, MSW, PhD

RDP Consulting

rdpconsult@gmail.com

www.r-d-p-consulting.com

