



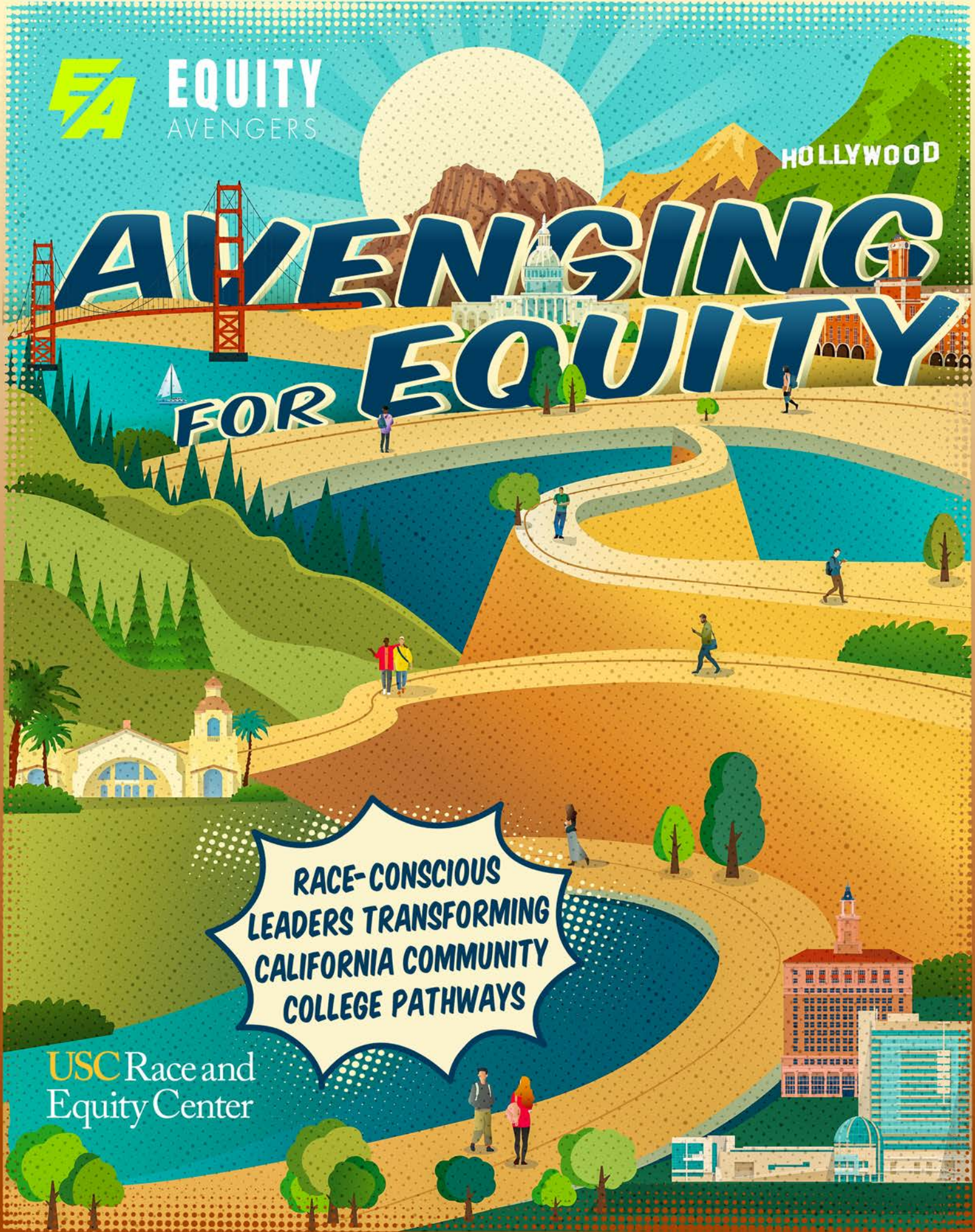
EQUITY
AVENGERS

HOLLYWOOD

AVENGING FOR EQUITY

**RACE-CONSCIOUS
LEADERS TRANSFORMING
CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY
COLLEGE PATHWAYS**

USC Race and
Equity Center



PREFACE

This special issue in our Solutions Briefs series, co-branded with the Equity Avengers, illustrates courageous leadership, effective racial equity problem-solving, and approaches to dismantling white supremacy and systemic racism in policies, practices, and programs across California Community Colleges. This brief series is published in an exciting graphic novel format with artwork from *Bridgegood*, formerly Oakland Digital Arts & Literacy Center. BRIDGEGOOD.org helps students build skills to secure creative design careers, and all of the artists in this issue are former California community college students.

The briefs feature authors from the Racial Equity Commission for California Community Colleges, a group of leaders in the system who over two years have reimagined community colleges to remove longstanding barriers for students of color. Originally, the commission focused on embedding racial equity in guided pathways. Our commission's focus quickly pivoted away from focusing exclusively on guided pathways to problems more deeply rooted in the foundation of our institutions. The 30-member Commission includes students, faculty, counselors, directors, deans, vice presidents/vice chancellors, and college presidents/chancellors. With an emphasis on action, this special issue starts the Racial Equity Guided Pathways series with leaders answering racial equity questions based on their experience implementing guided pathways. Some of the key questions these leaders answer regarding each pillar are:

- How do we develop, mentor, and cultivate the next generation of equity leaders?
- How can we cultivate communities to validate, uplift, and support each other's racial equity efforts?
- How do we build coalitions so all people on campus utilize their role to advance equity?

This entire series is organized in a conversational interview format. We aim for these stories to show personal and relatable conceptions of race-conscious leadership so that readers can be inspired by the different paths people take to become leaders and equity champions, no matter their roles or identities.

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INTRODUCTION

When the USC Race and Equity Center first unveiled the Guided Pathways Racial Equity Commission back in December of 2021, some individuals in the field branded us as mere bullies, posturing as equity warriors while students of color languished in the morass of developmental math and English. They dismissed our efforts, urging everyone not to be swayed by the ‘equity gap hype’ and highlighting race-neutral reforms that, they claimed, hadn’t adversely affected students of color but had yielded improved success rates for them. They accused us of standing on the sidelines.

Regrettably, I’m no stranger to these attacks on leaders and practitioners who dare to center the experiences and specific needs of Asian American, Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Multiracial, and Pacific Islander community college students. Requesting data, resorting to name-calling, and issuing challenges are distractions that, at times, serve as formidable roadblocks to those who relentlessly pursue racial equity in every conceivable space—be it the classroom, counseling, research, or student services. Unfortunately, these detractors fail to see that centering race in our radical reimagining of students’ pathways to success does not diminish the work of others. Their fear stems from our collective efforts to construct our own tables and harness the immense power we wield when we unite.

I had the privilege of crossing paths with Drs. Curry and Luster when I served as the president of Laney College. They were the original *Equity Avengers* and #RealCollege presidents, and we collaborated with other CEOs statewide to combat food and housing insecurity among our students. Through a multifaceted approach encompassing research, advocacy, and the elevation of students and practitioners, I’ve witnessed the incredible impact we’ve made in just five short years. They were the pioneers

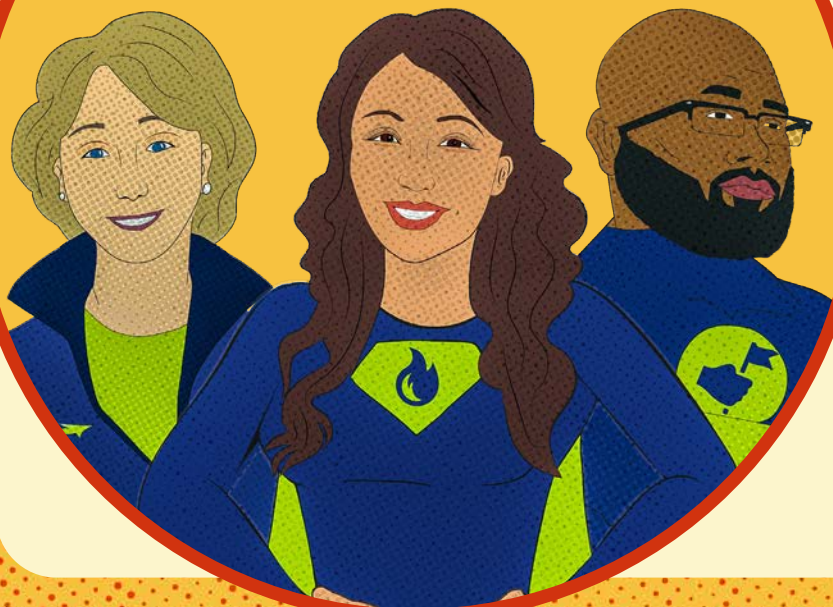
behind the Affordability, Food & Housing Access Taskforce, and their unapologetic and unwavering belief in students and the transformative potential of our institutions has taught me invaluable lessons. Together, as *Equity Avengers*, we act as connectors and co-conspirators, amplifying the research, leadership, and nationwide efforts to disrupt, engage, educate, and empower those passionately dedicated to eliminating racial equity gaps in higher education.

I had the honor and privilege of directly contributing to the *Avenging for Equity* series, spending time with these race-conscious leaders on the frontlines. In every role they assume, they embody tenacity, questioning, investigation, innovation, iteration, pushing boundaries, and breaking barriers. These reflections only scratch the surface of their unyielding commitment in the face of the usual resistance encountered when brilliant,

DR. TAMMEIL GILKERSON
EVERGREEN VALLEY COLLEGE

DR. PAMELA LUSTER
SAN DIEGO MESA COLLEGE

DR. KEITH CURRY
COMPTON COLLEGE



passionate, and relentless people of color strive to make a difference. They've chosen authenticity over conformity and courage over comfort. They exemplify the opportunity present in every facet of our institutions to delve deeper, confront our realities, and drive reforms that dismantle the supremacy of one group over another in how we perceive and support our students on their academic journeys.

Recently, Dr. Curry's son participated in a superhero-themed day at school. Students who dressed as superheroes were promised extra points to redeem at the student store. His son proudly donned an *Equity Avengers* t-shirt, rightfully viewing his father as a superhero. However, his teacher rebuffed him, insisting that *Equity Avengers* are not superheroes, denying him the extra points he deserved. I was incensed. This experience mirrored a familiar response—the colonizer and colonized authority framework that requires concrete proof to acknowledge facts and realities, disregarding the experiences and lived truths of our students. I recall a faculty leader once questioning, 'Why are we focusing on the experiences of Black students when they comprise only 2% of our student population?' Another individual asked, 'Is it statistically significant?' when presented with statewide survey results from over 66,000 students regarding their most basic needs—stable food and housing. And now, 'Equity Avengers aren't superheroes.' To that, I say, 'Kiss my grits.'

We harbor a shameful history of racism deeply entrenched in the United States' legacy, interwoven into the very fabric of our educational institutions. We possess systems and conditions that obstruct access to fundamental human rights and perpetuate othering, creating rifts within communities that undermine solidarity and collective action.

Yet, these race-conscious leaders, along with countless others not featured in this series, are actively co-creating the world we deserve, one that our students rightfully deserve. Our collective efforts serve as the antidote to racist systems, structures, and conditions. I remain resolute in our quest to assess how our colleges grapple within this same context and how we can humanize our classrooms and services for our students.

Let us find ways to engage in meaningful dialogue, share our experiences, heal, and collaboratively design solutions with our students. Let us reaffirm our commitment to providing access to a quality education that offers both students and employees the chance to live without fear, access economic security, and engage in learning and work within an emotionally safe environment. Let us remain steadfast in the face of detractors in every arena, those who seek to divert our attention from addressing what truly matters: racial injustice, criminal injustice reform, economic inequality, LGBTQIA+ and human rights, voting rights, environmental inequities, access to healthcare, and quality education.

The potential to be an *Equity Avenger* resides within each of us. The spirit of FUBU (For Us, By Us) endures.

Wage Love,

TAMMEIL GILKERSON

October 2023
Oakland, CA

DR. PAMELA LUSTER

SHE / HER / HERS

**PRESIDENT EMERITA
SAN DIEGO MESA COLLEGE**



DR. PAM LUSTER IS PRESIDENT EMERITA OF SAN DIEGO MESA COLLEGE, AND PRESIDENT/CEO OF LUSTER HIGHER ED GROUP, WORKING TO BRING EQUITABLE, JUST, AND INCLUSIVE PRACTICES TO HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERS AND INSTITUTIONS. SHE IS AN ADJUNCT PROFESSOR IN THE SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERSHIP. PREVIOUSLY, SHE SERVED AS THE VICE PRESIDENT OF STUDENT SERVICES, INTERIM VICE PRESIDENT OF INSTRUCTION, AND DEAN OF ACADEMIC SERVICES AT LAS POSITAS COLLEGE. AT WEST VALLEY COLLEGE, SHE HELD THE DEAN OF CAREER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT POSITION AND STARTED HER CAREER AS A FACULTY MEMBER IN THE DISABLED STUDENTS PROGRAM.

DR. KEITH CURRY

HE / HIM / HIS

**PRESIDENT
COMPTON COLLEGE**



DR. KEITH CURRY IS THE PRESIDENT OF THE COMPTON COLLEGE AND CEO OF THE COMPTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT. COMPTON COLLEGE IS THE 114TH CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE, ACHIEVING INITIAL ACCREDITATION STATUS ON JUNE 7, 2017. DR. CURRY IS RESPONSIBLE FOR OVERSEEING ALL DEPARTMENTS AND FUNCTIONS OF COMPTON COLLEGE AND THE DISTRICT AND SERVES AS SECRETARY FOR THE CCCD BOARD OF TRUSTEES. HE BRINGS AN ABUNDANCE OF ENERGY AND INNOVATIVE IDEAS TO COMPTON COLLEGE, ALONG WITH A WEALTH OF EXPERIENCE AS A POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION ADMINISTRATOR.

**DR. TAMMEIL
GILKERSON**

SHE / HER / HERS

**PRESIDENT
EVERGREEN VALLEY COLLEGE**



DR. GILKERSON IS PASSIONATE ABOUT BUILDING LEARNER-CENTERED INSTITUTIONS THAT REFLECT STUDENTS' LIVED EXPERIENCES, PROVIDE HOPE, AND PRACTICE LOVE. SHE RECOGNIZES THAT THE CORE OF THIS VISION IS THE NEED TO CULTIVATE AND NURTURE LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY BUILDING AT ALL INSTITUTIONAL LEVELS. THROUGH HER WORK, SHE CREATES SPACES WHERE INDIVIDUALS CAN BE LOVED, SUPPORTED, AND AFFIRMED AS THEY ENGAGE IN THE VULNERABLE ACT OF LEARNING AND LEADING WITH AUTHENTICITY, COURAGE, AND HUMILITY.

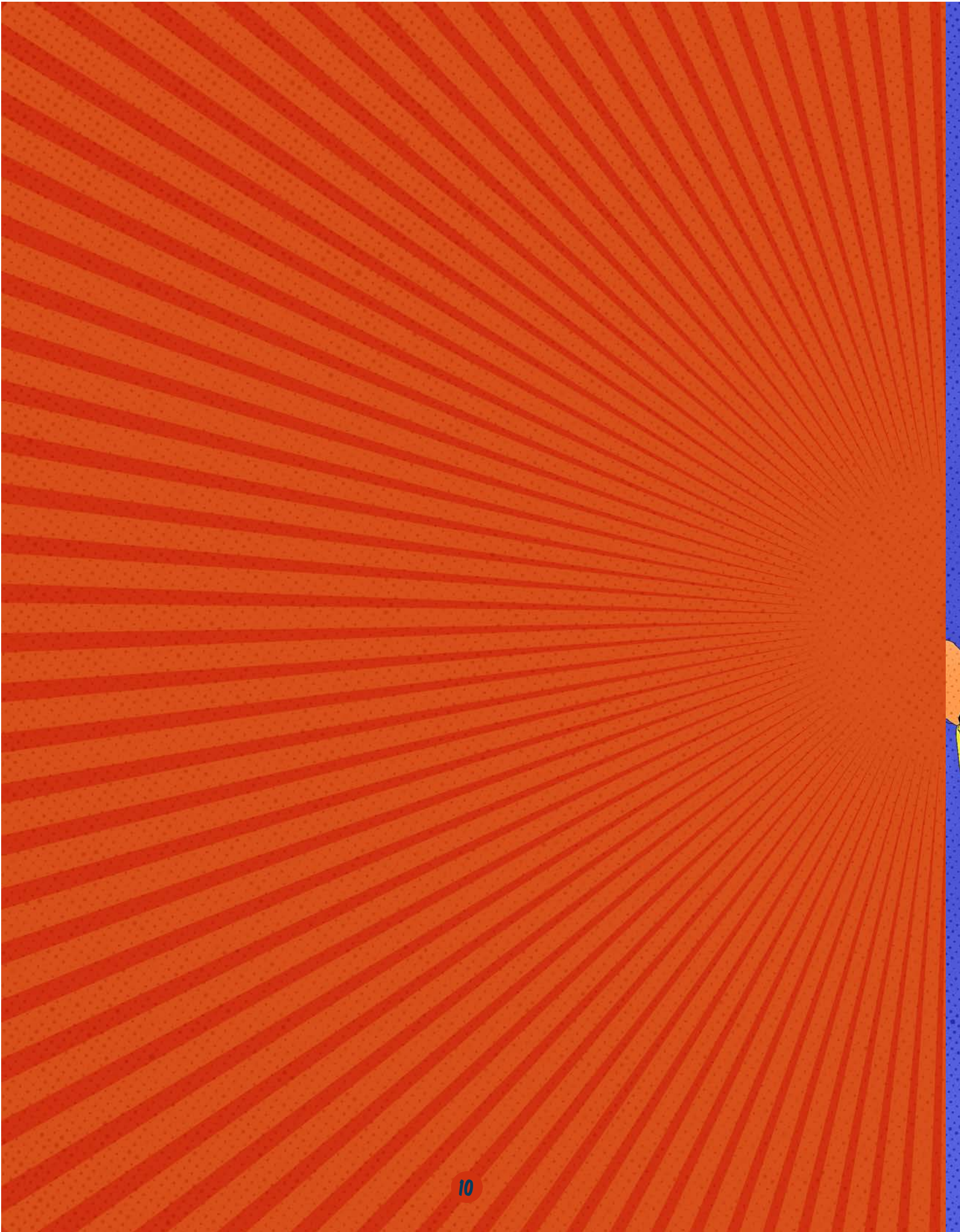
**EA EQUITY
AVENGERS**

MISSION

OUR MISSION IS TO ENGAGE, EDUCATE, AND EMPOWER HIGHER EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS TO ELIMINATE STUDENT OPPORTUNITY AND OUTCOME GAPS BY CULTIVATING PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES NECESSARY TO EMBED RACIAL EQUITY, CRITICAL HUMILITY, AND LEARNING ACROSS OUR SYSTEMS.

VISION

OUR VISION IS TO BUILD A HIGHER EDUCATION COMMUNITY FOCUSED ON ELIMINATING RACIAL EQUITY GAPS BY DEVELOPING AND SUPPORTING LEADERS WHO ACT AND DRIVE LARGE-SCALE CHANGE, RESULTING IN EQUITABLE STUDENT OUTCOMES.



STUDENT VOICES

EMPOWERING TOMORROW'S
LEADERS: CULTIVATING THE NEXT
GENERATION OF EQUITY AVENGERS

FEATURING
GUDELIA CISNEROS-WHITEROCK
EMMANUEL GÓMEZ





DR. TAMMIL GILKERSON (Q1): WHY DO YOU THINK IT'S IMPORTANT FOR COLLEGE LEADERS TO CENTER RACIAL EQUITY IN THEIR WORK TO GET STUDENTS OF COLOR TO COMPLETION BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT GUIDED PATHWAYS IS ABOUT? WHAT IS YOUR "WHY" AND WAS THERE SOMETHING THAT ACTUALLY SPARKED YOU TO BE INVOLVED AS AN EQUITY LEADER ON YOUR CAMPUS?



GUDELIA CISNEROS-WHITEROCK: When I reenrolled back in school, I had a ten year gap. There was a gap in my education because in Lake County, it's 50 miles north of Sonoma County, and it's really rural. There's a high poverty rate, high drug use, high domestic violence, and we're one of the poorest counties in the state of California. I got into

a car accident, and I fell into drug use right after at 19. It took until I was 26 to get clean, and I knew I wanted to go back to college. I re-enrolled in college, and I had a passion for human services to do a lot of outreach with the community, and I share with students that "You know you can go back to school?" The college is 40 minutes away, but there's not very many classes offered there, so what is readily available is the casinos and partying. Using drugs just becomes a cycle because it's what's readily available. And I'm seeing that there's this gap between even our students that go to college because I've seen Native American students and minority students go back to school. And there's this gap where there's no understanding of reading and writing. And some didn't even finish high school, some people have dropped out and then, and they just kind of fall out of the whole education system.



EMMANUEL GÓMEZ: I had already personally achieved my dream of going to automotive school and becoming a diesel mechanic, working on big trucks for a manufacturer like General Motors. Then, I ended up hurting my back and they had to implant this thing in me, so it was recommended that I avoid manual labor because once I got older, I would probably feel the consequences of it. That was my first reason why I turned to higher education. When I got to Pasadena City College, I started to

learn about so many resources available and not just student support, but curriculum, degrees, certificates, those types of resources. I started to get involved in clubs, trying to build a community in a new space. The key moment that made me really appreciate education was following an incident of police brutality and falsified reports and me going through trial as a defendant against the state of California. After months of trying to get a trial, then going to trial and unfortunately being convicted, I was so grateful that the judge presiding over my case took the time to look at my resumé and the letters of support from all these programs at PCC, recognizing the goals I had in education. At that point I realized that education is really the way to freedom in this country. It allowed them to suspend three years of jail time simply because I was involved in an educational track. That made me open up my eyes and recognize how important it was for me to be in school. That was the moment when I said, oh, my gosh, my perspective has been missing from this campus, and I want to let others know how important it is that education can literally prevent you from being in shackles.



DR. TAMMEIL GILKERSON
(Q2): **WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOU TO BE AN ADVOCATE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS?**

mine when I don't implement your advice into my life. I'm all ears. I want to listen, but I'm also going to revise it and try to pull out what works for me. Whoever your mentee is, it's very important that they know you're not judging them. It's a mutual relationship. It's not, "Hey, I'm older. I'm smarter, I've got in these degrees. This is the way." No, I want to know what helped you on your path, and maybe I can pick out some of that. I am not saying this in an ageist way, but ironically, older leadership can get in the way. It's like, why do they want to focus solely on what helped them when the current group of students lack the privilege they had. Cost of living is constantly changing. I've had experiences where professors kind of chuckle and say they paid only seven grand for their bachelor's degree. It's like, don't tell me that. That is not helping and it's making me look at you not in a relatable way. It doesn't even have to be our faculty or administration. I recognize the role that chancellors and trustees also have. I'm not throwing any shade, but it's crazy to me to know that there are trustees still governing the district of my college since before I was born. Unfortunately, other generations do not know how to be relevant to the present student. We're now at a point where Gen Z and even students that are currently in K-12, they are implementing inclusive ways of addressing others such as pronouns. Our professors are now implementing this because this is what the youth wants. We invest so much into marketing and targeting new students, but if you listen to the students, they're telling you what they want as the consumer in education and change only comes by listening to different perspectives.

GUDELIA CISNEROS-WHITEROCK: So kind of piggybacking off what Emmanuel said, it's the courage and the strength it takes to go against what has already been set up. It takes a lot to go from, "Oh, I'm good," to stepping out to be like, "No, this is this isn't okay." It takes a lot of personal growth to do that because I was once passive in situations where I saw things. I needed to step out of this, and it takes courage to use your voice to advocate for those around you. Why I do this is because growing up from a lower socio-economic group and a marginalized group, at first I saw education as a means to advance financially. However, it has also become a means to advocate for other tribal youth and impoverished teens and college students. For me personally, it means helping my fellow classmates overcome the barriers and obstacles that come our way as students from minority groups because we face barriers whether it be transportation or food or making it to classes on time. It's helping my fellow classmates recognize those are barriers, but there are ways around those barriers and obstacles.

EMMANUEL GÓMEZ: As an involved student, I think we hope to listen to find out how to pave the way for the next group of students and not get in their way. I want faculty and administrators to know that as students, we seek answers and/or advice to navigate this system based on our vision, our trajectory that we're aiming for. We want feedback but not unsolicited advice. I think it's very important that mentors or mentors or just anyone willing to help a student, recognizes that there is most likely a generational difference. Please don't get offended if you're a mentor of



**GUDELIA
CISNEROS-
WHITEROCK**

HER / HERS / SHE

**STUDENT
MENDOCINO COLLEGE**



I'M A MOTHER, RECOVERING ADDICT, FULL-TIME STUDENT, SPREADING THE MESSAGE OF HOPE, AND STRENGTH WHEN AND WHERE I CAN AS I WALK THROUGH LIFE. I LIVE IN GRATITUDE, STRENGTH, AND PERSEVERANCE. I AM FROM A RURAL TOWN IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA OF ABOUT 900 PEOPLE. I CURRENTLY LIVE IN LAKE COUNTY CALIFORNIA. LAKE COUNTY POSSESSES BEAUTY, HIKING, OUTDOOR ADVENTURES, AND THE OLDEST LAKE IN THE UNITED STATES. ALTHOUGH WITH ALL THE BEAUTY, LAKE COUNTY HAS A HIGH DRUG RATE, AND IS ONE OF THE POOREST COUNTIES IN CALIFORNIA. MY FATHER WAS A MEXICAN IMMIGRANT AND MY MOTHER A NATIVE AMERICAN WOMAN. GIVEN MY INTERSECTIONALITY IT IS HARD TO FATHOM EVERYTHING I HAVE ALREADY ACHIEVED. WITH THE ODDS AGAINST ME, I PERSEVERED, AND HAVE GRADUATED WITH ME A.S. I AM CURRENTLY ATTENDING CAL POLY HUMBOLDT FOR MY BSW. FROM THERE I CONTINUE WITH MY MSW. A TREMENDOUS PART OF MY LIFE IS WORKING IN THE TRIBAL COMMUNITY. I WILL FURTHER MY EDUCATION IN ORDER TO BRIDGE THE GAPS ON OUR RESERVATIONS, IMPROVE POLICY, AND PROMOTE ADEQUATE RESEARCH. I SPREAD MY MESSAGE TO THE YOUNGER GENERATION IN ORDER FOR THEM TO WITNESS THAT THESE ARE NOT UNATTAINABLE DREAMS.

**EMMANUEL
GÓMEZ**
HE / HIM / ÉL

**STUDENT
PASADENA CITY COLLEGE**

MY NAME IS EMMANUEL GÓMEZ AND I WAS BORN AND RAISED IN PASADENA, CALIFORNIA. I'M AN AUTOMOTIVE DIESEL TECHNICIAN ATTENDING PASADENA CITY COLLEGE AS A SECOND-YEAR STUDENT AND I'M COMPLETING AA-TS IN HISTORY, SOCIAL SCIENCES, & HUMANITIES BECAUSE I BELIEVE THAT THE COMMON SINGLE-SIDED AMERICAN NARRATIVE CONTINUES TO NEGATIVELY IMPACT SOCIETY. I'VE LEARNED THROUGH MY PERSONAL LIFE AND EXPERIENCE IN STUDENT LEADERSHIP THAT I SHOULD ALWAYS BE A SKEPTIC AND ENSURE THAT I'M RECEIVING AND DELIVERING CREDIBLE INFORMATION. I PLAN ON BECOMING AN ATTORNEY FOCUSED ON PUBLIC POLICY AND EDUCATION. ONE OF MY FAVORITE GOALS IS TO BE APPOINTED UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF EDUCATION SO I CAN HELP ENHANCE CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT, AND FUNDING.



GUIDED PATHWAYS PILLAR I:

CLARIFY THE PATH

TRANSFORMING THE WAY:
ILLUMINATING FUTURES FOR
EQUITABLE AND CLEARER PATHS

FEATURING

DR. MONIQUE GREENE
DR. LATONYA PARKER



DR. TAMMEIL GILKERSON (Q1): *WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU TO BE AN ADVOCATE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS, AND WHY IS THIS WORK ESPECIALLY PERSONAL TO YOU?*



DR. MONIQUE GREENE: I'm a first-generation college student, so both of my parents by trade were successful but never attended college.. I grew up in the Inland Empire, and if you know anything about the IE its one of the lowest bachelor's degree attainment county in the nation, sothe work I do on a professional level is extremely personal to me. The students we serve, that's my community, and those are my neighbors. I've lived in this community my whole life, so I've seen the impact that education has done for not only for myself, but for the people around me as well. I

will spend the rest of my life in service to my community. Another part of the reason why I do this work, is because I'm raising two young black boys, so thinking about sending them into a system that was not created for them, how they will be treated when they get into that system, and the experiences that they will have, I'm willing to dedicate my career to prevent some of those barriers to their success. When we look at data, a lot of times we're just looking at the number and not realizing that those numbers are individual humans. Those numbers are my son's, so we need to really make this work personal. This is completely personal for me, the positions I've taken and the work that I do in guided pathways and the redesign of our institutions. It has been very meaningful. It also has been disturbing sometimes, depending on spacesI've been in. You know, they always say, "Oh, you're so passionate!" phrases they refer to when they talk about the angry Black woman syndrome. Well, I'm passionate because there has to be justice in the system that we serve. When I talk about being an advocate for student success, it's more than me just being a counselor in that space.



DR. LATONYA PARKER: I come from a household with a single parent mom whose education did not pass the ninth grade, and my father was a Vietnam vet who was mentally disabled, so I understand navigating this space is difficult for some. We need to be humble in our approaches to students. The circle of support which I often teach in my guidance course if you are a first-generation student, then you have some students who families kind of have some knowledge of higher education in terms of its purpose.

I'm talking about how you also have to educate the families about what it means to be a community college student. I know that some families, they rely on their older sibling to provide childcare or pick up their siblings from school. That education about the circle of support has to expand to what it means to be a full-time student, in terms of hours, in terms of commitment. I'm a firm believer that orientation should be inclusive. Usually, if we can't do it within orientations, then there could be some other format to help the students understand how to have conversations with their loved ones to provide the necessary support, so they do focus sometimes on their educational experience.



DR. MONIQUE GREENE: A lot of times we build things first. Then we bring them to the students, and say, “What do you think about it?” without first bringing those students to the table to ask about their experiences, to ask about what it is that they need. Or a lot of times, we do a lot of listening, a lot of focus groups, recording and collecting of data, but then we stop at the action and the implementation phase. Instead we just go back to doing what’s minimally necessary and comfortable for us to do within our operating hours, even though we just heard tons of students saying they need evening and weekend support and they can’t get through any of our programs online, so we can’t just talk about advocacy for student success, there’s large populations of students that we are still not servicing and servicing well. When you talk about specific groups of students who have outside roles and responsibilities that impact their success and our institutions, why then do our programs that support the most marginalized populations require them to be full-time, to have three counseling appointments, and go to four workshops? We’re asking them if you want this \$250, you have to go to all these different activities to get three books. And then we turn around and wonder why they are dropping out? They’re having to appeal to stay on to the Promise program. Why? When they could have easily picked up six units and successfully pushed past those six units while simultaneously taking care of all their outside responsibilities.

DR. TAMMEIL GILKERSON (Q2): WHEN THINKING ABOUT THAT WITH BOTH OF YOUR ROLES IN CLARIFYING THE PATH IN PILLAR ONE, HOW CAN PEOPLE IN STUDENT FACING ROLES, SUCH AS COUNSELORS, BE EQUITY LEADERS TO ADVOCATE FOR STUDENTS AND ENSURE THEIR SUCCESS?

DR. MONIQUE GREENE: We must be able to bridge those conversations and the relationships between instructional faculty and students. Because a lot of times students are sitting in their class, they’re asking questions about the institution and support programs that faculty can’t even answer. We don’t have any type of training for faculty on what

the matriculation process even looks like. What are the next steps for the student? How do they book a counseling appointment? A lot of our instructional faculty that teach content specific courses don’t even know how our institutions operate and a lot of them are adjunct faculty, so they get minimal pay or training to understand how our institutions operate. And so, if I could change one thing, it’d be the amount of support, funding and resources that we give our adjunct faculty because they eventually become our full-time faculty at some point in our community college system. But you know, we only pay them 3-6 hours of professional development pay and they’re teaching 60% of our classes, but yet we give them the least amount of training and connection to our campus while they’re working at three or four other campuses as well. So I would invest more efforts in our future full time faculty.

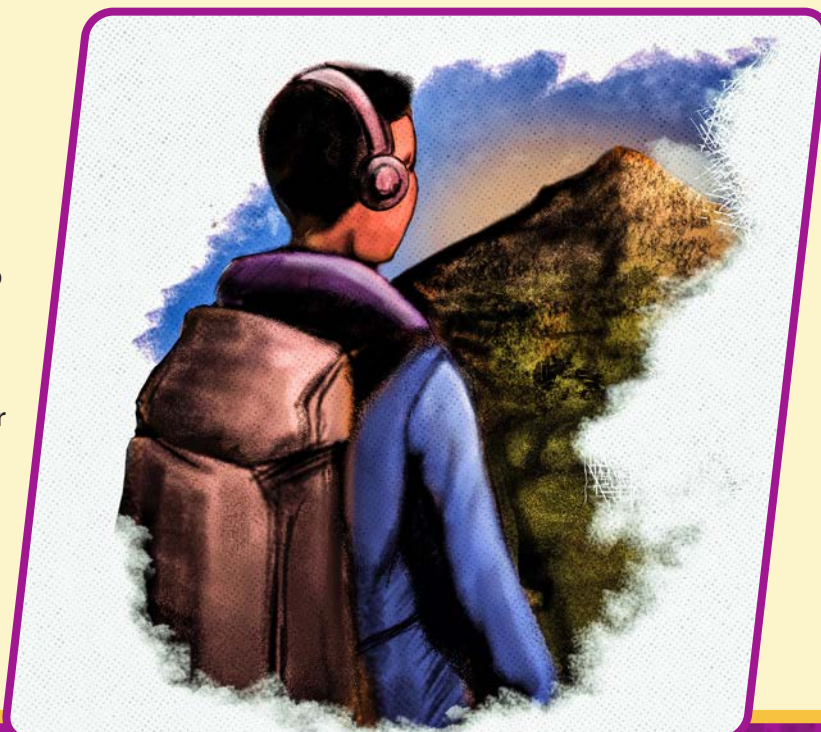
DR. LATONYA PARKER: : It also starts with collaborations and partnerships. So what does that look like? Collaboration is necessary within Student Services division and the Office of Instruction as well as K-through-12 institutions. There is not a one stop shop. I am a firm believer in the village approach for providing intentional and deliberate approaches to student success and welcoming experiences and creating opportunities for their development. It’s about increasing the accessibility of these resources and allowing students to understand what are all the resources to aid in clarifying their path. It is demonstrated in terms of our front liners and their work in connection with us. This collaborative approach leads to the student understanding not only do I see you, I hear you, and you belong here. We do great at creating paths. We have all kinds of paths, but clarifying the path? It’s a matter of us providing information to students so that they can self-identify literally in terms of their educational aspirations, whatever that may be. Usually, it’s counselors, but I also think we should all share that responsibility to talk to students about certificate completion, degree completion, transfer, and whatnot. We all need to help provide guidance to students not just about courses, but identifying for students “What do all these courses mean for you,” whether it’s general education, whether it’s an elective, whether it is a major, “What does this truly mean for you? What are your outcomes and how does this tie together?” We can all get students invested in co-creating their educational planning and shaping their own experience within our system and organization and not default to just referring them to online resources.

DR. MONIQUE GREENE: I think the goal of clarifying the path is it's everyone's role. Faculty members need to make sure that they're creating clear curricular pathways and that there's no bottleneck courses within their pathways preventing students from being able to complete or graduate or transfer. Constantly looking at the data, seeing where our students are falling off their path, where they are not completing it. So that's one part of clarifying the path for the instructional faculty and the counseling faculty. How are we doing intrusive counseling with these students? How are we doing intentional outreach to these students when we realize, "Hey, you've only completed seven units all year long, but you've attempted to take 30? What's going on here, how can we support you better? Is there something that you need to scale back on or become a part-time student so that you could be more successful and deal with other outside responsibilities that you have?" We must find a system that allows us to intentionally reach out to these students when we see them falling off the path.

I also want to touch on the strategic planning piece that Dr. Parker mentioned. I don't know how many strategic plans I've read across the state involved in this redesign work. We write really well. And don't get me wrong, there's a lot of doctors, Ph.D. and Ed.D., in the house. We write extremely well, but those folks who are writing the plans are not typically the ones actually on the ground doing the work. And so sometimes we have these high-level aspirations and goals, metrics of success that we have for our students. But then there's no accountability and/or additional resources support when it comes down to the people who are doing the work. In our institutions there is a lot of equity work happening in silos, so maybe the English faculty are doing amazing work around AB705 and really moving the needle for student success in the English arena. They're doing some great things and have identified promising practices, but most of the time those practices don't leave the English department or that division. And I am just using English as an example. How do we get together to better support each other with those high-impact practices, specifically for marginalized student populations, to talk about what's working? We don't do that often and we need to, some of those practices are transferable across content.

DR. TAMMEIL GILKERSON (Q3): YES, WE NEED MORE COLLABORATION AND EVERYBODY SHOULD KNOW THEY HAVE A ROLE. WE SHOULD HAVE COURAGE TO ENGAGE IN THE THE DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS TO ASK WHY STUDENTS DON'T ENTER THE PATH AND WHY CERTAIN PATHS ARE EXCLUSIONARY. HOW CAN DATA INQUIRY HELP US BETTER UNDERSTAND INEQUITABLE OUTCOMES AND HELP TO ERADICATE THESE CONFUSING, EXCLUSIONARY PATHS TO MEETING TRANSFER AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL GOALS?

DR. MONIQUE GREENE: We need a centralized system, so if students go to EOPS or CalWORKS or Umoja, those students shouldn't walk away with four different student educational plans from four different advisement appointments or even have to retell their story, sometimes traumatizing stories to four different counselors. We should be telling students, "You have a EOPS counselor. That's your primary outside of the academic support counselor that you're going to go to, this is where you are going to receive the resources. Then, when you go to your STEM counselor, they won't relive your whole student experience. They're going to provide you with internship opportunities. They're going to connect you to STEM faculty members."





We have to set clear goals and expectations for our students. So when students have multiple identities on our campus, they're not having to experience this confusing network of advisement. And that advisement can come from anywhere, half of the time students don't know the difference between a faculty advisor, an educational advisor and a counselor. Our job is to train each role in their specific function to serve that student's needs holistically.

The system for collecting data also needs to be

revamped and redesigned for incoming students. What was this experience like? Tell me, where were the barriers? A lot of times, we have student applicants. They don't even make it to a seat on the first day of class. I think it's reasonable to conduct some type of data inquiry to see where these students are going, or do they choose another college that was easier to navigate in order to get into class? We know our students will drive 30 minutes out of their way to go to another community college they heard is more friendly, welcoming or supportive, or have courses that are still open.

The ultimate goal of clarifying the path is helping students see the direct alignment of their degree, their certificate, and the courses they're taking to an outcome, like employment opportunities or a particular career choice they're interested in. Our CTE programs do a really good job at this because they're forced too. There's an accountability piece behind our CTE programs – gainful employment. However, when you look at the rest of our plan, there are very general education specific degrees, which don't necessarily lead towards career outcomes, and so what are we as institutions doing? We also haven't talked about exclusionary pathways. I like to use nursing for this particular example. When we look at the data specifically, we should know whether our students of color are being filtered into our registered nursing programs, or are they being filtered into our CNA or LVN programs? We should be looking specifically at students of color and whether they are only on pathways that don't lead to high attaining jobs. In nursing across the board, you can see that most students of color are either CNAs or LVNs. They never make it through the registered nursing program, so what are our programs doing to intentionally reach out and support students of color to ensure that we have a diverse workforce, specifically in that area? If I have a student come in, I could easily say, you only need one course and you can become a CNA, but NEVER show that student that if they spend two more semesters with us, and complete these four prerequisites, they can become a registered nurse and make 'X' amount more money. I understand that students are coming to us. They want quick outcomes in terms of gainful employment, "right here, right now." Still, the conversation could focus on the goal to continue to build, to take the classes, to get to the next level, showing them our stackable type of certificates or programs and then supporting them in those science courses or supporting them in those math courses to ensure they ultimately meet that long term goal.

**DR. MONIQUE
GREENE**

SHE / HER / HERS

**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, COUNSELOR
RIVERSIDE CITY COLLEGE**



DR. MONIQUE GREENE'S CURRENT WORK REVOLVES AROUND SYSTEMS CHANGE, STRATEGIC PLANNING AND EQUITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION. ON A LOCAL AND STATE LEVEL, DR. GREENE HAS PROVIDED LEADERSHIP ON REIMAGINING STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES, DEVELOPING STUDENT SUCCESS TEAMS AND INSTITUTIONAL REDESIGN. DR. GREENE'S WORK AS A RACE CONSCIOUS LEADER COMES FROM WANTING TO SERVE HER COMMUNITY IN THE INLAND EMPIRE WHICH IS IN ONE OF THE LOWEST DEGREE ATTAINMENT COUNTIES IN THE NATION. BEING ABLE TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES THAT WILL EVENTUALLY LEAD TO UPWARD MOBILITY FOR THOSE AROUND HER IS AT THE FOREFRONT OF HER MISSION WHILE WORKING IN HIGHER EDUCATION. ON A MORE PERSONAL LEVEL, DR. GREENE IS A MOTHER OF TWO YOUNG BLACK BOYS WHICH FUELS HER PASSION FOR WANTING TO DISMANTLE A SYSTEM THAT HAS BEEN HISTORICALLY HARMFUL AND NEGLIGENT IN SUPPORTING AND AIDING IN THE SUCCESS OF YOUNG BLACK MEN. CREATING SPACES WHERE HER CHILDREN AND OTHERS WHO LOOK LIKE THEM FEEL RESPECTED, ACCEPTED AND VALUED IN EDUCATION IS MINIMAL. MOST OF HER LIFE IS SPENT ON ZOOM OR IN MEETINGS, BUT HER "FREE TIME" IS SPENT BALANCING THE DEMANDS OF WORK WITH TRAVEL, HIKING, AND FINDING GREAT FOOD PLACES WITH HER FAMILY.

**DR. LATONYA
PARKER**

SHE / HER / HERS

**PROFESSOR, COUNSELOR
MORENO VALLEY COLLEGE**

**ACADEMIC SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES SECRETARY
ASCCC FACULTY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE CHAIR**

LATONYA PARKER, ED.D., IS AN ACCOMPLISHED EDUCATOR AND EXPERT IN THE AREA OF A TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP. BORN IN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA. SHE HAS SERVED THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE (CCC) SYSTEM OVER 26 YEARS, AND DURING THAT TIME HAS BEEN AN ACADEMIC SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER, LOCAL SENATE PRESIDENT, PROFESSOR, COUNSELOR, AND UMOJA COUNSELOR/COORDINATOR. HER LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT SERVANT-LEADERSHIP APPROACHES HAVE INCLUDED PASSIONATE ADVOCACY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL MOBILITY, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, LIFELONG LEARNING, AND A JUST AND FAIR INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM. AS A RACE CONSCIOUS LEADER DAY-TO-DAY INTERACTION WITH DIVERSE STUDENT POPULATIONS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS HAVE SHAPED HER SERVICE LEADERSHIP APPROACHES WHICH HAVE INCLUDED DECISION MAKING PRACTICES AND STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT TO EMPOWER EQUITABLE AND ACCESSIBLE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION IN THE CCC SYSTEM. HER RACE CONSCIOUS DATA DRIVEN DECISIONS HAVE BEEN TO IDENTIFY CHALLENGES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRAMS TO ASSIST IN CREATING OPPORTUNITY GAPS FOR STUDENTS. AS A TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADER IN HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP PRACTICES ARE DRIVEN BY A PERSONAL VISION AND PASSION IS TO INCREASE LOW GRADUATION, RETENTION RATES AND TRANSFER FOR UNDER RESOURCED STUDENTS.



A man with a backpack stands on a dirt path in a mountainous landscape. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light, suggesting sunrise or sunset. The man is looking towards the horizon. The background features rolling hills and a clear blue sky. The overall mood is one of adventure and exploration.

GUIDED PATHWAYS PILLAR 2:

ENTER THE PATH

**EMBARKING ON THE JOURNEY:
COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS
ON THE PATH TO SUCCESS**

**FEATURING
DR. ANGÉLICA GARCIA
DR. RAY RAMÍREZ**



DR. TAMMEIL GILKERSON (Q1): How do you use your agency as leaders and engage in “real talk” to change perspectives in reframing guided pathways to be more equity-minded?



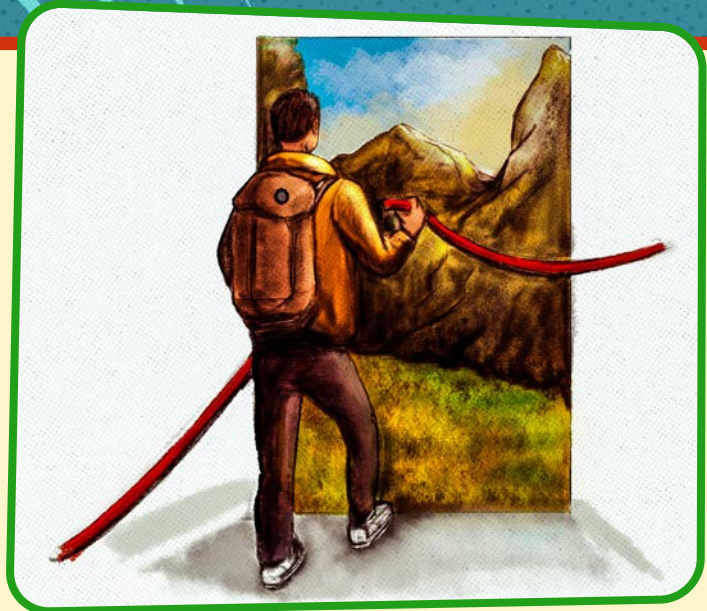
DR. ANGÉLICA GARCIA: I feel like the times we make the most impact are when we’re able to humanize the student story with the data. When we leave data as statistical charts and bar graphs and scattered plots, then it looks

like that, like just ink on paper, so what we have to do is lift that up. I was thinking about how it is that we learn, and we all have different ways for learning, different ways for connecting. And I was kind of thinking back in the ‘80s’ and the ‘90s’ when service learning and research in the community was really hitting the scene and all that. Oh, I’m really dating myself now. I was thinking about it and imagining if we were to engage as educators in these culturally immersive experiences. What I’m imagining is what would it mean for us to say, “You know what, for your sabbatical you, a faculty leader, is going to the Salinas Valley and working alongside farmworkers and hearing their stories and figuring out how education is or is not in their lives right now. And of course, train people, so it’s not voyeuristic like you’re coming in to save, but truly what it means to go be in community with our students and find out what’s going on.”



DR. RAY RAMÍREZ: I know there’s been discussions I’ve been involved with about adding equity as part of the point value system for sabbaticals on our campus, so those culturally affirming, validating and welcoming experiences are not isolated to a portion of the campus and instead becomes a normalized experience for most faculty. I have faculty colleagues coming to me like, “Yo, there’s this equity component, and I can get more points?” A colleague, an English faculty member came to me and said, “You know, I want to do something related to PUENTE.” And to make a long story short, I came up

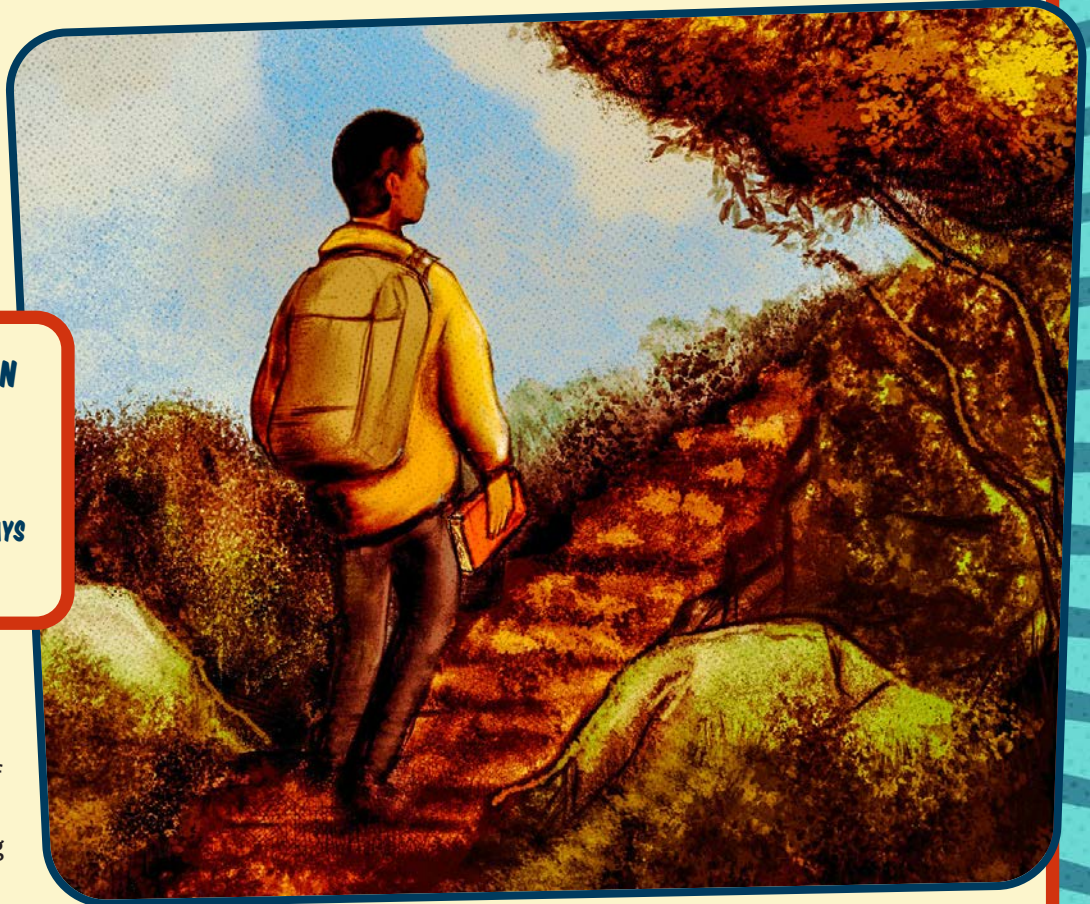
with this thing where I dubbed it “How do we PUENTIFY the campus?” What this professor colleague did is they submitted a proposal to essentially engage in work in the state to learn from other people who are in the communities we serve to then come back to the college to PUENTIFY the English department. What does it mean for faculty and staff to be advocates for student success and racial equity? We’re thinking about the communities and students that are coming to us with the hope for a better quality of life. It means we’re altruistic. We’re not thinking about ourselves. And we make a conscious effort to contribute to a shared decision-making process that benefits students generally with a heightened focus on those who come from minoritized and marginalized backgrounds. And it’s a full-time job, not a part time job. Not 25%, not 50%. It’s full time, all the time, and we all make it a part of our job. In this way we also reject deficit notions of student success and colleges needing to be student ready. I make a very conscious effort to exert my agency depending on who the person is, the relationship I have with an individual to really call people in and when needed, call them out. If it’s something that is so atrocious in a public space, that’s not something that I’m going to let slide, so I’ll just say, “Hey.” We’ll chop it up in the hall, or I’ll do it in a kind, thoughtful manner, as I hope I always am doing. But we got to stop it. Enough. It’s 2023. I mean, the next time we hear “at-risk, underserved...,” we should flip it to “We are underserving our students. We are at risk of failing our communities. We are at risk of tanking our economy if we are not race conscious and equity minded.”



DR. ANGÉLICA GARCIA: Yes, having those necessary conversations, for example, with financial aid teams and classified professionals who are seeing students in an incredibly vulnerable space when it comes to their finances or maybe their immigration status. They can either ask the question, “What do you mean you don’t have this paperwork for verification?!” or instead in another way “Wow. Yeah, that must be really hard. Let’s figure out how to get what you need.” I think when you bring in that lens, then it starts to show the full story of the student that’s not doing so well or turned in the homework assignment late. Then the full story becomes they were really dealing with this highly stressful situation about trying to finalize all their financial aid and you realize that you have a student who is couch surfing, which just happened to one of my students a couple of weeks ago. We had a student who basically is pregnant though her family doesn’t know, and she’s also a dual enrollment student. So we’re working with a high school figuring out how do we support her to let her know she’s not alone and that we’re connecting her to the resources while also letting the faculty member know she might be a little out of pocket for a little bit, but that’s not an indication of her academic ability or her prospects for the future.

DR. TAMMEIL GILKERSON (Q2): *How do we begin to build coalitions between college leaders and faculty to implement guided pathways with a racial equity lens?*

DR. ANGÉLICA GARCIA: I was thinking about when I first became president of Berkeley City College and I had my very first meeting with the academic Senate president, white male, political science faculty member. We’re having this conversation via Zoom. And I had this moment I don’t know if this happens to you all, where you get the butterflies in your stomach and you’re trying to make the decision: am I really going to say this? Am I really going to do this right now? You’re kind of like weighing. Is it worth it? And I remember thinking, Angélica, if you don’t do it, who will at this point? So I ask this question, “I would really like for you to help me understand how it is that the academic Senate executive team is made up of all white people. How did that happen?” And he stopped. And, I saw like this uncomfortable vibe and look on his face and in my head I’m thinking, here’s where he’s going to tell me how he’s not racist. He stops and he goes, “I have no fucking clue.” And he goes, “No, that’s not right. I know how, we just we don’t do shit.” And as soon as he said it and recognized it, I realized now we are engaging in this real talk. I think of Paul Hernandez with his real talk pedagogy because now we are both in this place where it’s almost like for him the light bulb went



off like, yeah, you're the academic Senate president and you should know how it is that your leadership team got slated and elected the way that they did. What I didn't know then because that was just me, I think being me: curious, asking questions, trying to understand. But what that kind of set the course or this foundation from which now every discussion, every space where he is in a position of influence, where I'm in a position of influence, especially when the two of us are there in the highest governance council, we are bringing this up and it's not just me. It's important to have leaders who are willing to disrupt the status quo, because if we don't utilize the positions in which we sit, whether you are a department chair or academic senate president or dean or director, whatever that might be, if you don't take advantage of those moments, then we become cosigners to the treatment that students get. We become underwriters to the racist policies. And so, the not doing anything in a lot of ways is more damaging.

DR. RAY RAMÍREZ: If leaders don't show up differently, and they don't make a conscious effort to use their agency, positional power, official power, influential power, as a means to disrupt, then what's going to happen is a perpetuation of systemic inequities in our colleges. Leaders have to create those conditions and opportunities. We have to influence changes and policies, whether it's a board policy, an administrative regulation, a campus level policy that we always seem to make up and pull out of thin air but we follow them, right? "If we can create them, we can uncreate them" to paraphrase the great Dr. Regina Stanback Stroud. For instance, what we do here now at Fresno City College for new employees, all faculty, classified staff and administrators, we have this program called NEEA, New Employee Equity Academy. It's a three-day orientation to the college, and then faculty members specifically will have a faculty guide. We took the conventional orientation, "Here's the stapler. Here's where the printers are. This is where your classroom is. This is your manual." We took that, and we equitized it, so we're orienting people to the college, and we're saying "Welcome. This is our mission vision core values which centers equity mindedness and anti-racism. We're glad you're here. Now you're going to help us contribute to maintaining and upholding that important document." And so it's orienting new people to the culture of the campus we're trying to create.



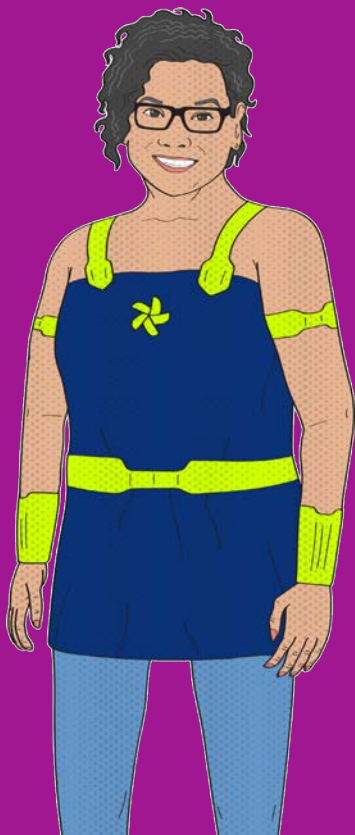
DR. TAMMEIL GILKERSON (Q3): *How do we actually use these coalitions to support students as they enter the path and bring all their assets and uplift their cultural knowledge and aspirations?*

DR. ANGÉLICA GARCIA: If we're really going to be about coalition building, if we're really going to be about going back to the student, then let's acknowledge that not everyone is coming from the same soil and that's actually the beautiful part of our community. I think as we think about this Guided Pathways work, and we're utilizing the imagery of the pillars and the path, and I think that imagery works for so many reasons. Going back to my Central Valley roots as I was driving up the 99, I just kept thinking when I think about the path, what would it look like if we thought of the experience as a path that is not this fixed road? And I know we often can see it as a winding path. We do all of that, but now as I'm going out there, I'm thinking about the immigrant story that might be traversing water and traversing mountainous terrain. I think of the gang community where the path is knowing kind of which blocks to walk, and which one's not to just to make sure that you can get to your destination safely. The path of navigating public transportation, knowing which bus routes connect in a way that make it seamless. It's almost like how do we challenge that pathway paradigm, so we don't assume that everyone is walking on this path, not to mention the ableism that goes with that. Yeah, but what would it look like if we really said we appreciated this imagery? It has helped us move some dialog around. So that's what's coming up for me, where like I'm imagining that, if you had me thinking about boats or crossing rivers or something, that might resonate differently.

DR. RAY RAMÍREZ: So part of entering the path is where in our community is that group of students who identify as black or African-American or Hmong. What zip code and what are the resources they have or don't have? All of that should be taken into consideration as we're helping students enter the path. The holistic approach is so common in guided pathway pathways language and rhetoric, but what does it really mean to be holistic? It's the community in this case, and for students entering the path, we got to think about the trajectory, the experience, then tie in all of those pillars. I really think that that is important. If we want to do the things that we talked about, affirming culture and interrupting and disrupting deficit notions, then we got to be aware of where our students are coming from. And then affirm and validate where they're coming from. That really has got to be taken into consideration to help students enter the path.

**DR. ANGÉLICA
GARCIA**
SHE / HER / ELLA

**PRESIDENT/SUPERINTENDENT
SANTA ROSA JUNIOR COLLEGE
FOUNDER & BOARD MEMBER, COLEGAS**

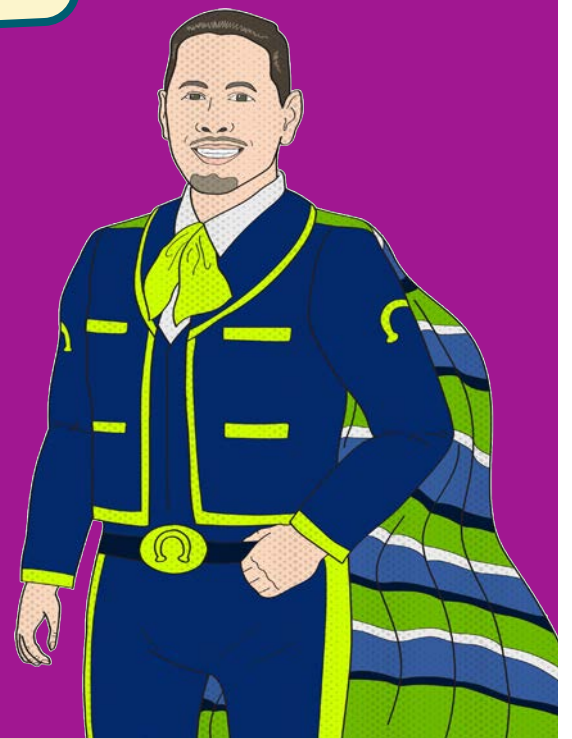


I AM THE LIVING, ITERATIVE, IMPERFECT EXAMPLE OF MY ANCESTORS' WILDEST DREAMS. MY DAILY EXISTENCE IS FUELED BY THE INTERSECTIONS OF MY IDENTITIES AS A MAMA, WIFE, DAUGHTER, SISTER, CHICANA, LATINA, QUEER, ACTIVIST, AND RAISED IN A LOW-INCOME COMMUNITY. AS A FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL, I AM AWARE THAT THE POSITIONS THAT I OCCUPY ARE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE COME BEFORE ME AND THOSE WHO WILL COME AFTER ME. I BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF CRITICAL HOPE, RADICAL HEALING, AND LOVE AS A VERB. I AM A RACE-CONSCIOUS LEADER BECAUSE THE SYSTEM INEQUITIES IN OUR SOCIETY HAVE BUILT FALSE NARRATIVES AGAINST BIPOC FOLX. IT MATTERS THAT WE EDUCATE, CULTIVATE, AND SUPPORT A CITIZENRY THAT WILL PUSH OUR DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY TO END RACIST, SEXIST, HOMOPHOBIC, AND CLASSIST PARADIGMS. I AIM TO BE A RACE-CONSCIOUS LEADER WHO CREATES THE CONDITIONS FOR OTHERS TO STEP INTO THEIR FULL POWER AND POTENTIAL BY "SEEING" AND "HONORING" THE CULTURAL WEALTH OF BIPOC FOLX. MY ROOTS IN THE IMMIGRANT AND FARMWORKER COMMUNITY HAVE TAUGHT ME THAT OUR COMMUNITY IS LIBERATED WHEN WE UNITE IN THE COLLECTIVE STRUGGLE AND SUCCESSES. MY CHILDREN ARE COUNTING ON MY GENERATION TO MAKE RACIAL EQUITY A COMMUNAL REALITY.

**DR. RAY
RAMÍREZ**
He / Him / Él

**DIRECTOR
STUDENT EQUITY AND SUCCESS EDUCATIONAL
SERVICES AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS
FRESNO CITY COLLEGE**

BORN INTO A CULTURALLY AND ARTISTICALLY RICH FAMILY OF MARIACHEROS (MARIACHI SINGERS AND MUSICIANS) AND FOLKLORISTAS (MEXICAN FOLK DANCERS/TEACHERS) DR. RAY RAMÍREZ IS A FATHER, HUSBAND, AND A FAMILY AND COMMUNAL-ORIENTED CIS-GENDERED MEXICAN AMERICAN CHICANO MAN. INFORMED BY HIS LIVED, PROFESSIONAL, AND ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES, DR. RAMÍREZ HAS DEDICATED HIS LIFE'S WORK, RESEARCH, AND ADVOCACY EFFORTS TO RACIAL EQUITY, ANTI-RACISM, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE. WHEN HE'S NOT WEARING HIS FAMILIA OR COMMUNITY COLLEGE RACIAL EQUITY CAPES, YOU CAN FIND HIM TEACHING AND DANCING FOLKLÓRICO (MEXICAN FOLK DANCE), WORKING OUT, OR MOUNTAIN BIKING.



GUIDED PATHWAYS PILLAR 3:

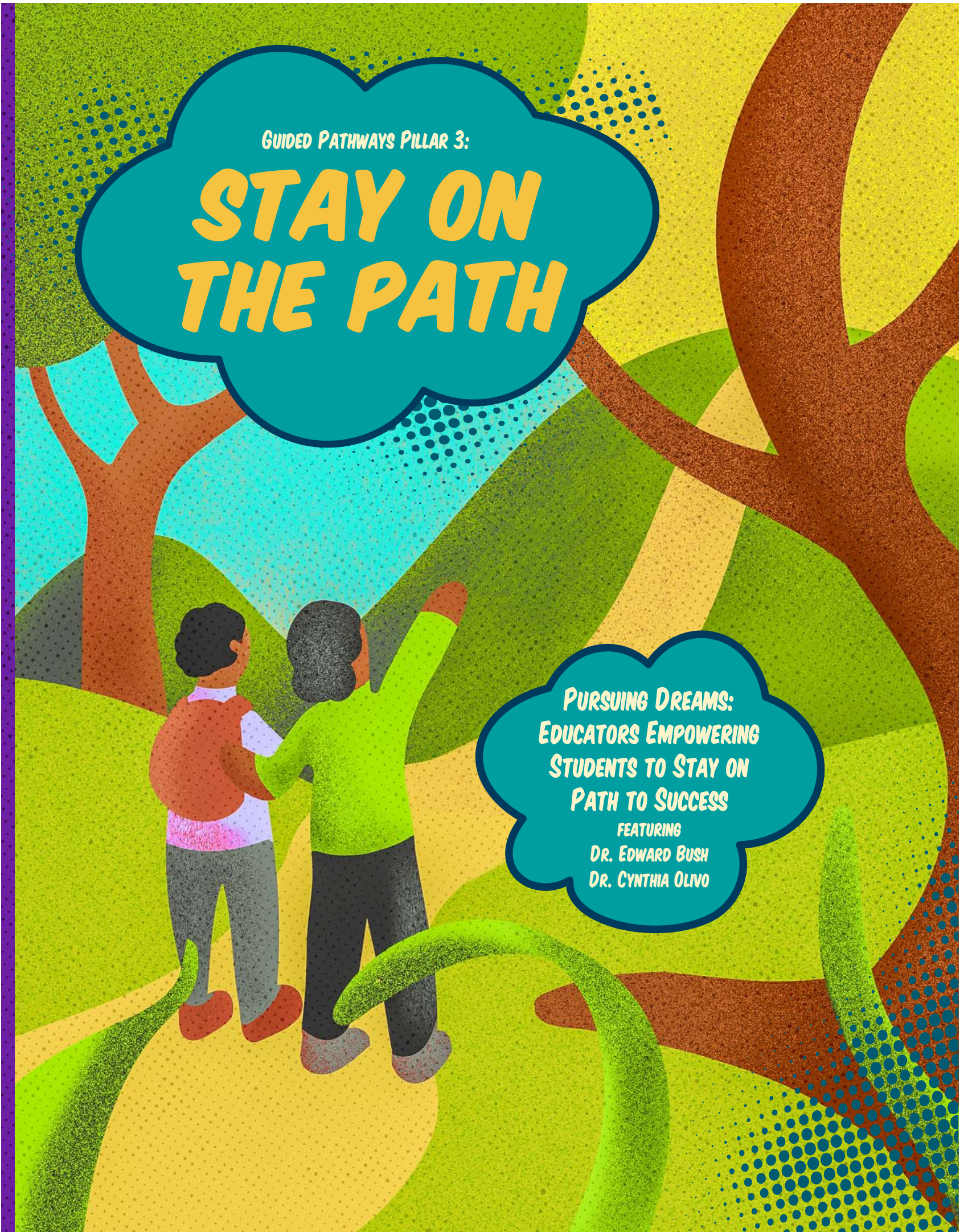
STAY ON THE PATH

PURSuing DREAMS:
EDUCATORS EMPOWERING
STUDENTS TO STAY ON
PATH TO SUCCESS

FEATURING

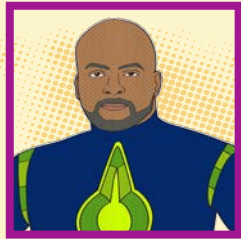
DR. EDWARD BUSH

DR. CYNTHIA OLIVO





DR. TAMMEIL GILKERSON (Q1): AS LEADERS HOW DO WE EXPLICITLY CENTER RACE IN GUIDED PATHWAYS TO ENSURE STUDENTS STAY ON THE PATH, AND HOW DO WE HOLD OURSELVES ACCOUNTABLE TO ENSURE THIS HAPPENS?



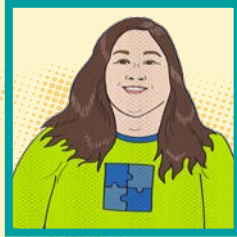
DR. EDWARD BUSH: We have to raise the issue. And I think we have to acknowledge that from the very beginning, race was a part of guided pathways, but racial equity wasn't a part of guided pathways. Often in this work, people believe that equity champions are introducing race to the conversation. No, we expose race because it's always been in the conversation and embedded within guided pathways and staying on the path. I think if we want to center racial equity, we got to expose whiteness that is built into the way in which students experience and interface with our institution.

Whiteness is affirmed in every way the institution goes about doing its work, from how the facilities are constructed to the representation inside and outside of the classroom to the course material that students read. The white cultural identity, whether it is consciously or unconsciously, is constantly being affirmed, so we have to talk about that. These things that we do in our institution through guided pathways are not race-neutral. That race neutrality is a myth that we bring to the work and we know it is a myth because the status quo and our default way we do business is not working for students of color.

Why I do this work is rooted in a belief and understanding of the infinite potential of human beings and their capacity to learn and grow. And I think particularly those who have been underserved and disadvantaged and marginalized within our systems and structures, because oftentimes there's a lack of belief in what is possible for them. And so I think my 'why' is to reframe a deficit-minded approach to how we see students of color and students from other marginalized communities to see the genius and wisdom that lies within them, to appreciate and value their culture and ways of being and operate with the understanding that that doesn't come second to anything. We need to center that culture and center their assets in our institutions as opposed to centering whiteness as the default way in which we operate.

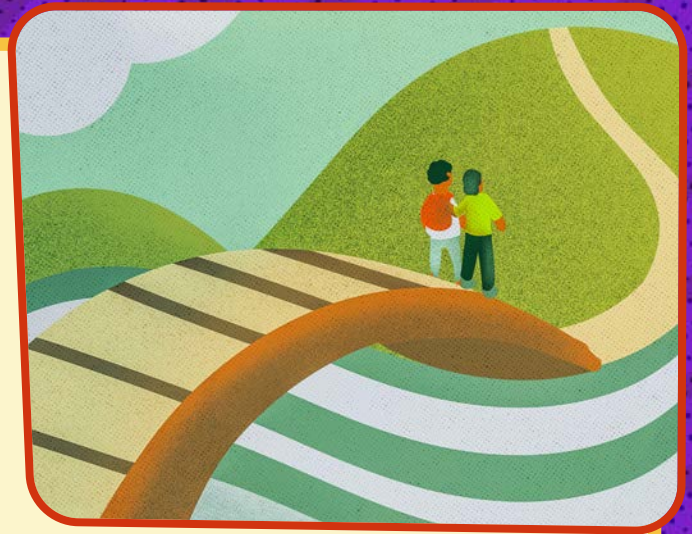
I hold space around success being tied to one's ability to maintain their own cultural identity, of being able to navigate or get through an educational system where they can see themselves reflected in who they are, where they are closely affirmed, when they can critique systems and structures and can be able to dismantle that and feel empowered to do that. So it is less about the students we graduate and more about what type of graduates we produce and if going through school means you can no longer be connected to your brothers and sisters that still hang out on the block, or if it means that you have a greater disconnect from your grandmother and maybe now, perhaps don't even speak that language anymore. I do not call that success, even though you may have graduated from my institution and received a Ph.D. And so I try to reconcile to some extent, that tension, but sometimes not trying to reconcile that all and just live with the tension that exists.





DR. CYNTHIA OLIVO: I agree with all of what Ed said. Research studies show that they thrive once we center our students' race, culture, ethnicity and background and provide them with culturally affirming experiences. Often K-12

and higher education lack environments that affirm who our students are. From that perspective, I'm somebody who comes in and can observe, but then also becomes a trusted member of a community so that we all can build on why we need these environments for our students, so that they can feel loved and be their most authentic form of themselves. And when they're in this space, they really do exceed any expectation we can have of them. For me, Guided Pathways is an invitation to transform the institution to center racial equity as the outcome. It's not just about staying on the path to get more degrees awarded. It's all those things. But it truly is to ensure that our students have a chance at succeeding and feel whole when they get through our institutions. They feel whole, authentic and good, and they can go on and critique the system and change our world in the ways that we need them to. To challenge racism, sexism, and classism. That's what guided pathways should be the invitation to do. I think we would know if racial equity is a priority when a system of accountability is wrapped around it. And right now, as it relates to equity work and racial equity work, there's no system of accountability wrapped around it. There isn't a faculty member I know of who hasn't made tenure because there are disparities in the outcomes of the courses they teach. They might if their withdrawal rate or overall course success rates are perpetually low, but if they're not successful at teaching black and brown students or API students, I haven't seen a faculty not make tenure because of that.



DR. EDWARD BUSH: I have yet to hear about a president who did not have their contract removed because they have been unable to move the needle in student outcomes or because they haven't been able to close achievement gaps. Or their faculty haven't adopted culturally relevant practices. There's no accountability system around racialized student outcomes for infusing race within guided pathways.

DR. CYNTHIA OLIVO: I remember when Luke Wood was working with my previous campus and he said, "Everyone wants the silver bullet, and there's not one. It's a silver buckshot, and you have to try multiple things." And Estela Bensimon said, "It's not about best practice. It's about best practitioners." So we have to build that curiosity and intention with racial equity as the intention within our teams.

DR. EDWARD BUSH: When I get into this conversation, I often feel a push to get to the pragmatic right away. There's a push to know how to operationalize what it is you mean and applying in a way that would give insight to how to give details in implementing the work. And I think that's often a mistake because I'm not sure if we have really sat on the problem long enough, so I think much of the harm we create, even with good intentions, is that we try to apply treatments without an accurate diagnosis. We don't have an accurate diagnosis because we haven't allowed ourselves as leaders or as colleges to sit on the problem long enough. Oftentimes people are applying the treatment without trying to get to the core of the disease or issue in the first place. What is needed is this internal interrogation that says, "Look, we're going to look at course success rates at the instructor level and see how folks handle that." It's coming out of this sense of authenticity and a sense of self-interrogation, coming out of sitting on a problem long enough, as opposed to feeling like I got to find an immediate strategy to fit a certain context and situation because people need something practical and want to find a solution.

DR. TAMMEIL GILKERSON (Q2): WHERE DO YOU SEE HOPE WITH THE WORK THAT WE'RE DOING AROUND BUILDING COMMUNITIES, EQUITY CHAMPIONS ON OUR CAMPUS? AND I'LL USE THE TERM RACIAL EQUITY CHAMPIONS BECAUSE I WANT TO BE REALLY CENTERING WITH THAT. WHERE DO YOU SEE HOPE AND IN CONTINUING TO SUSTAIN THE RACIAL EQUITY IN GUIDED PATHWAYS EFFORTS THAT WE'RE DOING.

DR. EDWARD BUSH: I draw hope from the fact that I believe that there is a new generation of emerging leaders that are much more race-conscious, more open to showing up in an authentic way. I'm hopeful there are different models of leadership that exist now for people to emulate and that you don't have to follow this old motto of acting and behaving like a white male when you want to become the educational leader, or college president, classified professional, or faculty for that model. Authentic equity leadership really is often a daily vicious interrogation of one's self and our own behavior. I think a leader's ability to first of all have a sense of their own self, their own limitations, their own strengths, and areas in which they are compromised. How I have internalized whiteness within myself and how does that show up and how has it impacted my decision making, my interactions, how I speak, the language I choose, the language I don't choose, how I perform and how I don't perform? I think it has to be a constant question, or I would see myself repeating behaviors and patterns that would lead to the further demise of folks who have already been victimized by white supremacy and structural racism. I think now it is becoming possible, where there is not just one default way in how a leader is supposed to look and act. I'm hopeful about that. I'm hopeful in just the human, infinite desire to be free and liberated and that humans will look to continue to push towards that as an end goal despite what's around them.

DR. CYNTHIA OLIVO: I'm never letting my foot off of that gas pedal about equity. At my President's staff meeting, every conversation I have is about actualizing equity. And if I get called into the meetings about the water main broke and there's facilities and construction, I have to address those things. And I do. However, I'm constantly thinking about how does this impact our students, and does everyone understand that's who we're really talking about here at all times: our students. The students give me hope every day. They're so brilliant and you know, they're just really incredible, so thoughtful. They're so filled with gratitude and they give me hope. They give me hope that what we're doing is helping and that we need to keep pushing the gas on this issue so it can help more students like them. Where I also see hope is efforts like this one, the Commission

on Racial Equity for our State and The Coalition, our respective organizations having just attended A2mend and APAHE [conferences]. When I returned from those experiences, I realized I felt so good in those places and confident because those places don't center whiteness. It centers us, and it just makes me hopeful that we all will continue to plan and strive to change our system. That gives me so much hope. It didn't occur to me at first that a lot of people do feel isolated in our system, and creating these organizations helps to address that sense of isolation and the feeling that we're up against a system that's too big for us to try and dismantle alone. That cannot seep in. Our students cannot have that happen where we think it's impossible.



DR. TAMMEIL GILKERSON (Q3): WHAT KEEPS YOU GOING IN THE WORK? HOW DO WE AS EQUITY LEADERS RECHARGE AND AVOID BURNOUT?

and keeps me connected, but sometimes I don't have the luxury of self-care because of what's at stake. There are times in the game in which I have to play hurt because there's too much on the line, and to be focused on my own injury at that time will actually cause more injury. I spend my time thinking about this whole notion of self-care and wonder to what extent this wave of self-care is actually doing more harm than good. Like I think about what was self-care for Harriet Tubman? What was self-care for Malcolm X? Well, I'm not saying they didn't have something to ground them, I'm not saying you don't have to pause and breathe and be concerned about what you put in your mouth. It's like all of that is imperative, it's important. But I also realize that sometimes there's not an opportunity to do that. So how can I find harmony and get rewards in playing injured?

DR. CYNTHIA OLIVO: I would say my family is one area that refuels me and recenters me. And, you know, I come from a very faithful family like we have faith that helps me every day, my faith, and then also involving myself with people who I can learn from off-campus and other settings like being in the coalition helps me. Being in COLEGAS helps me, you know, because I can ask people in a text message, a phone call, "Hey, can you take a look at this? Can I get your feedback?"

DR. EDWARD BUSH: Why I put so much energy and effort in organizations like A2mend, COLEGAS, APAHE, and The Coalition, is because burnout is inevitable. I want people to pass the baton. It absolutely recharges me and it absolutely creates a sense of safety and protection. And ultimately, it really is a failsafe mechanism for burnout because I got to run this leg as fast as I can, and at the end of my leg, I should have nothing left in me. I should just fall completely out because I'm giving that much. And that's what's required. The beauty and my hope is having organizations like A2mend, an organization like The Coalition, is that I can run the race as fast as I can. I don't have to modulate how much energy I spend because I know I'm not solo. And I think oftentimes we modulate how much energy we can give out because we don't have relationships or we don't trust someone that they will be able to move the work forward. And so we have to pick our spots, pick our battles. We have to make sure we don't get fired to be able to see work through, like all these different things, because we believe we are the only one that's in place. And when we go out, literally, if we die, the work dies. And my sense is what I'm trying to build up is that the work never dies because the work is not reliant on me. And the more that that is in place, the harder I could run my race without having to modulate and pick and choose when and where I spend my energy.



**DR. EDWARD
BUSH**

He / Him / His

**PRESIDENT
COSUMNES RIVER COLLEGE
PRESIDENT-ELECT, A²MEND**

**I AM PERSON THAT IS COMMITTED TO
DISMANTLING WHITE SUPREMACY. AS A
RACE-CONSCIOUS LEADER I WORK TO CREATE
NEW STRUCTURES, SYSTEMS, POLICIES AND
PRACTICES THAT HONORS AND CENTERS THE
CULTURE, HISTORY, CONTRIBUTIONS, VALUES
AND ONTOLOGY OF PEOPLE OF COLOR.**

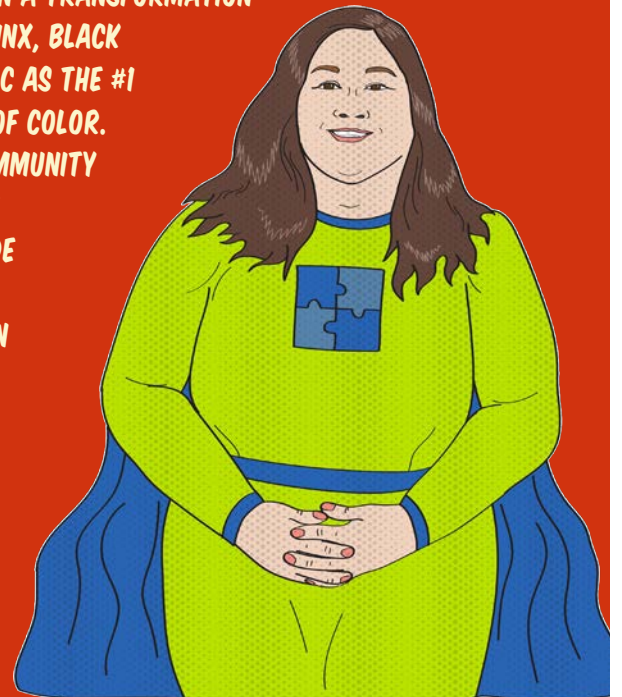
**DR. CYNTHIA
OLIVO**

SHE / HER / ELLA

**PRESIDENT
FULLERTON COLLEGE**

**FOUNDER, BOARD MEMBER & PAST PRESIDENT
COLEGAS**

DR. CYNTHIA OLIVO IS THE PRESIDENT OF FULLERTON COLLEGE, THE OLDEST CONTINUOUSLY OPERATING COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA. IN HER 28TH YEAR OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SHE HAS SERVED FOR NEARLY 15 YEARS AT PASADENA CITY COLLEGE AS DEAN, ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT OF STUDENT AFFAIRS AND ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT/VICE PRESIDENT OF STUDENT SERVICES. WHILE THERE, SHE WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN LEADING THE COLLEGE IN A TRANSFORMATION WHICH INCLUDED INCREASING STUDENTS SUCCESS RATES FOR LATINX, BLACK AND ASIAN AMERICAN, PACIFIC ISLANDER STUDENTS TO PLACE PCC AS THE #1 COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN THE STATE FOR GRADUATING STUDENTS OF COLOR. SHE WAS ALSO A KEY LEADER IN HELPING PCC BECOME THE #1 COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN THE CALIFORNIA FOR THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF LATINX STUDENT GRADUATES. DR. OLIVO'S LEADERSHIP QUALITIES INCLUDE LEADING INNOVATION TO IMPROVE STUDENT EQUITY & SUCCESS, CONSENSUS BUILDING TO ADVANCE STUDENT EQUITY, CREATING AN ENGAGING & INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT TO FOSTER CHANGE IN OUR PRACTICES WHILE EMPHASIZING CULTURAL FLUENCY TO ALIGN WITH STUDENT NEEDS. DR. OLIVO IS THE GRANDDAUGHTER OF MIGRANT FARMWORKERS WHO WERE BORN IN THIS COUNTRY DURING A PERIOD OF SEGREGATION. SHE IS THE DAUGHTER OF AN AMAZING SINGLE MOM. CYNTHIA IS THE FIRST IN HER FAMILY TO GO TO COLLEGE AND THIRD GENERATION CHICANA.





GUIDED PATHWAYS PILLAR 4:

ENSURE LEARNING

CULTIVATING INCLUSIVE
EXCELLENCE: EDUCATORS
ENACTING CULTURALLY AFFIRMING
LEARNING FOR STUDENTS

FEATURING
DR. KAREN CHOW
DOLORES DAVISON

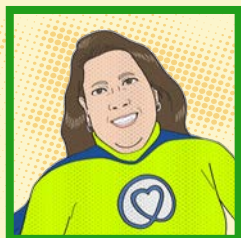


DR. TAMMEIL GILKERSON (Q1): *How do we invite students to talk openly and co-create their learning space, while acknowledging racial inequities?*



DR. KAREN CHOW: I think one key piece of race consciousness in teaching for me is to be very intrusive. I'm just going to be honest, when I look at my roster and especially after I see and hear my students presenting their name

stories, I'm paying attention to our students who come from those communities where we know we have equity success gaps. And I'm going to be that "intrusive auntie" who's going to go in and message these people if they're falling a little behind. I'm going to be the instructor who pulls them aside before or after class and say, "I think it'd be good for us to chat. I'm kind of wondering what's going on. Not sure why I haven't seen the last few assignments from you." I think these are the things that we have to do as an instructor. And I know it's difficult if we have heavy teaching loads and we've got upwards of 90 to 150 students a quarter, it's hard. But even if you can do that for these students at least once or twice in the term. In our case, both Dolores and I were teaching at Foothill and DeAnza in a quarter system, so that goes fast. But even if you can connect with them once or twice, now we've got an early alert system set up in place for instructors to pull in help and support from our student services side to help reach out. So we really have to really make use of the respectful yet intrusive possibilities we have there in the classroom. So those are things that for me are what I consider to be part of the race conscious practices as an instructor.



DOLORES DAVISON: When I'm in my classroom or asynchronously online, I do think it's really important to do things like learn how to pronounce student's names correctly. That's one of the first questions I ask on their opening day questionnaire, "How do you want to be addressed? What is your preferred name? What are your preferred pronouns?" I have a non-binary niece and they have been using "they" now for more than a year, and it makes a difference that I'm the only member of the family other than their parents that remembers to do that. My niece also has had some fairly significant learning differences, though she is not disabled. She is a student with disabilities. That's a very big difference to a student. That's not what defines her. It is something that is part of her makeup. I grew up on the Eastside of San Jose, and my consciousness about race started pretty early. I grew up in an entirely Latino/a and Asian neighborhood, one of the areas that eventually became Little Saigon when I was about ten years old.

DR. KAREN CHOW: I wanted to share that Dolores and I, besides teaching in the same district, we share this history even though we grew up in totally different places. She was in San Jose. I was in Southern California also growing up in a very Latino and also Asian-American neighborhood in the San Gabriel Valley. This is why I connected with you so well, because I didn't even know that history of yours. Dolores and I ended up by chance teaching together in Florence, a study abroad program in 2008, and in that program [Dolores] and I clicked on making it a priority that we were teaching from the lens of valuing and appreciating diversity I think because both of us come from the standpoint of knowing and being in a multi racial, multiethnic milieu in society. Being a port city and having students with us who were also very diverse, I had a project where I asked the student to please go find an immigrant to Florence and your project is to talk to them and find out what their story is and report back. And then we had another assignment focus on women in Italy. Teaching abroad in Florence, where you're surrounded by these grand productions, these grand buildings that were built by Europeans and Italians.



In a space like that, it can feel very intimidating for someone whose background is not that. You feel small and feel like, “Oh, I’m insignificant, in light of all this marble and everything. I think for us as instructors to say, “Hey, I want you to help us learn more about immigrants in Italy, right? You’re going to help us learn more about the contemporary Italian Florence experience. And we are going to validate that experience in our classrooms. We’re not just talking about the Medicis. We’re not just talking about the great masters. We’re going to talk about real people.” I think that’s what I try to do in the classroom as well.

DOLORES DAVISON: I think one of the things that I have really tried to do as the department chair in history is acknowledge the way history is taught in the Western world, is a colonial history. It is by definition, a history of the victors, using those words in quotes, subjugated everyone below them and in a variety of different ways. When we talk about women’s studies and women’s history, it’s the subjugation of women, or if we’re talking about specific groups that were brought over or were here already in the United States and were subjugated. I’ve been fairly conscious for a very long time of race in my classroom in terms of using terminology and language that is not offensive or insulting, language that a lot of people don’t even realize that they’re using. In the same way, I communicate with my Islamic students when I teach History of Islam and History of the Middle East. One of the challenges is that all of the textbooks carry only the Sunni version of history. I’ll say “You’ll notice the author is white. This was not necessarily written by a Muslim. This is mainly the Sunni version rather than the Shia version of your history. Am I still doing this in a way that makes you comfortable, and are you okay talking about this? If I’m doing something that you feel is wrong, talk to me, and let’s see how we can mitigate that to allow multiple stories to coexist because you can hold two things at once.”

DR. TAMMEIL GILKERSON (Q2): HOW DO WE HAVE MORE DEPARTMENTAL DISCUSSIONS TO ENCOURAGE CRITICAL INTROSPECTION AND DATA TRANSPARENCY?

DR. KAREN CHOW: Our English language department is very big. I happen to be department chair, and we are having more and more of these conversations in our subcommittees. We have a subcommittee on the literature classes only, we have a subcommittee on what

we call PAGE, which focuses on the transfer level 1A class post-AB705 and talking about “What are the support strategies that we have in place for our students and how are they working?” We have very robust discussions in our PAGE committee. We also have discussions because we have a dedicated 1A course paired with a three unit success course for the lower GPA band students. We have a portfolio process that the department has agreed to implement with instructors who are teaching that particular combined course. At the end of the quarter, they get together to they share student portfolios, talk about what’s working, and what’s not working. So we actually have very robust discussions in our department in different spaces about the success of our equity gap communities of students, but there always can be more. There are always instructors who are avoiding those conversations, and trying to find a way to engage them, to pull them in can definitely be a challenge.

DOLORES DAVISON: I’ve had more robust discussions as of late with my POCR (Peer Online Course Review) colleagues because I went to a POCR program in the fall and one of our POCR leaders is my next door neighbor in terms of our offices, so we are constantly talking. It’s basically a rubric that was created by the CBC OEI, we vetted through faculty, and it is actually on canvas. Foothill has been one of the leaders in online Ed for a really long time, but nobody in my department had done the POCR class and had done the training, so I actually did it for my women’s studies course because ‘Intro to Women’s Studies’ is offered pretty much every quarter, and going through that meant talking about how this impacts students, where there is that intersectionality of race, social economic condition, technology abilities, students who are working with disabilities



and need certain things in their classes to enable them to succeed or at least have a better chance of success. My colleagues were actually getting ready to write program review or to look at program review because we've completely changed that process, and one of the discussions we've been having was about data from our data researcher around Latino/Latina populations, which led us to offer our history of Latin America more frequently. That was a course that students enrolled in and were very successful in. The faculty member that taught it initially taught it in person. When he taught it online, the success rates weren't nearly as high, which we know is typical in an online class. But we looked at the numbers, especially in terms of ethnicity and race and said, wait a second, we've got a 79 or 80% success rate for Latino/Latina students when it's in person and a 50% success rate when it's online. It's not a gap that's explicable by computer technology. There's something that's going on. We've been having those important conversations.

DR. KAREN CHOW: Regarding data, it's great that the Chancellor's office has set up a very powerful data tool called data mart, and in that tool we have the ability to drill down into our college data, our state data, and even individual department data broken down by ethnicity, by gender to see how students are succeeding. I would love to see that tool expanded to also include sexuality and gender identities because we have reports from my institutional researcher, Mallory Newell, that LGBTQ+ students also have an equity gap, especially if they're transgender. So we have data mart, but also many individual colleges have now been instituting their own data dashboards. In our college it is called 'Course Success by Ethnicity Dashboard,' where we're actually encouraged as faculty to go into the dashboard and look at our own student success rates. We're working within our college to encourage more departmental level conversations around that. We try to get away from shaming and blaming individual instructors because I think that's been the barrier to having people look at their own data, but rather we have opened up more conversations around pedagogy, around these questions that we're talking about right now, like what does it mean to be race conscious. What does it mean to be a real advocate for student success? It's not just about teaching your content nor about being on the stage just sort of throwing knowledge out there and considering the students to be these passive receptacles. I think the way Dolores talked about how she teaches history is an example of that.

DR. TAMMEIL GILKERSON (Q3):
PLEASE EXPAND MORE ON YOUR EFFORTS
TO HUMANIZE YOUR SYLLABUS AND USE
CULTURALLY RELEVANT CURRICULUM?

really be very conscious and intentional about what is in our curriculum, how is it representing and validating our very diverse experiences and cultures in any discipline. Even in the STEM fields, we have ways to bring that in. It's very important that the content of the pedagogy, what you're studying is also reflective of the diversity of the students. We have, for example, the DEI curriculum tool kit, as a tool for departments and instructors to really look at their curriculum outlines and consider, "is it really as diverse and reflective of DEI not only in the content but also in the assignments?" For me, you're really trying to affirm the cultural wealth that you have in your students. You're really trying to invite them in with validating that they have experiences to share, that they bring cultural knowledge to the classroom that is relevant to be learned and shared.

DR. KAREN CHOW: Of course another important conversation we are having of late is regarding our course content. You know, I'm very proud of Dolores. She was a very groundbreaking leader in our statewide academic Senate for so many years. And I've started following in her footsteps a little bit by serving on the executive committee. I'm the Area B representative, and I just feel like I came on board at just the right time because I get to help with promoting the idea that we have to

DOLORES DAVISON: I have a liquid syllabus. I have a welcoming video message. I have a discussion of what they're going to be learning, how they're going to be learning it, how to reach out to me, "Let's talk about alternatives. Let's talk about different types of assignments." I do all that that in my syllabus.

DR. KAREN CHOW: Like Dolores, one of my colleagues, Jamie, has been going through a lot of online professional development, where she made a liquid syllabus, or a multimedia syllabus not just a piece of paper. It includes a video of the instructor giving a welcoming message to the students. It's not just about "Here's the policy of what happens when you're tardy. Here's the policy of what happens when you turn in late work." It's not meant to be punitive. It's student-centered, humanized. So I'm excited that she's going to present on her liquid syllabus tomorrow for the division because many of us, even myself, still need to do the whole training and learn how to do that because the syllabus is very important. It's our contract with our students, and in the olden days, it used to be kind of literally the first point of contact that the students had with the course other than meeting you on the first day. We called it the green sheet because it was literally printed on green paper and you passed it out on the first day, but luckily we have the technology now where the first point of contact could be a welcoming email from you. It could be a link to your liquid syllabus with the video and everything, so yes, I think the syllabus is an important tool for connecting, especially with our students of color. I think that the multimedia possibilities are wonderful, and being able to use your learning outcomes but be able to state them in a way that "This is how this course is going to help you achieve those outcomes," not just "Here's the bar, and now you got to jump over it."

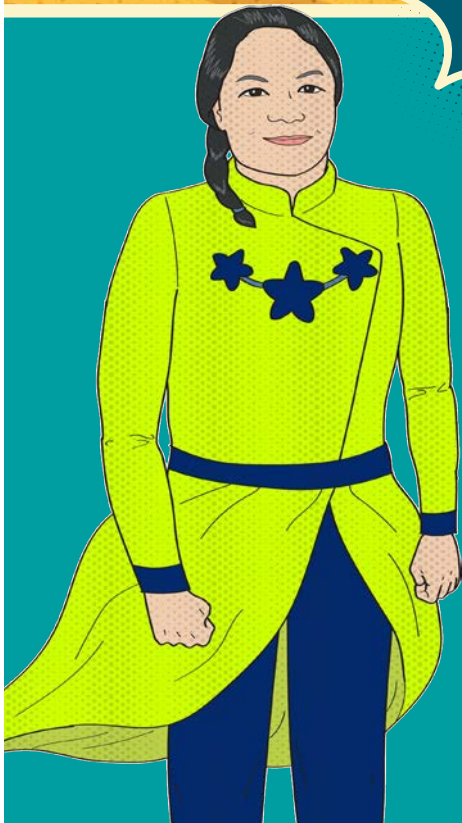


DOLORES DAVISON: For me, especially this quarter, I'm teaching 'Women and Global Perspectives'. It was really important that the text that I use be inexpensive because that does make a difference. This particular quarter I'm using a text that is a loose-leaf binder, so it's only \$26, which is significantly less than anything else out there, but I'm supplementing that with writings by and about women from around the world, and that's in the syllabus, so the students are like, "Oh, Sandra Cisneros is in my syllabus! Rigoberta Manchu is in my syllabus!" I'm making sure that students can see themselves in the readings and in the materials that are being used. I'm actually really forthright in this especially in women's studies because I have a non-binary niece that has struggled tremendously with their identity and with their gender and with their sexual orientation. They're in their first year of college now. They're doing fabulously, but growing up in a comparatively small town and having to deal with that, with the preferred name, your preferred pronouns, and recognizing that my nieces experiences cannot be generalized for every other non-binary individual. We can start with some really basic assumptions, but there are non-binary individuals who have been embraced around the world in India and in indigenous cultures in the United States and other places. Just this week we're talking about second sex and the third gender in class, which has been great. Seeing that level of understanding conveys to students, "What your experience is, is tremendously significant and may be different from what others experience, but that doesn't make your experience any less valued and less important."

DR. KAREN CHOW: When I show up in a physical classroom or in a synchronous one, I'm sharing my space, and obviously I represent a racial demographic that they may have seen before, but maybe not in the particular combination of Asian women and teaching English or even teaching women's studies, right? I feel like I'm bringing who I am into the classroom, and one of my favorite sort of get to know you strategies that we do at the start of the class, even in my online and hybrid classes, is that I show them an excerpt from Sandra Cisneros, 'The House on Mango Street,' where she talks about 'my name.' I give them that, and then I also give them the story of my own name where I go in-depth, explaining my Chinese middle name and how it was given to me by my grandfather in Hong Kong who didn't speak English. From the get go I try to say I am here to validate who you are and validate your story, so I invite them in with these two pieces to then tell their own story. If we're in person, I ask them to do a little bit of homework and then bring it back, and we share it in small groups and then share with the larger classroom. Of course, online, it's a little easier because you can set it up like a discussion board and everybody can see each other's stories, and I ask them to please comment, give an affirmation to everybody's stories. Everybody has a story, so it's a really cool way to help us get to know each other as people from the get go.

**DR. KAREN
CHOW**
SHE | HER | HERS

**ENGLISH, ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES,
& WOMEN'S STUDIES
DE ANZA COLLEGE**



I IDENTIFY AS BEING A CHILD OF IMMIGRANTS FROM HONG KONG, A BILINGUAL SPEAKER OF ENGLISH AND CANTONESE, BORN IN MASSACHUSETTS, RAISED IN SAN GABRIEL VALLEY, AND CURRENT BAY AREA/SAN FRANCISCO ASIAN AMERICAN BENEFICIARY/LIFELONG STUDENT AND TEACHER OF ETHNIC STUDIES AND LITERATURE/ POPULAR CULTURE. I AM A RACE-CONSCIOUS LEADER BECAUSE I HAVE EXPERIENCED THE POWER OF BEING A RACE CONSCIOUS STUDENT (STARTING IN LATE UNDERGRADUATE AND CONTINUING IN GRADUATE SCHOOL, WHEN ETHNIC STUDIES HELPED ME MAKE SENSE OF THE DIVERSE AND RACIALLY STRIATED SPACES I HAD EXPERIENCED). THOSE OF US IN ETHNIC STUDIES WHO USE IT TO BREAK DOWN SOCIETAL BARRIERS AND BUILD COALITIONS KNOW THAT THIS IS TRULY A POWERFULLY TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS AROUND US.

**DOLORES
DAVISON**

SHE | HER | LEI | SUA

**PROFESSOR AND CHAIR
DEPARTMENTS OF HISTORY & WOMEN'S STUDIES
FOOTHILL COLLEGE**

**C-ID CURRICULUM DIRECTOR
ACADEMIC SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES (ASCCC)
PAST PRESIDENT, ASCCC, 2020-2022**

AS A PRODUCT OF THE EAST SIDE OF SAN JOSE, MY FORMATIVE YEARS WERE SHAPED BY THE DICHOTOMY OF ATTENDING AN ELITE GRADE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL WITH LIMITED DIVERSITY BUT GROWING UP IN A NEIGHBORHOOD IN WHICH DIVERSITY NOT ONLY EXISTED BUT WAS EMBRACED AND SHARED. WATCHING MY MOTHER RETURN TO OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO PURSUE HER EDUCATION WHEN I WAS IN 3RD GRADE TAUGHT ME DETERMINATION AND DEMONSTRATED THAT NOT ALL STUDENTS ARE THE SAME, A LESSON WHICH I HAVE TAKEN WITH ME THROUGH THE ENTIRETY OF MY PROFESSIONAL CAREER. AS A FACULTY MEMBER IN ONE FIELD WHICH IS TRADITIONALLY WHITE AND MALE (HISTORY) AND ONE WHICH IS FAR MORE DIVERSE (WOMEN'S STUDIES), I STRIVE TO MAKE MY PROFESSIONAL LEGACY ONE OF INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND ANTI-RACISM, FUNDAMENTALS THAT I HAVE ENDEAVORED TO EMBRACE AND INSTILL IN ALL OF THE POSITIONS I HAVE HELD.



ARTWORK



**CHRISTOPHER
CRUZ**

HE / HIM

CHRISTOPHER CRUZ IS A FILIPINO-AMERICAN ILLUSTRATOR AND ARTIST BASED IN OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA WHO FOCUSES ON EDITORIAL ILLUSTRATIONS, POSTERS, AND COVER ART THROUGH THE INK, SCRATCHBOARD, AND DIGITAL MEDIUMS.

HIS WORK HAS BEEN AWARDED BY THE AMERICAN ILLUSTRATION AWARDS, CREATIVE QUARTERLY, AND GRAPHIS. HE HAS WORKED WITH THE STRANGER, DEMOCRACY AT WORK, WILD RESPONSE, ART OF THE BAY PODCAST, KAPWA MAGAZINE, BEATS-RHYMES-AND-LIFE, BILINGUE 4 KIDS, AND MONOCLE.

OUTSIDE OF ILLUSTRATION, CHRISTOPHER ENJOYS MUSIC AND COMICS. IN HIGH SCHOOL, HE FORMED A ROCK BAND WITH HIS BEST FRIENDS FROM CHOIR. AFTERWARDS HE JOINED THE US NAVY. AFTER SERVING AS AN AVIATION ELECTRONICS TECHNICIAN, CHRIS CRUZ PURSUED HIS EDUCATION IN ILLUSTRATION AND DESIGN. HE ATTENDED CALIFORNIA COLLEGE OF THE ARTS AND COMPLETED HIS BFA IN ILLUSTRATION IN 2023.

CHRISTOPHER HAS STUDIED GRAPHIC DESIGN DURING HIS TIME AT CCSF, UX/UI DESIGN THROUGH BRIDGEGOOD, AND ADVANCED BRANDING AT USEFUL SCHOOL. HE CONSIDERS HIMSELF A LIFELONG LEARNER IN THE PURSUIT OF BECOMING A BETTER HUMAN, PICTURE-MAKER, AND STORYTELLER.

ARTWORK



**DIEGO
EDUARDO MUÑOZ**

HE / HIM

DIEGO EDUARDO MUÑOZ IS A FIRST-GENERATION MEXICAN-AMERICAN DIGITAL ARTIST FROM SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA. HE ACQUIRED AN ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE IN GRAPHIC DESIGN AT COLLEGE OF SAN MATEO AND CURRENTLY STUDIES AT SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY PURSUING A BACHELOR'S OF FINE ARTS IN DIGITAL MEDIA ART.

HE USES HIS CREATIVE SKILLS TO CONNECT WITH HIS AUDIENCE AND EXPRESS HIS PERSONALITY AND EXPERIENCES THROUGH DIFFERENT MEDIUMS OF ART. HIS ART STYLE IS INSPIRED BY HIS CHILDHOOD ADMIRATION OF CARTOONS, SUPERHEROES AND COMIC BOOKS. HE STRIVES TO SHARE THE MESSAGE OF STAYING IMAGINATIVE AND INNOVATIVE BY DOING WHAT HE LOVES AS AN ARTIST, AND INSPIRING OTHERS TO BE THEIR BEST CREATIVE SELVES.

ARTWORK



EFFERY SIMS

He / Him

EFFERY SIMS, AN AFRICAN AMERICAN VISIONARY HAILING FROM THE VIBRANT CITY OF OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, IS A TESTAMENT TO THE POWER OF COMBINING PASSION WITH DEDICATION. HAVING GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL IN 2013, SIMS EMBARKED ON A JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY AND ARTISTIC EXPLORATION THAT WOULD LEAD HIM TO A FULFILLING CAREER PATH.

IN 2018, ARMED WITH AN ASSOCIATE OF ARTS DEGREE IN GRAPHIC DESIGN, SIMS EMERGED FROM COLLEGE WITH A FIRM GRASP OF VISUAL COMMUNICATION AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES. HIS EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION SET THE STAGE FOR A FUTURE CHARACTERIZED BY INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY.

SIMS'S DAILY LIFE IS AN INTRICATE TAPESTRY OF CREATIVITY AND MOTION. WITH A SKETCHBOOK ALWAYS WITHIN REACH, HE FINDS SOLACE AND INSPIRATION THROUGH DRAWING, A MEDIUM THAT ALLOWS HIM TO EXPRESS HIS THOUGHTS AND IDEAS. BEYOND THE REALM OF PAPER AND PENCIL, SIMS TAKES TO THE STREETS ON HIS SKATEBOARD, EMBRACING THE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AND THE RUSH OF ADRENALINE.

HOWEVER, IT IS THE WORLD OF GRAPHIC DESIGN THAT TRULY IGNITES SIMS'S PASSION. A FERVENT ILLUSTRATOR AT HEART, HE ASPIRES TO BRING HIS CREATIONS TO LIFE ON A BROADER CANVAS. HIS ULTIMATE GOAL IS TO ESTABLISH A GRAPHIC BUSINESS THAT NOT ONLY CAPTURES HIS ARTISTIC ESSENCE BUT ALSO DELIVERS A RANGE OF CAPTIVATING PRODUCTS TO THE WORLD. T-SHIRTS THAT EMBODY HIS DISTINCT STYLE, POSTERS THAT NARRATE STORIES, FLYERS THAT CATCH THE EYE – THESE ARE THE MANIFESTATIONS OF HIS VISION.

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DR. APRIL YEE
SHE / HER

ABOUT THE COLLEGE FUTURES FOUNDATION



At College Futures Foundation, we envision a California where postsecondary education advances racial, social, and economic equity, unlocking upward mobility now and for generations to come. We believe in the power of postsecondary opportunity and that securing the postsecondary success of learners facing the most formidable barriers will ensure that all of us can thrive—our communities, our economy, and our state. We believe that the equitable education system of the future, one that enables every learner to achieve their dreams and participate in an inclusive and robust economy, will be realized if we are focused, determined, and active in our leadership and partnership.



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RECOMMENDED CITATION

USC Race and Equity Center. (2023, October).
Avenging for Equity: Race-Conscious Leaders Transforming California Community College Pathways. Los Angeles, CA.

ABOUT THE USC RACE AND EQUITY CENTER

**OUR MISSION IS
TO ILLUMINATE,
DISRUPT, AND
DISMANTLE RACISM
IN ALL ITS FORMS.**

USC Race and
Equity Center

The University of Southern California is home to a dynamic research, professional learning, and organizational improvement center that serves educational institutions, corporations, government agencies, and other organizations that span a multitude of industries across the United States and in other countries. We actualize our mission through rigorous interdisciplinary research, high-quality professional learning experiences, the production and wide dissemination of useful tools, trustworthy consultations and strategy advising, and substantive partnerships. While race and ethnicity are at the epicenter of our work, we also value their intersectionality with other identities, and therefore aim to advance equity for all persons experiencing marginalization. Our rigorous approach is built on research, scalable and adaptable models of success, and continuous feedback from partners and clients.

