

Santa Monica College
Equitizing Gateway Courses
Fall 2025 Evaluation Report



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Project Overview and Updates

Equitizing Gateway Courses (EGC) at Santa Monica College is a multi-year professional development opportunity designed to cultivate and deepen equity-centered pedagogical practices. Its ultimate goal is to better serve Santa Monica College students, particularly African American and Latiné students. Program activities guide faculty to understand student experiences, implement equity-centered pedagogies, and develop better student supports to foster engagement and increase student success. The project is housed within the Division of Equity, Pathways, and Inclusion. It was initially developed by Drs. Tyffany Dowd, Counselor, and Chanté DeLoach, Professor and Department Chair, Department of Psychology, and is now led by Drs. Marisol Moreno, Professor of History, and Chanté DeLoach.

Through EGC activities, participating faculty are guided through four phases:

EGC Program Phases:

- Phase 1: Faculty Experience
- Phase 2: Student Experience
- Phase 3: Teaching & Learning Experience
- Phase 4: Student Engagement & Belonging Experience

Through EGC's multiphase curriculum and cohort-based model, faculty implement data-informed changes to teaching practices and departmental curricula. Evaluation data from the first two cohorts indicated that while the four-semester, department-based model supported sustained engagement, it also posed completion challenges for some participants.

In response, beginning with Cohort 3, the program was intentionally redesigned to improve effectiveness and completion. Building on the institutional knowledge and leadership capacity developed in the initial cohorts, Equity to Action Groups (EtAGs) were reorganized by Areas of Interest (AOIs) and facilitated by experienced equity coaches from Cohorts 1 and 2. Additionally, the curriculum was condensed to a two-semester model, a change informed by participant feedback and outcome data indicating that a shorter timeline would better support faculty persistence.

Evaluation findings from subsequent cohorts further demonstrated the value of smaller, more intentionally composed faculty groups. As a result, Cohorts 4 and 5 recruited fewer participants, in partnership with community organizations and campus programs (e.g., the NFI program), to deepen engagement, increase individualized support from faculty leads, and strengthen collaboration through expanded on-ground, full-cohort sessions. To further align program design with participant needs, an application process was introduced to assess faculty readiness, equity-related professional development experience, and pedagogical goals. Analysis of application data enabled co-leads to intentionally compose EtAGs based on multiple assessment-informed criteria, including: levels of equity professional development experience, shared instructional goals, faculty status, discipline, teaching experience, and scheduling availability. Collectively, these assessment-driven refinements reflect EGC's commitment to continuous improvement and to maximizing the program's impact on equitable teaching and learning outcomes.

The goals and outcomes of EGC have remained the same:

- Faculty will critically analyze their personal beliefs, behavior, and pedagogical practices in order to cultivate an equity-centered learning experience for African American and Latinx students
- Faculty will use culturally responsive strategies to develop an environment of belonging and sense of community for African American and Latinx students
- Faculty will integrate Culturally Responsive, AntiRacist, and Trauma-Informed pedagogies to foster student engagement and promote successful completion for African American and Latinx students
- Faculty will develop course specific methods for intervention and student retention of African American and Latinx students

Program Activities

In alignment with the increased commitment to deepen engagement, provide individualized support from faculty leads, and strengthen collaboration through expanded on-ground, full-cohort sessions, cohorts 3 and 4 have smaller cohorts with opportunities to engage in person or in a hybrid format (hyflex). A snapshot of some of these activities included:

- In-person onboarding and orientation at Fall Flex Day
- Equity coach training retreat
- 2024 Flex Day speaker: Edna Chavarry, J.D.
- 2025 Fall Phase 2 speaker
 - Equity-minded Data-Sense Making: Hannah Lawler, Ph.D.
- EGC culmination events celebrating completion of the program

EGC Evaluation Design

Dr. Mary Aleta White served as an external evaluator working in concert with the Santa Monica College Office of Institutional Research for the first three cohorts of the program. EGC program co-leads continue to evaluate the program with the support of the IR leadership (Dr. Hannah Lawler) and the IR team.

The evaluation goal remains the same: to provide process and impact data to EGC co-leads and campus leadership. The data continues to be used to improve program operations, make necessary changes, and determine the effects of the program on institutional success indicators, particularly as articulated in the Student Equity Plan. The questions below are used to guide data collection.

Key questions guiding program evaluation and effectiveness include:

Evaluation of Program Activities

- To what extent are program coaches and faculty satisfied and engaged with the program's content and activities?
- What are the most commonly reported learning outcomes? Are faculty prepared to implement change?
- What effect does program participation have on faculty knowledge and attitudes?

Program Impact

- What impact did the training have on faculty teaching practices?
- What other data suggests impact as a result of program participation?

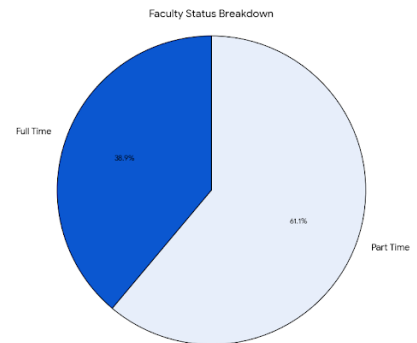
A blended, multimethod evaluation approach integrates various qualitative and quantitative data sources. Additionally, as part of the EGC logic and evaluation model, which emphasizes both short-term and long-term change, a longitudinal analysis of indirect impacts on course success data for participating faculty is ongoing.

Program Data

Since the implementation of EGC, 395 faculty across all academic departments have participated in the program. For purposes of this report, data will focus on cohorts 4 and 5. More detailed data about the first three cohorts are available in earlier annual and midterm reports.

Participants

- Cohort 4
 - 27 participants | 4 equity coaches
 - 15 FT | 16 PT
- Cohort 5
 - 15 participants | 3 equity coaches
 - 7 FT | 11 PT



Impacts

An essential component of the evaluation plan is the assessment of program impact. Primary evaluation questions include:

- What impact did the training have on faculty teaching practices?
- What other data suggests impact as a result of program participation?

Focus Group Findings: Faculty Experience in EGC Program

Qualitative data plays a vital role in the multimethod evaluation plan. The IR team organized a focus

group to collect initial feedback from faculty participants about their experiences, thoughts, and ideas regarding the EGC program. This helped identify what's working effectively and areas for improvement to better support racially minoritized students. A total of eight faculty members from Cohort 4 joined one of two focus groups, which were conducted in winter 2025, either via Zoom or in person.

Results were thematically analyzed and resulted in the following themes.

1. Overall Experience in EGC

Participants Enjoy the Conversations they are Having with Colleagues

Seven of the eight focus group participants reported that they valued and enjoyed the collegial conversations fostered by the program. Participants emphasized that these discussions created opportunities to learn from colleagues with greater experience in equity work, increasing their own awareness of concrete strategies to better support students, including how to address trauma in their courses.

Several participants described the conversations as emotionally affirming. Madeline and Nick noted that hearing others articulate similar challenges provided reassurance that they were not alone in struggling to enact the program’s equity ideals. For Madeline, this collective vulnerability reduced feelings of discouragement and helped normalize the learning process. Andrew and Barbie similarly highlighted the importance of the “space” created by the program, describing it as rare, supportive, and long needed. Barbie, in particular, shared that although she had taught at multiple community colleges, she had never previously participated in sustained equity-focused dialogue, and these conversations increased her comfort engaging in such

“It’s been really enjoyable for me to be in the conversations in our weekly meetings, and I think I’ve gotten the most out of that.” -Nick

discussions.

Finally, participants also praised the program’s interdisciplinary structure. Marcy, Barbie, and Nick noted that engaging with faculty from different departments broadened their perspectives on equity. Marcy contrasted this experience with an earlier cohort organized within a single department, explaining that the interdisciplinary format allowed for richer dialogue and a more expansive understanding of equity across disciplines and course contexts.

“I really love meeting faculty from other departments rather than just being in my own little department bubble.” -Barbie

Increased Awareness of Equity Issues

Half of the participants reported that the EGC program heightened their awareness of equitable teaching practices. John #1, a veteran instructor, admitted: *“I’ve been teaching for more than 10 years and doing the same thing over and over. I didn’t realize some of those habits weren’t equitable until this program pointed them out.”*

Similarly, John #2 shared: *“When I reviewed my syllabus, I realized I wasn’t including diverse perspectives. That pushed me to revise my materials—something I wouldn’t have done without EGC.”*

Positive Experience with Challenges

While participants valued the program, they noted gaps. Discussions surfaced equity issues but offered few practical solutions. John #2 suggested: *“It’s been more academic than practical so far. A checklist of takeaways after each session would help us apply what we learn.”*

Several participants—Nick, Madeline, and Andrew—wanted more consistent meetings. Madeline explained: *“I feel more motivated when we meet regularly. Long gaps make it harder to stay engaged.”* Andrew agreed: *“I’d be open to weekly meetings. Hearing colleagues’ perspectives is so valuable.”*

2. EGC Impact on Personal Learning

Program Activities and Impact on Personal Learning

Half of the participants reported that program activities influenced their personal growth.

Videos

Nick described a video on joy that inspired him to prioritize his own happiness and bring joy into his classroom. Madeline reflected on a video emphasizing that sometimes rigor must be sacrificed to lift students, which resonated with her discipline’s focus on rigor.

“No one has ever asked me, in the last 40 years, what my colleagues had asked me. I thought ‘wow, this is why I came here’. All the emotion behind it, the sense of belonging to this group.” –
John #2

Group Work

Others highlighted the value of working in small groups. John #2 shared that being asked personal questions during the first meeting made him feel a sense of belonging—something he now strives to create for his students.

Increased Empathy

Three participants said the program deepened their empathy. John #1 noted: *“I realized students aren’t making excuses—they’re facing real challenges.”* This shift helped him better understand and support students’ circumstances.

3. EGC Impacted Teaching Practices and Approaches

Five instructors reported changes to their teaching after participating in the EGC program:

- **Created Flexible Deadlines**

Two of these participants discussed how they implemented more flexible deadlines as a result of being in the EGC program. Marcy began offering grace periods and a “late pass” option each semester. John #2 also adopted more flexible deadlines, recognizing students’ work and family obligations.

- **Increased More Diversity**

Two out of the eight participants discussed how they include more diversity in their assignments and teaching practices as a result of being in the EGC program. John #1 revised a historical writing assignment to require multiple cultural perspectives, ensuring

broader representation.

- **Created Low-Stakes Assignments**

Two out of the eight instructors discussed how they created low-stakes assignments in their courses. Marcy introduced assignments graded on completion to reduce stress. Nick replaced daily assessments with participation points earned through group work, which improved engagement and reduced anxiety.

“The students were all excited because there was little stress, and they were actually talking to each other and trying to help each other.” --Nick

Student Response

“I see increased engagement from historically minoritized students. I see them engage more in discussions.” – John #1

Four participants noted positive outcomes. Nick observed stronger peer interaction. Marcy and John #1 reported fewer drops among historically marginalized students. Andrew expects noticeable changes next semester after full implementation.

4. Some Faced Challenges while Navigating EGC

Four of eight participants reported challenges. Three struggled with program structure; one with content implementation.

- **Navigation Issues**

Madeline found the Canvas site confusing: *“It felt like being a student in someone else’s course, not knowing what to do each week.”*

- **Data-Related Challenges**

Andrew noted his group wasn’t encouraged to attend Data and Donuts: *“It answered a lot of questions about our data—someone should’ve explained its importance.”*

John #2, a new instructor, had a blank equity report: *“I wish there was something that said, ‘If your report is blank, do this instead.’”*

- **Content Integration**

John #1 struggled to fit EGC material into his syllabus and requested sample syllabi for guidance.

5. Moving Forward in the Program, Participants are hoping to Learn

Five of eight participants responded, focusing on solutions to equity challenges discussed in the program.

“Looking forward to seeing more examples on how to implement these equity practices.” – John #1

“Solutions. What can I do?” – John #2

**“Action items. Being able to take something away immediately to incorporate.”
– Nick**

- **Marcy** wants more strategies to make courses equitable and values learning as much as a coach as she did as a participant.
- **Nick** seeks actionable items and more collaboration beyond Zoom, including sharing syllabi for feedback and observing peers’ classes to provide formative input.
- **Madeline** simply said she wants to keep learning and isn’t ready for the program to end, which she sees as positive.

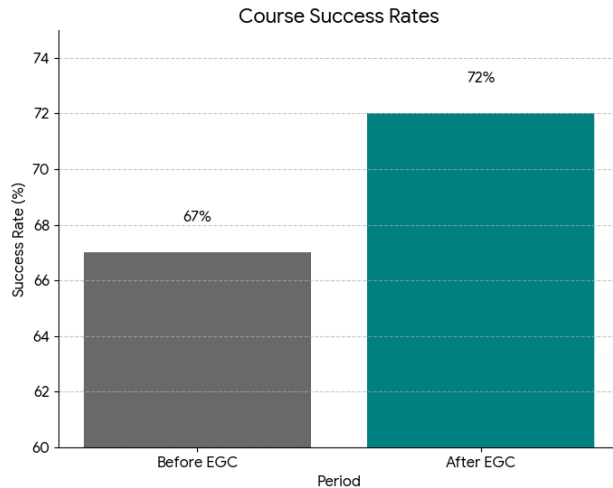
6. Things Participants would Like EGC Leaders to Know

Participant Feedback for EGC Program Leaders

Four of eight participants shared comments for program leaders:

- **Madeline** felt feedback about equity can be overly negative: *“It’s hard hearing I’m doing everything wrong. My E-tag group helps remind me of what I’m doing right.”*
- **John #1 and Marcy** appreciated compensation, noting it improved attitudes and supported adjuncts financially.
- **Nick** suggested updating outdated COVID-era videos to reflect current practices.
- **Andrew** recommended creating detailed tutorials on locating and analyzing racial data, as this was a common challenge.

Course Success Data



course success and reductions in equity gaps for Black and Latinx students.

- Overall, course success increased from **67% before EGC to 72% after EGC**.
- **Black students'** success rates improved, and their equity gap relative to the collegewide average narrowed from about **-15 percentage points to -8 percentage points** by Fall 2024.
- **Latinx students** also showed steady improvement, with their equity gap decreasing from about **-7/-8 percentage points to -4 percentage points** by Fall 2024.
- While gaps remain, the trends suggest that EGC participation is associated with **meaningful gains in**

Next Steps: Looking Ahead

Cohort 5 will complete their final semester of the program, engaging more deeply with the spring curriculum as they apply learning from the first semester to implement transformative changes in an identified course.

- Spring deliverables include a course survey and course revisions.
- Due to budget restrictions, there will be no speaker for the spring term, however, program leads encourage participants to attend Gina Garcia, Ph.D.'s spring flex day presentation.

EGC alumni workshop series

In spring 2026, a workshop series highlighting how experienced EGC faculty are transforming racial equity principles into sustained practice will be offered to EGC alumni. Through in-depth case studies across disciplines, alumni will share how they have continued to apply EGC frameworks, integrating an equity mindset, data-informed inquiry, critical reflexivity, and humanizing pedagogies and student engagement practices, to advance racial equity and belonging in their classrooms. Each hyflex session offers concrete, evidence-based examples of course redesigns, candid reflections on challenges and growth, and actionable strategies that demonstrate equity-centered teaching in practice.

- **Intended audience:** Current and past EGC instructional faculty participants, although the workshops are open to all interested faculty.

- **Goals:** To provide EGC participants with a structured and community-based support system to continue to apply EGC principles and skills to their classroom.
- **Learning outcome:** Upon completion of a professional development workshop, practitioners will be able to engage in continuous critical self-reflection regarding their own racialized beliefs and systemic power dynamics in higher education to assume personal and institutional accountability for implementing course revisions that reduce or eliminate racial equity gaps and increase students' sense of belonging in the classroom.
- **Institutional Alignment:** This workshop series is aligned with and supports the advancement of multiple objectives outlined in the Student Equity Plan 2.0 (e.g., increasing retention and completion through cohort-based professional development), as well as the ASCCC IDEA framework and CCC Vision 2030 priorities.
- **Delivery format:** Each 90-minute workshop will be facilitated by an EGC alumnus or co-facilitated by two EGC alumni representing two disciplines. Sessions will be hyflex or virtual slide presentations with 1 to 3 substantial examples of course interventions or revisions, including but not limited to course policies, practices, curriculum, syllabus, and pedagogy.

Workshop series topic #1: From Principle to Practice: EGC Alumni Model Data-Informed Critical Reflection

- Experienced EGC alumni faculty present deep-dive case studies of their ongoing course redesign efforts, sharing the quantitative and qualitative data they used, the specific changes they made, and the resulting student outcomes. Two hyflex sessions highlighting different disciplines/AoIs.
 - Workshop Description: Using a case study approach, EGC alumni will model their journey of critical reflexivity and race consciousness by presenting on how they continued to apply EGC principles and skills to reduce or eliminate racial equity gaps in their own classrooms. Specifically, they will showcase how they used disaggregated student data from Precision Campus and classroom student surveys (Phase 2 of the EGC model: integrating a culture of equity-centered inquiry) to identify and dismantle specific institutional or pedagogical barriers—not student deficits—that disproportionately impacted African American and Latine/x course success. The case study approach will feature candid discussions about the emotional labor involved in confronting negative student outcomes and the critical reflexivity process—the willingness to critically reflect on one's own implicit biases, assumptions, and practices to ensure pedagogical and policy changes demonstrably advance equity in educational outcomes.

Workshop series topic #2: Humanizing the Classroom: EGC Case Studies in Authentic Care and Equity

- Experienced EGC alumni faculty present deep-dive case studies of their ongoing course redesign efforts, using a trauma-informed lens and culturally responsive pedagogies, the specific changes they made, and the resulting student outcomes. Two hyflex sessions highlighting different disciplines/AoIs.

- Workshop description: EGC alumni faculty will present case studies of their on-ground and virtual course redesigns, modeling how they applied trauma-informed and culturally responsive pedagogies to create classroom environments of optimal learning, engagement, and sense of belonging. The session will focus on concrete in-class practices, curriculum adjustments, and actionable policies that explicitly support the unique challenges and strengths of Black and Latine/x students (inclusive of intersectional identities, LGBTQ+, veteran, foster youth, undocumented status, and justice-involved and justice-impacted). The case study approach will feature candid discussions about the emotional labor involved in confronting negative student outcomes and the critical reflexivity process—the willingness to critically reflect on one's own implicit biases, assumptions and practices to ensure pedagogical and policy changes demonstrably advance equity in educational outcomes.

Additional Workshop for Department Chairs: Equity-Centered Leadership in Action: Data-Informed Strategies for Departmental Change

- Workshop Description: This session brings together department chairs who participated in EGC and are actively strengthening and applying equity-centered leadership principles within their departments. Presenters will share how they have used data-informed practices - including through program review - to guide departmental changes, inform policy decisions, and revise course outlines of record for identified gateway courses. The session is designed to serve as a springboard for continued dialogue and professional development among department chairs, fostering a community of practice focused on advancing equity-centered leadership and sustainable institutional change.
- Learning Outcome: Participants will be able to identify and apply data-informed strategies to promote equity-centered decision-making and leadership within their departments.

Collaboration with GP

Beginning in the winter 2026 semester, EGC co-leads and select instructional faculty who completed the EGC program will partner with The Guided Pathways Collaborative. The *Guided Pathways Collaborative* is a cross-institutional effort with membership consisting of EGC instructional faculty, Area of Interest (AoI) counselors, and classified educators from Outreach and Student Services. The rich knowledge and expertise each member will contribute to the collective ensures that we can examine Black and Latine students' experiences from multiple facets, with equity at the center.

For EGC alumni, this is an opportunity to build upon knowledge learned in EGC and translate their classroom equity expertise into a college-wide initiative that centers and improves the first-year student experience for Black and Latine students through the *Guided Pathways Collaborative*.

Summary

The Fall 2025 EGC Evaluation Report details the progress and impact of the EGC professional development program at Santa Monica College aimed at closing equity gaps for Black and Latine students.

As mentioned, key updates and findings include:

- **Program Redesign:** To improve faculty persistence and promote completion, the program was condensed from four semesters to two and reorganized into smaller, intentionally designed Equity to Action Groups (EtAGs) led by experienced equity coaches.
- **Faculty Impact:** Qualitative feedback from Cohort 4 indicates that faculty value the interdisciplinary collaboration and have gained a heightened awareness of equitable teaching practices. Changes implemented by participating faculty include flexible deadlines, diversified assignments, and low-stakes assessments.
- **Student Success:** Data shows a positive trend, with overall course success increasing from 67% to 72%. Notably, the equity gap for Black students narrowed from -15 to -8 percentage points, and for Latiné students from -8 to -4 percentage points by Fall 2024.
- **Future Initiatives:** Moving into 2026, the program will expand through a new alumni workshop series focusing on data-informed reflection and humanizing the classroom, a designated workshop for Department Chairs, alongside a new collaboration with the Guided Pathways Collaborative to center racial equity and enhance the first-year experience for minoritized students.