Equity Audit (EA) Findings

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Today's Agenda

Background

Key Findings

A Way Forward

Next Steps/Discussion

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Background

Context

SMC invited Hotep Consultants to facilitate an Equity Audit of practices, policies and procedures to uncover potential barriers to student success -- specifically as it relates to the impact on historically minoritized students.

- Assess current practices at Santa Monica College- including existing equity-centered work
- Provide recommendations for continued improvements
- Ensure equity is embedded in all areas of campus: policy, practice, and praxis

Timeline

September
Collected responses from an employee survey and a student survey and facilitated focus groups for key constituents.

October
Conduct an analysis of key institutional documents focused on policy, practice, and assessment.

November - Present findings to key constituent groups

December- Present findings to campus wide community

January - **Submit final report**

February - Present findings to the Board of Trustees

Winter + Spring - Series of professional learning sessions for employees

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Key Definition: Equity

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Equity is developing policies, practices, and assessments within an organization that take into consideration the unique challenges and barriers faced by disproportionately impacted groups.

Santa Monica College

Equity

Fair and just inclusion. An equitized society is one in which all can participate and prosper. The goal of equity must be to create conditions that allow ALL to reach their full potential. (Reference: Veronica Neal). Equity is an ongoing process and an accountability lens. It is not an end product.

Racial Equity

The application of justice systems that have been out of balance with regards to race. Racial equity is both a process and an outcome. As an outcome, we achieve racial equity when race no longer determines one's socioeconomic outcomes; when everyone has what they need to thrive, no matter where they live. As a process, we apply racial equity when the most impacted by structural racial inequity are meaningfully involved in the creation and implementation of the institutional policies and practices that impact their lives. (SEP 2019-2022)

Key Definition: Anti-Racism

- Intentionally focusing on policies and practices that produce or sustain racial equity between racial groups
- Requires constant assessment and reflection
- Is less about the creator – is solely about the outcome

Guiding Research Questions

1. To what extent is the environment at Santa Monica College **diverse and inclusive**?

2. To what extent do Santa Monica College's administrative policies and practices encourage a **systemic and collaborative approach** to diversity, equity and inclusion?

3. To what extent do Santa Monica College's **instructional policies and practices** help cultivate a learning experience that is engaging and empowering for historically minoritized students?

4. In what ways can Santa Monica College support changes to current policies, practices, and procedures in order to **improve the quality of instruction and services** for students?

5. To what extent are Santa Monica College's **budget and resource practices** informed by a student-ready and equity minded lens?

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Key Competencies

Critical Reflection
The practice of assessing an organization's culture, policies, and practices and identifying ways to change, adapt, and grow to improve outcomes for students.

Demonstrating Belief in Students
This is the authentic and unwavering belief that students (in particular, students of color, first generation, and/or low income) have the capacity to learn and be successful.

Racial Literacy
Understanding what race is, its relationship to inequity, and how to respond to racial tension, discrimination, and inequitable outcomes with an anti-racist lens.

Action Oriented
Being action-oriented requires intentional steps and efforts towards dismantling inequitable practices and policies within the institution.

Sense of Welcome & Belonging
Students feel welcomed and a sense of belonging when an institution values students' cultural/racial differences, connects them to opportunities and resources, and creates community for students.

Utilizing a Campus Equity Ecosystem
Creating change requires the organization function as an equity-minded community meaning that all individuals, constituent groups, departments, and services understand what their role is in student success and leverage resources to advance equity and student success in alignment with student equity plan and strategic plan

EA Approach: Data Reviewed

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1. **Campus-wide survey**
    a. Employee responses: 358 Student Responses: 2,026
    b. Gained insight into SMC's culture and climate including the extent to which employees feel supported and valued by the institution, the practices they engage in to support students, some of the issues and challenges with shifting to a student-focused and student-ready approach, and insights to the student broad experience.
    c. Participation encouraged campus wide and with key leadership groups.
    d. Automated reminders were sent to classified, faculty, and administration.
2. **Focus Group Discussions**
    a. Total # of hours: 40
    b. 156 participants engaged in 32 sessions. Participants represent the following stakeholder groups: Students, Student services & Support professionals, Instructional Faculty, and Managers/Administrators.
    c. Gained insight around employees' level of understanding, engagement, and feedback around equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts at Santa Monica College. For students focus groups provided deeper insights on their challenges and areas of great support.
3. **Document Analysis**
    a. Total # of documents: 146
    b. Types of documents: Policies, practices, and assessments
        i. Job descriptions/postings, advertisements about student programs, info about professional development, HR forms, syllabi, student surveys, academic senate resolutions, etc.
        ii. Gained insight into structures, messages and practices that create barriers to anti-racist efforts

S.E.T. Framework

Student Ready	Equity Minded	Transformative
Institutional	Individual	Service
Policy	**Practices**	**Assessment**
The record of what we say we do	Doing what we said we would do	The result of doing what we said we would do

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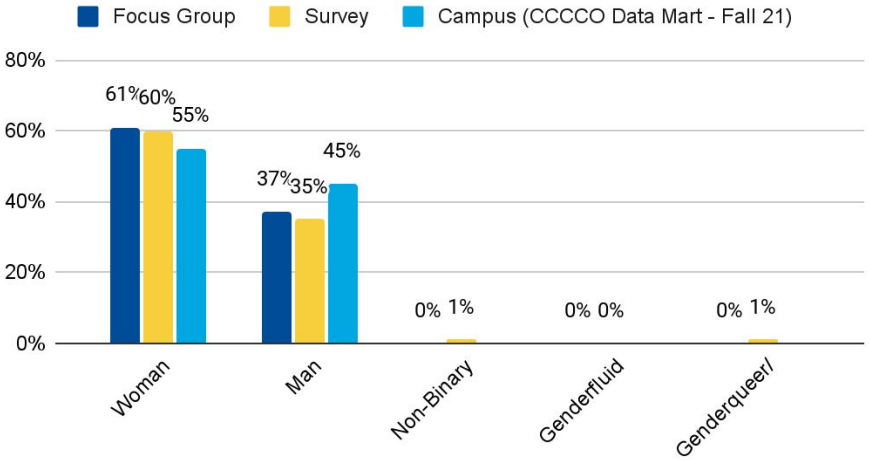
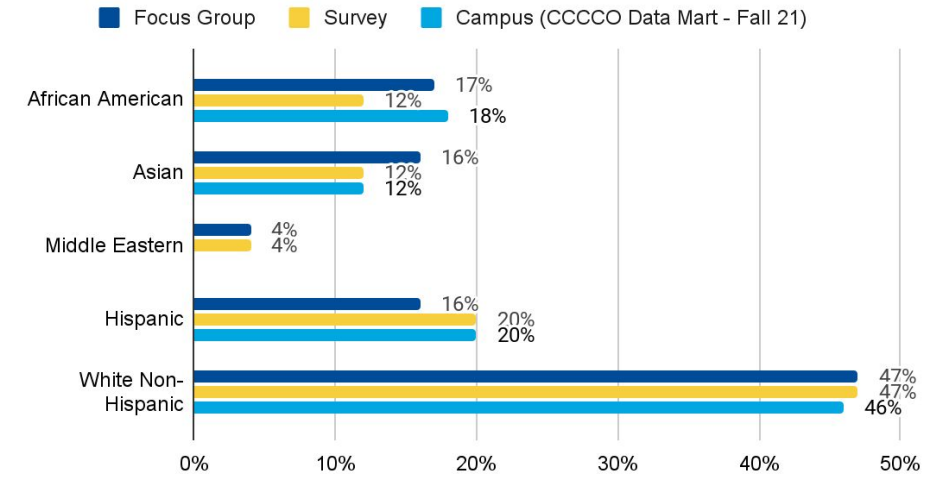
Participant Demographics - Employees

Gender Identity - Employees



Racial Identity - Employees



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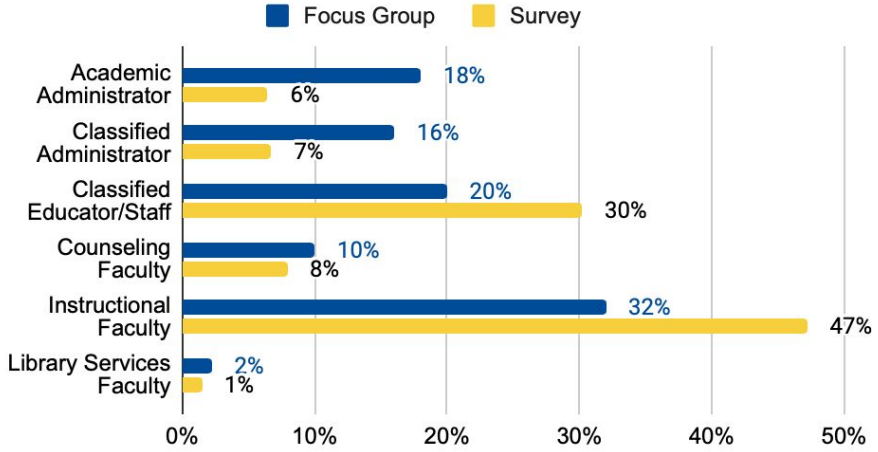
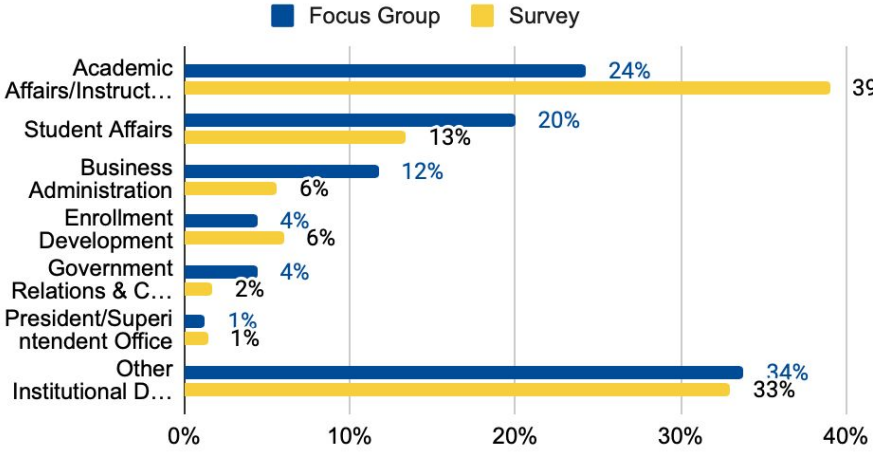
Participant Demographics - Employees

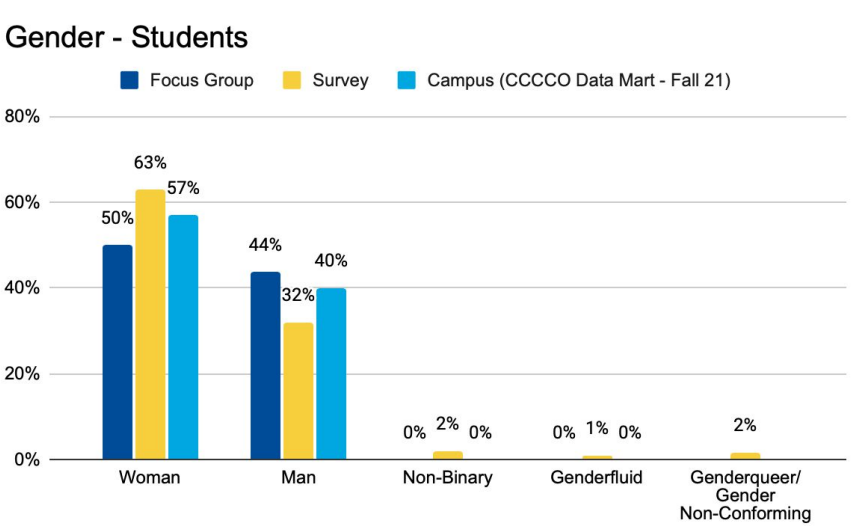
Employee Group

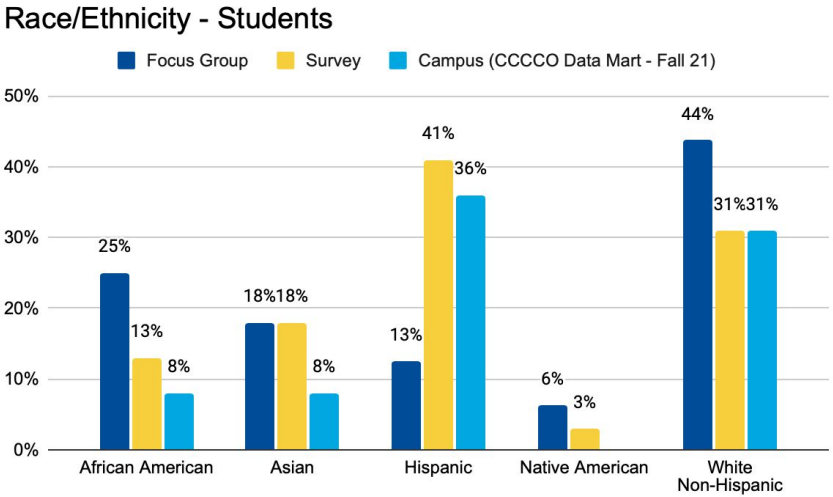


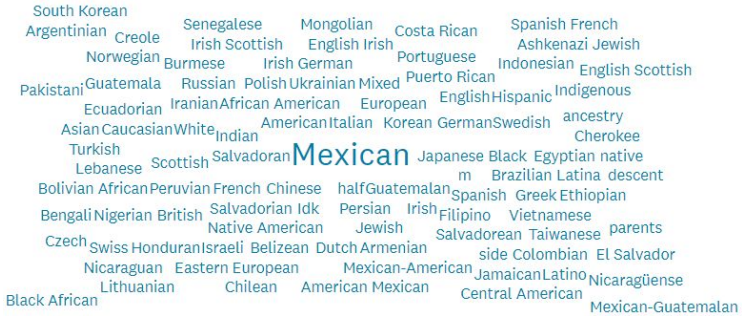
Department/Division Affiliation



Participant Demographics - Student







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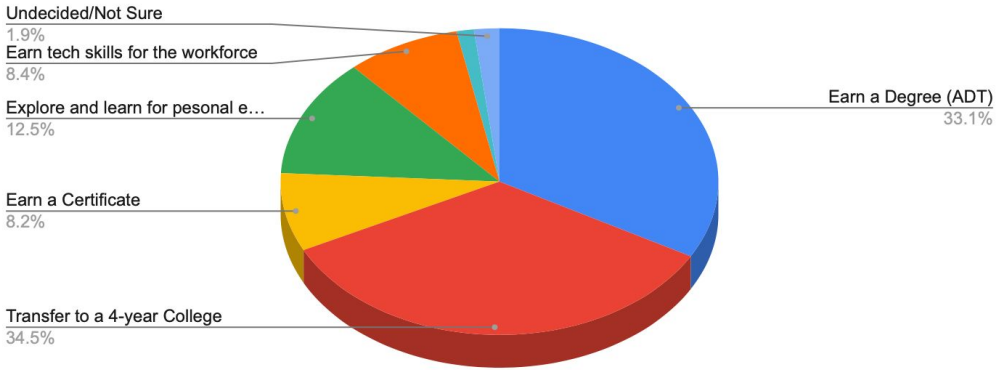
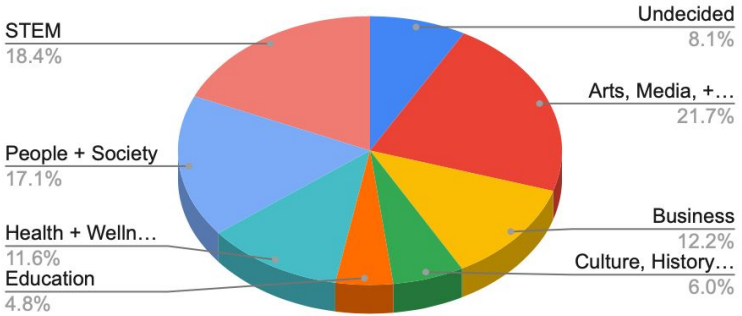
Participant Demographics - Student

Educational Goal



Areas of Interest



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Limitations

- Timing
  - There were several competing priorities that may have impacted the ability for community members to participate: ie. timing of survey distribution and focus groups with the start of the semester
- Breadth and depth of voices
  - Wish we had more participation from students and part-time/adjunct faculty in both the survey and the focus groups; We also wish we had more focus group participation, overall.
- Access and information
  - We can only review the information we have access to - including speaking with individuals who were able and willing to share their stories.
- Pandemic!
  - We are still straddling a virtual environment for the majority of community members and adjusting and re-adjusting to constant shifts and changes within our work.

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Moment of Reflection

Key Findings

Overarching Themes

Clarity and Connection
There is a lack of clarity around the institution's equity advancing priorities and lack of guidance on the how the institution intends to implement those priorities.

Challenges to developing an Equity Ecosystem
Equity efforts are siloed and polarized which creates a barrier to developing a system of equity that can be easily entered into by a community of people with different backgrounds and levels of understanding about the issues.

Competencies for Student Success
SMC's programs offerings and reputation attract diverse students into the SMC community, but there is substantial progress to be made with regards to the campus climate and culture, to improve outcomes for disproportionately impacted students.

Key Findings - Student Ready *(Institutional)*

Highlights

- **"Redesigning the Student Experience" (Guided Pathways), Development of the Equity, Pathways, and Inclusion Division.**
    - Examples of: Practices

- Accessing expertise of national thought leaders, such as USC's Center for Race & Equity, CUE, CCEAL, to inform campus equity efforts.
    - I.e. Language used in key institutional documents, such as the 2019 SEP, demonstrates a clear and intentional focus on racial equity
    - *Evidenced in: SEP 2019-2022 Exec. Summary*
        - Examples of: Practices

- The 2021-2022 Action Plan 1 - included a specific focus on reviewing and revising Course Outlines of Record, Student Learning Outcomes, and Program Learning Outcomes in collaboration with the Curriculum Committee and Program Review Committee
    - Evidenced in: *DPAC 2021-2022 Action Plan*
        - Examples of: Policies, Assessments

Areas of Growth/Opportunity

- **There is not a shared understanding of "equity" and how initiatives and activities align with the definition.**
    - There are several documents that communicate institutional goals but they are disconnected and misaligned
    - i.e. 2022-2023 Board of Trustees Goals, SMC Strategic Initiatives 2017-2022, 2019-2022 SEP Executive Summary, DPAC Action Plans.

- Across all job classifications, there is a lack of consistency about expectations for engaging in equity-minded practices and lack of support for growth in these areas.
    - "PD experiences vary depending on classification type and department. There are very limited opportunities for managers and classified staff. There are a percentage of faculty/staff/admins with a truecommitment, but it is not widely accepted….it is missing from our mission and vision and most reactions to recent events are focused solely on peoples emotions at the time, not how we can continually commit to being an anti-racist campus." (*Administrator Survey Response)*

- Culture of mistrust and lack of clarity around equity advancing efforts and initiatives within the institution.
    - "I have not felt that these opportunities are 'safe spaces' and I've been significantly more 'quiet' at these spaces than I ever have been in my career." (*Counseling Faculty, Survey Quote)*

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Key Findings - Equity Minded *(Individual)*

Highlights

- Comprehensive Professional Development opportunities for embedding equity-minded practices into one's work.
    - Evident in the development and ongoing engagement in the Equitizing Gateway Courses Program and the Data Coaching Program.
        - Examples of: Practices, Assessment
- **SMC employees believe they and their colleagues have high expectations of all students regardless of background and are aware of the biases they may have.**
    - 75% of employees reported that colleagues have *high expectations of students regardless of race, gender or cultural identity.*
    - 86% of employees reported that they are aware of *how their beliefs can create bias towards specific groups of people.*
        - Examples of: Practices

Areas of Growth/Opportunity

- **There is a disconnect between believing that all SMC employees are responsible for advancing equity efforts at SMC, and the reality of how doing so fits into various roles on campus.**
    - Classified Educators were the only respondents that responded "Not Applicable" when asked if they were aware of SMC's equity related goals and whether their colleagues had a shared understanding of equity at SMC.
        - Examples of: Practices
- Equity is not a consistent priority (or included at all, in some cases) for employee-facing documents from recruitment, onboarding, and evaluation.
    - For the tenured faculty evaluation, questions on the "Professionalism" form do not have an explicit focus on "equity" or culturally relevant practices. Q8 says "Responsive to students and is accessible to students."
        - Examples of: Practices, Assessment
- There are beliefs about teaching, learning, and students, still rooted in the right to fail model. When unchallenged, this creates barriers to innovative and equity-minded approaches.
    - "….the Equity movement on campus appears to be dedicated to lowering standards, equating them with forms of oppression." *(Survey Quote, Full Time Faculty)*
    - "I'm in science classes; instructors aren't known to be flexible in emergencies." *(Native American/Alaskan Native Student Quote - Student Survey)*
        - Examples of: Practices

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Key Findings - Transformative *(Service)*

Highlights

- **SMC's commitment to basic needs, such as the Bodega and Transportation services, help remove a financial barrier for students.**
  - "The instructors are now informing us about resources that help the whole student, not the academics. The whole school cares if you have food now! The school cares about your wellbeing. It is amazing." (*African American,* Student Survey Quote)
    - Examples of: Practices

- Overall, students feel supported by the campus community.
  - 86% agreed with the statement, *"I feel valued by instructors in the classroom (in person or virtually)."*
  - 83% agreed with the statement, "*SMC staff are helpful and approachable."*
  - Impact of programs such as Black Collegians, Men of Color Mentoring Program, and EOPS, in creating a sense of community for students.
    - Examples of: Practices, Assessment

Areas of Growth/Opportunity

- **Students experiencing challenges when it comes to standard processes and interactions with employees (i.e. a lack of follow through and inflexible policies).**
  - "The issues of disabled students needs work. Several fellow students have expressed concern over Professors who ignore and disregard those with challenges. *(African American,* Student Survey Quote)
  - "As an adult re-entry student, I find it very difficult to determine which course (and instructors) actually adhere to the flexible learning designation. I also find it painstaking to explain that, if my kid is sick or I had to pick up some extra work, I may need more time to complete an assignment, and which instructors will even be receptive to it." (*White, Student Survey Quote)*
    - Examples: Practices, Assessment

- Across employee groups, there is a sense of feeling undervalued by the organization.
  - Over 20% of employees agreed with the statement, *I have felt I did not receive the due credit for my ideas or work.* Over 40% of employees agreed with the statement, *"I feel I have to work harder than my colleagues to be perceived as a competent employee."*
    - Example: Practices, Assessment

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Moment of Reflection

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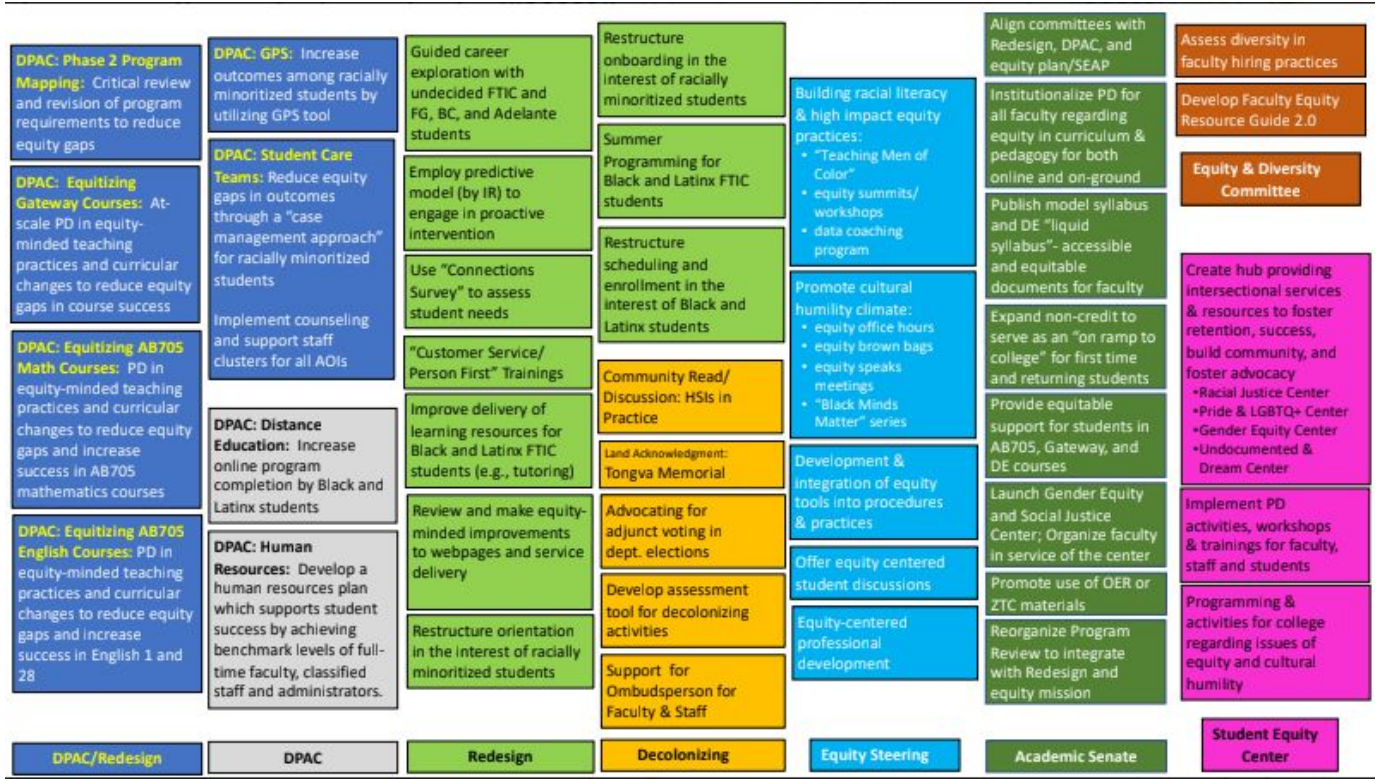
Where Are We Now?



Source: EPI Crosswalk Presentation 2.4.21

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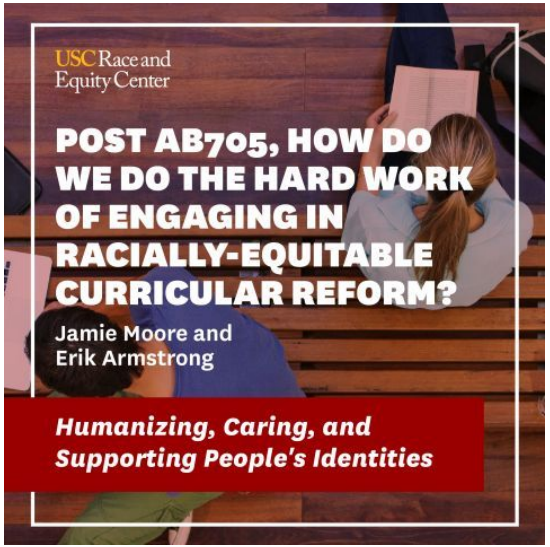
Where Are We Now?



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"If you want to change the system, then you have to invest in the people. Because the people make up the system."

-Focus group participant

Culture eats PD for breakfast.

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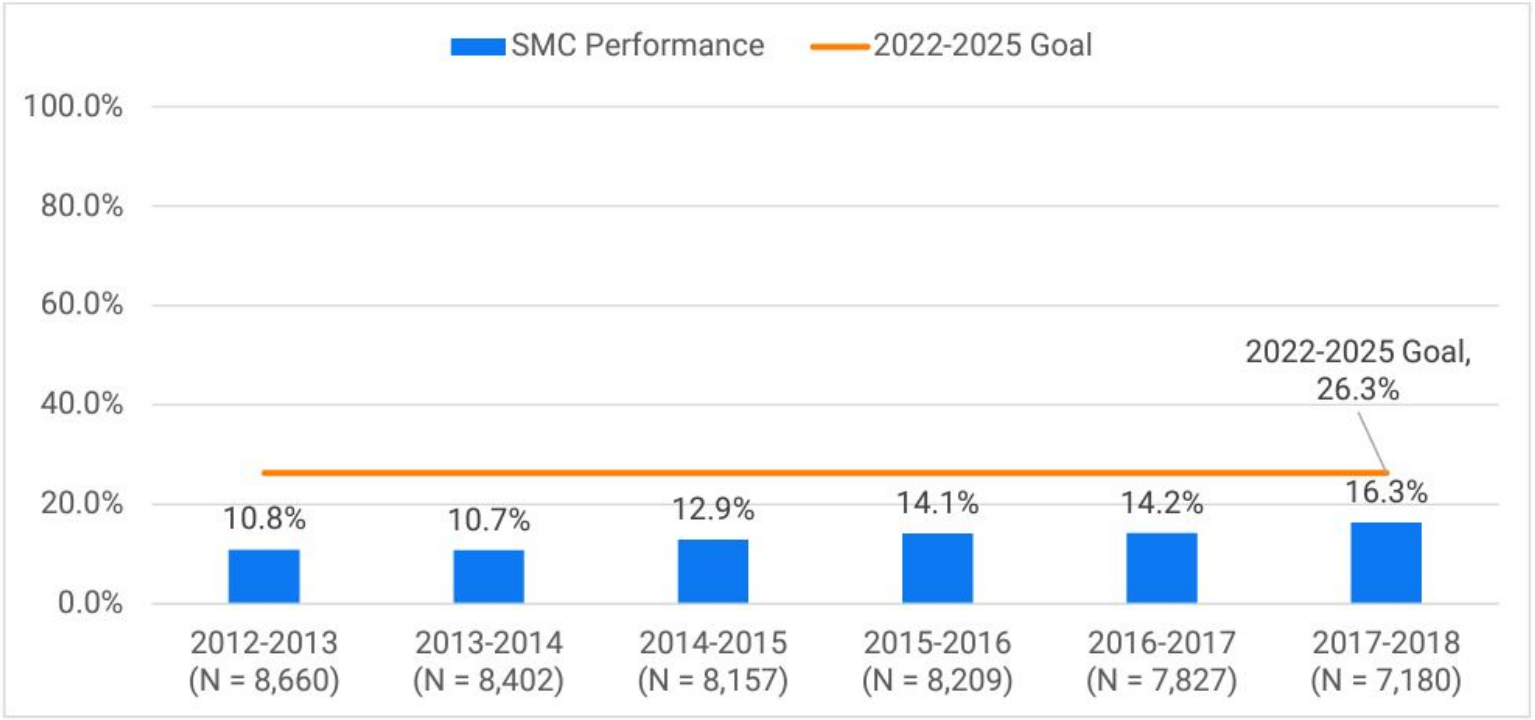
Where Are We Now?

SMC 3-Year Goal Completion Rate



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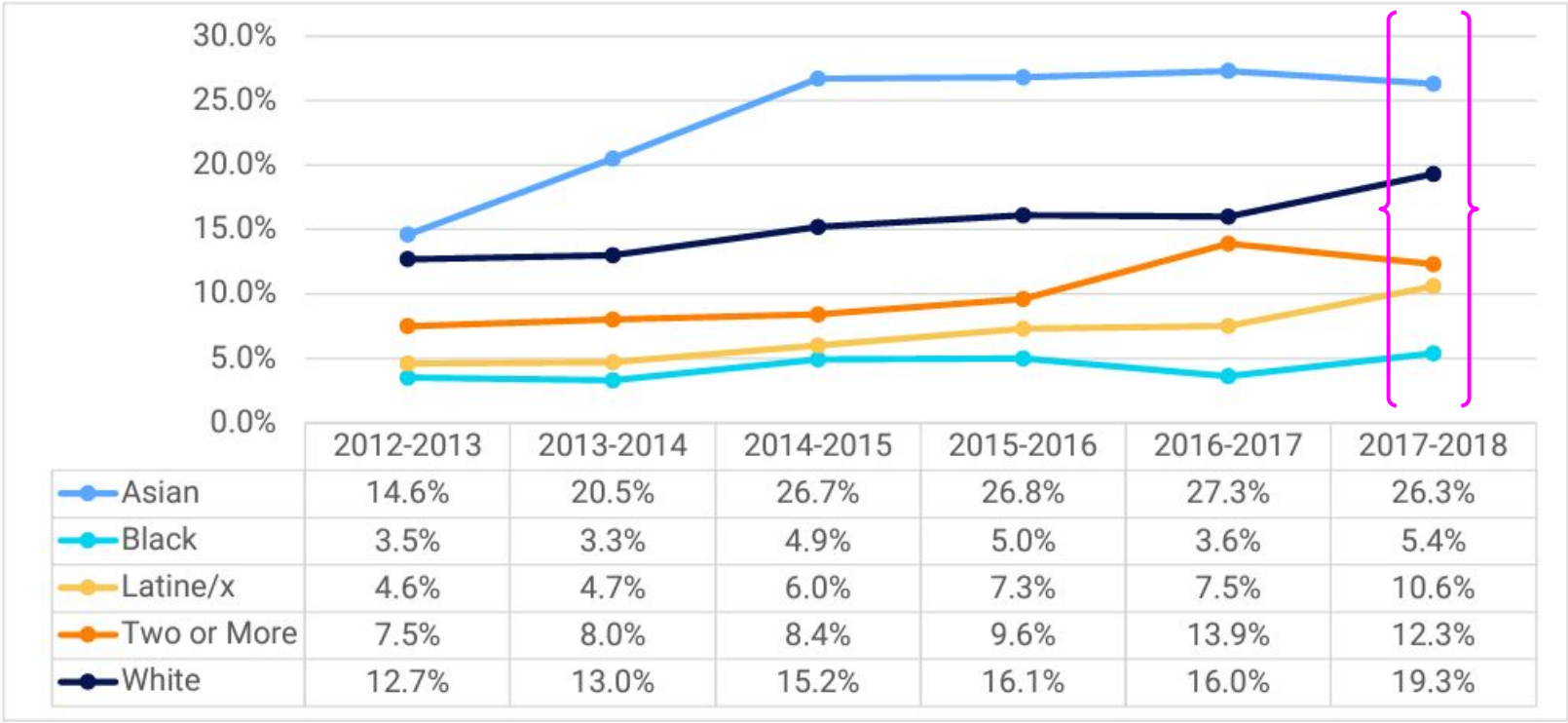
Where Are We Now?

Disaggregated by Race/Ethnicity (1.9 Completed Vision Completion Goal in Three Years)



	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Asian	14.6%	20.5%	26.7%	26.8%	27.3%	26.3%
Black	3.5%	3.3%	4.9%	5.0%	3.6%	5.4%
Latine/x	4.6%	4.7%	6.0%	7.3%	7.5%	10.6%
Two or More	7.5%	8.0%	8.4%	9.6%	13.9%	12.3%
White	12.7%	13.0%	15.2%	16.1%	16.0%	19.3%

Source: 2022-2023 Institutional Effectiveness Report

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A Way Forward

A Way Forward - Student Ready (Institutional)

Recommendation	Strategic Plan Goal
Assess the current status of recommendations and qualitative data provided by former consultants and internal campus experts about the student experience. ● *Example: Continued focus on Annual Action Plan 1: Review of SLO, PLO, COR, etc.*	1, 3, 5, 6
Implement a *Shared Equity Leadership (SEL) Framework,* to provide a collaborative and inclusive approach to structuring equity work. *Resource: Shared Equity Leadership Toolkit - American Council on Education and USC Rossier's Pullias Center for Higher Ed*	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Develop an internal process and guide on inclusive and equitable hiring practices that become the base for how to prepare, chair, and participate on a committee, through an equity-minded lens. *Resource: University of Washington: Candidate Evaluation Form Tips & Guidelines, DEI Commitment Statement, & Staff Diversity Hiring Toolkit*	1,2, 3, 4, 5, 6D
Develop a communication guide to explain the college prioritization process and include: vocabulary, the roles of key groups, guiding questions or key elements that should be focused on to help create transparency and clarity around how decisions are made. *Resource: RCC Initiative Prioritization Handout*	3A, 6A, 6C
There needs to be a paradigm shift from a box-checking-compliance orientation to institutional transformation, in the examination of policies, practices, and assessments. This includes an equity-minded approach to decision making within the context of current institutional landscape. *Example: How does equity impact the prioritization process?* *Resource: Equity-Minded Decision Making Guide - Achieving the Dream*	1A, 1B, 1D
All job descriptions should include information regarding SMC's commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and expectations of how each role might engage in equity advancing efforts within the college community *Example: Norco College STEM Faculty Job Description*	1, 4

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A Way Forward - Equity Minded (Individual)

Recommendation	Strategic Plan Goal
Conduct a review of employee review, onboarding, and evaluation forms to incentivize equity-minded practices, provide support needed for employee learning and growth, and to address behaviors not aligned with SMC's vision, mission, and goals. *Example: CSEA Employee Evaluation Form - College of Marin*	1F, 1G, 1H
Create Professional Development Learning Pathways to help employees navigate the multitude of opportunities available to them. This would include an inventory of all organized PD activities, when they take place during the year, expertise levels, modality, and resources.	1J, 1D
Embed equity action plans within all employee evaluations to encourage the engagement with equity advancing work on campus (and/or beyond) and highlight areas of opportunity for the campus to meet the professional development needs of faculty, staff, and administrators.	1B, 1E, 1G, 1H, 1I
Provide training and coaching for managers/administration with formal responsibilities over equity initiatives. ● Develop a process for dialogue that addresses conflict in a constructive way. ● Deepen knowledge base around key issues and trends affecting various student groups and communities. ● Develop funding/resource strategies to sustain impact of equity initiatives across the college.	4, 6B, 6C, 6D
Develop campus wide leadership training (modules/workshops) for students leaders & student employees, so they are prepared to create a welcoming environment for their peers.	1, 2, 4

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A Way Forward - Transformative (Service)

Recommendation	Strategic Plan Goal
Engage in Cultural Humility and Healing Centered Leadership & Engagement trainings/practices to re-establish a clear culture of trust, understanding, and collegiality. *Resource: Flourish Agenda Healing Centered Engagement, Smith Consulting and Networking*	1, 1D
Establish a staff ombudsperson (or office) dedicated to being a resource to the community of campus employees who have issues or concerns with fairness with college processes, policies, or procedures, and to communicate confidentially about their experiences. The ombudsperson can support individuals and provide systemic recommendations without disclosing confidential information. *Resource: Berkeley Staff Ombuds Office*	1,4A
Revise the Data Coaching program to include external facilitators - especially as it comes to supporting Classified Educators, Administrators, and Hesitant/Less Engaged Faculty. *Resource: Skyline College Equity Training Series*	1F, 1J, 2, 4b
Utilize time within Department/Division meetings to facilitate dialogue with staff, faculty, and administrators for sharing best practices and how to implement culturally sustaining practices within their work. *Example: Creating a schedule of presentations for each dept./unit/office to share updates, goals & how they connect with institution's goals, high-impact practices, and opportunities for collaboration.*	1, 2D, 4, 2E
Establish a forms committee to review the effectiveness of required forms, update language, and evaluate the submission and review process on a regular basis (annually). *Resource: Web Scan - USC's Center for Urban Education*	3
Establish a process to review and revise the model syllabus template, course syllabi, and canvas pages on a regular basis. While syllabi can be viewed as contracts from the student to the instructor, they can, and should, also be viewed as a communication tool and resource between the instructor and the student.	1, 2

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“You can’t be equity advancing and risk averse.”

Next Steps

- Identifying the recommendations that are most meaningful for your campus as it comes to addressing potential equity gaps
- Sharing the findings and recommendations with campus constituents and receiving feedback
- Incorporating the recommendations into the strategic planning process
- Establishing a system of accountability with recommended next steps

A Way Forward - EXAMPLE

Recommendation	Strategic Plan Goal	Strategic Body - Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed	Timeline
All job descriptions should include information regarding SMC's commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and expectations of how each role might engage in equity advancing efforts within the college community	1, 4	HR, Management Association	HR, Senior Leadership	Academic Senate, CSEA	Hiring committees, recruiters, BOT	
Establish a process to review and revise course syllabi and canvas pages on a regular basis.	1, 2	Academic Senate, VP Academic Affairs	Instructional Faculty	Faculty Association,	Instructional Deans	

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