

# Cabrillo Equity Focus Groups

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# Agenda

- Background
- Brief Overview of Student Support (Re)defined
- Cabrillo College's Equity Efforts
  - Context and methodology
  - Findings and college's response
- Q&A

# Outcomes

- Participants will be able to describe how qualitative data can augment quantitative measurements of equity gaps and inform equity project implementations.
- Participants will be able to connect the Student Support (Re)defined Six Success Factors to equity.

# Background

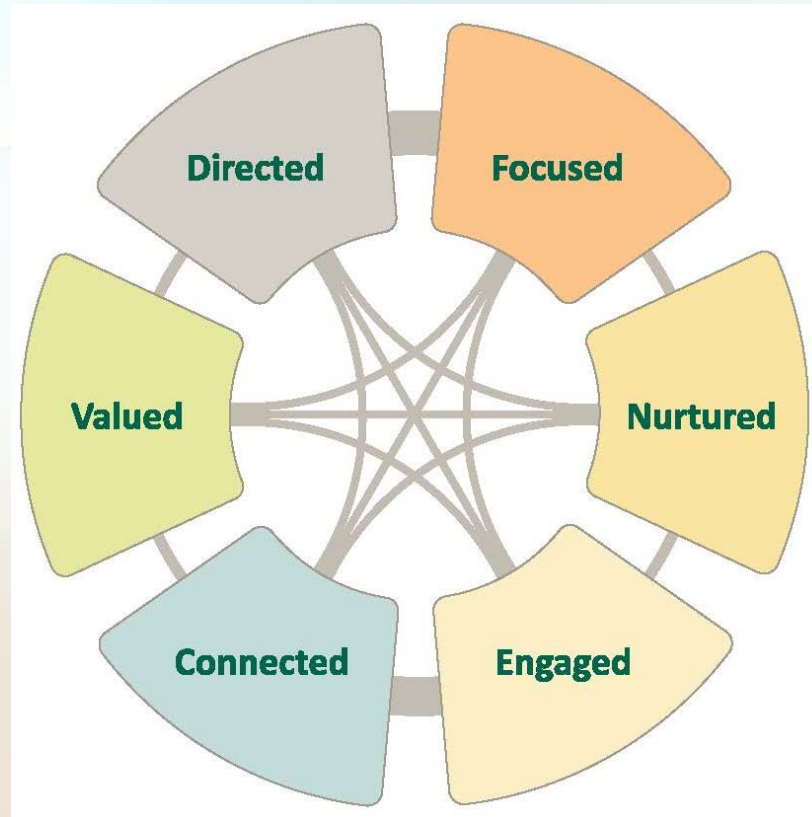
- Why Cabrillo asked RP Group to come?
- What was our motivation?
- What we hoped to gain?
- Why we chose to include a college wide convening with a presentation including student panel along with focus groups?

# What is Student Support (Re)defined?

## General Research Question

In an environment of extreme scarcity, which student support activities can be delivered inside and outside of the classroom to improve success for all students, paying special attention to African-American and Latino learners?

# Six Success Factors



# Six Success Factors

- **Directed:** Students have a goal and know how to achieve it
- **Focused:** Students stay on track—keeping their eyes on the prize
- **Nurtured:** Students feel somebody wants them to succeed as a student and helps them succeed



## Six Success Factors (*continued*)

- **Connected:** Students feel they are part of the college community
- **Engaged:** Students actively listen and participate in class and are involved in extracurricular activities
- **Valued:** Students' skills, talents, abilities and experiences are recognized; they have opportunities to contribute on campus and feel their contributions are appreciated

# Unique Findings for African-American and Latino Students

- Both African-American and Latino students were more likely to cite the importance of **having programs and services available to help them successfully navigate college** (*directed*)
- Both African-American and Latino students were more likely to indicate that **not passing a class** as a very important reason not to re-enroll (*focused*)
- African-American students were more likely to say that **having someone at the college who cared about them** was a key motivating factor in their decision to return to the college the following semester (*nurtured*)

## Unique Findings for African-American and Latino Students *(continued)*

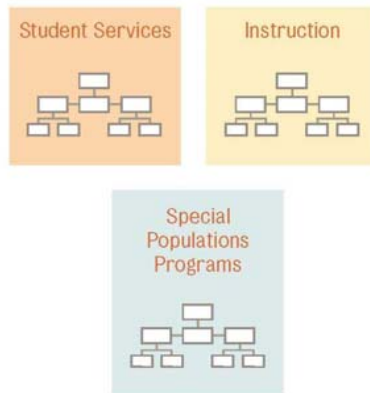
- Both African-American and Latino students were more likely to indicate that **working with diverse groups of students** positively affected their learning and that they ***learn best when working with others (engaged)***
- Both African-American and Latino students were more likely to be report **spending their time outside of class on campus alone (connected)**
- Both African-American and Latino students were more likely to indicate that **feeling valued was important to their success (valued)**

# Key Themes

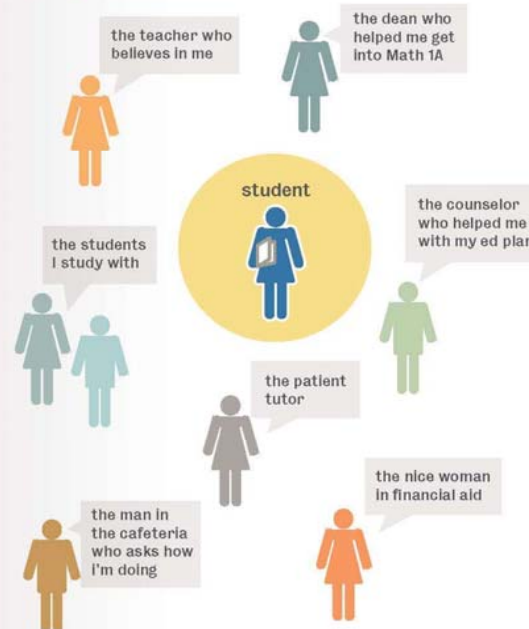
1. Colleges need to foster students' motivation.
2. Colleges must teach students how to succeed in the postsecondary environment.
3. Colleges need to structure support to ensure all “six success factors” are addressed.
4. Colleges need to provide comprehensive support to historically underserved students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

# Differing Perspectives

## What we see...



## What the student experiences...



# How Student Support (Re)defined Applies to Equity

- Focus is on student voices
  - Colleges need to go beyond outcomes data and surveys
- Apply what helps students succeed to ALL students

# Cabrillo College's Equity Efforts

## Context and Methodology

# Focus Groups Context

- SEP Funded
- Student Support (Re)defined Presentation
- 7 FGs conducted by RP Group
- Target populations:
  - African Americans
  - Native Americans
  - Latino – Aptos
  - Latino – Watsonville
  - DSPS
  - Veterans
  - Foster youth – Current & Former



- Recruitment Process
- Participants: **39**



# Focus Group Methodology

Borrowed from Minority Male Community College Collaborative focusing on experiences of students in targeted groups at Cabrillo College.

Asked four questions:

1. What challenges do you face as a [member of group] at Cabrillo College?
2. What personal factors help you overcome these challenges?
3. What is the college doing to help you succeed in spite of these challenges?
4. What advice would you give to the college to help it better serve students from this group?

We prepared individual reports for each student group along with a summary report that included common themes that occurred across groups and highlights of unique findings for each group.

# Cabrillo College's Equity Efforts

Findings and College's Response

# General Findings

Financial  
Concerns

Connection  
with the  
College

Academics

Student  
Support

Motivation

## Motivation

Students believe college can help with employment and a stronger future.

*I feel like I have a lot of people in my family that they didn't think that I could get to college. They thought, "Oh, well she's just going to get pregnant, she's not even [going to] finish high school" and it's like, "No, look at me. I don't have kids. I'm doing good."*

## Financial Concerns

Students are already financially stressed and college has added even more financial pressure.

*You got to pay for parking. Got to pay for gas. Can't just have a car... If you're on the Board of Governors [fee waiver] you only pay \$20 [which is] half the price for your parking permit. It's still \$20, but you have to choose between \$20 for a parking permit, or spending that on feeding your kid. Kids are going to win every time.*

## Student Support

During the focus groups, students frequently started sentences with, “I didn’t know about...”, “If I had known, I would have started earlier with...” or “It wasn’t until I heard from a friend that...” Frequently, students learned about a useful service informally from a friend rather than proactively from the college.

## Academics

Students credit the Math Learning Center with their success.

*I’m at the Math Learning Center every day. [It] changed my entire college experience. The [tutors] just help, they sit with you until you figure it out ...Math is difficult for me. I’m a business major so I have to take a lot of math. And honestly, I think the Math Learning Center has saved my life here at Cabrillo.*

However, they also noted that the centers were crowded and often have to wait to see a tutor:  
*At the MLC (math learning center) , they got seven or eight great tutors, but you got 100 kids sitting in there all clicking on this computer [registering for tutoring help]. Then you wait 20, 30 minutes for the next [tutor].*

# Connection with the College

*[I] stay focused because only one person here at the main campus (she's a high person in the counseling office) always motivated me to just not give up. And there's many times like six or ten times I wanted to give up on school. It's hard when you don't have any peers, no family, no friends of color or anything that you can really turn to and get some sort of support. Who can you go to? You know what I mean? [The counselor] has been the one person here that was an influence for me. A good influence for me.*

*I get more e-mails when something goes wrong than when things are telling me what's happening at the school.*



# Selected Responses by Group

## **African American**

*I was thinking about other aspects of this campus that really shape our experiences here, and there really isn't anything targeted for us like clubs, or activities. There's no African-American studies, dance classes, language or history. There's just no Black culture here. It's like we're like an invisible people walking on this campus.*

## **Latino**

*It's really hard for me to approach [my teachers] because I feel like they don't understand me...I feel kind of ashamed because I'm brown. I feel like I don't know enough to their level.*

However, another Latina student directly answered the student's concern:

*I've only had one Hispanic teacher since I've been at Cabrillo, but I've talked to most of them and they've all been very understanding and everything...I would definitely try to approach them. I don't think they'll criticize you for being who you are.*

## **Native American**

*I didn't have textbooks because I couldn't afford them because I didn't get financial aid. I didn't have time to withdraw from my classes so I ended failing all three of my classes. And, I had been passing, with an A in every single class.*

# Selected Responses by Group

## **Foster Youth**

*[I] don't know where to meet new people or how... there's no place to gather? I've been in foster care for eight years...I don't meet the right people [who are going to be a good influence]; only people that see everything is so funny and/or say, "I don't care about my life, ha-ha..." I tried to meet people, but I don't know how. I've tried reading books on it, like how to smile at people and stuff, but I just can't make friends here.*

## **Students with Disabilities**

*My first year in ACE & STARS [learning communities] they pointed me to [Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS)]. Otherwise I wouldn't have known what I needed...I wouldn't know what class to take. I wouldn't know what services I would need and so they were there to give a hand.*

## **Veterans**

*I would like teachers to know if somebody is getting up and going to the back of the classroom to stand up that it's not disrespectful to them. Because in the military you're taught like if you're in a class and you're starting to doze off, you better get your ass up and go stand in the back.*



# Reaction and Action

- Reframed students' "complaints" into "needs" we could address
- More efforts to schedule follow-up appointments with the same counselor
- Developed a series of projects informed by data and the student focus groups
- Student services fair to promote awareness of programs and services
- Faculty senate held an equity "deep dive"
- Informed equity plan activity proposals
- Equity expert as keynote speaker at college convocation
- Plastered campus with Student Support (Re)defined posters
- Creating equity office staffed by director and coordinator

# Q & A



# For more information on Student Support (Re)defined

- <http://www.rpgroup.org/projects/student-support>
- Dr. Darla Cooper, Project Director
- [dcooper@rpgroup.org](mailto:dcooper@rpgroup.org)

# For more information on Cabrillo College's Equity Efforts

- Terrence Willett, Planning and Research Director
- [tewillet@cabrillo.edu](mailto:tewillet@cabrillo.edu)

Thank you!