



Office of Community College
Research and Leadership

EQUITY FELLOWS TOOLKIT

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The Office of Community College Research and Leadership (OCCRL) was established in 1989 at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Our primary mission is to use research and evaluation methods to improve policies and programs in order to enhance community college education and transition to college for diverse learners in Illinois and the United States. The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), along with other state, federal, and private and not-for-profit organizations, supports projects of this office. The content in our publications does not necessarily represent the positions or policies of our sponsors or the University of Illinois. Comments or inquiries about our publications are welcome and should be directed to occr@illinois.edu. This document can be found online at <https://occr.illinois.edu>. The EC₃P project is funded under the title “Embedding Equity within Pathways Catalog of Services” by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The principal investigator of this grant was Dr. Eboni M. Zamani-Gallaher, who can be reached at ezamanig@illinois.edu.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Engaging Excellence in Equity Fellowship was one component of the Office of Community College Research and Leadership’s Equity Conscious Community College Pathways (EC3P) project, a multiyear effort conducted with financial support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The inaugural cohort featured 18 community college administrators, faculty, and professional staff from various geographic areas nationwide. These individuals were identified by the leadership of their respective campuses as exemplary practitioners who are integral to the success of racially minoritized students at their institutions. The fellows worked collaboratively during the fellowship to leverage their collective knowledge and experience with culturally responsive or sustaining practices, policies, and programs that can be utilized to promote successful outcomes for racially minoritized students at community colleges.

The Embedding Equity Toolkit was developed as a compilation of tools as a result of their collective work. Each tool is designed to advance equitable outcomes for racially minoritized community college students via culturally responsive and culturally sustaining practices. The toolkit represents and reinforces the imperative need and commitment of supporting racially minoritized community college students, aiding the successful navigation of their institutions and positively impacting their educational experiences and outcomes.

The tools included in this compilation feature culturally responsive practices for racially minoritized students such as campus mentoring, trauma-informed support programs, and capturing and utilizing student voice. Each tool features a description, the intended audience and outcomes, suggested instructions for utilizing and assessing the tool, and recommendations and implications for policy, programming, and practice.

Each featured tool is briefly described below:

Guide for Empowering Racially Minoritized Students on Community College Campuses Through Mentoring

This guide provides postsecondary institutions, specifically community colleges, with a framework for developing a culturally responsive mentoring program that utilizes institutional agents as mentors to retain racially minoritized students and help them persist through completion of a degree, certificate program, or successful transfer to a four-year college or university.



The tool presents four fundamental principles as a guide for creating a successful mentoring program: building coalitions, leveraging campus resources, developing and strengthening cultural competency, and developing the mentor-mentee relationship. Further, this tool highlights exemplars in mentoring as guidance for best practices.

Taking an Equity-Focused, Trauma-Informed Approach to Support Racially Minoritized Community College Students

This tool raises awareness of the impact of trauma on racially minoritized students' experiences and outcomes at the postsecondary level, specifically at community colleges. It helps institutional agents better understand the effects of trauma on learning and development and offers trauma-informed, practical methods and strategies institutions can utilize to better support trauma-affected racially minoritized students as they navigate higher education. Further, this tool features several assessments that can help institutional agents understand and implement culturally responsive, trauma-informed practices to support racially minoritized students.

Capturing and Using Student Voice to Inform Practice

This topic area includes two tools institutions can utilize to include student voice in campus practices and policies that directly affect the experiences of racially minoritized students. The tools, Capturing and Using Student Voice to Improve Practice and the Supporting and the Promoting Education, Awareness, and Knowledge (SPEAK) Survey, are similar in their recognition of the value, power, and utility of student voice. They differ in their approaches to gathering, assessing, and effectively operationalizing student voice, as well as in the outcomes they seek with the SPEAK survey, which aims to address the immediate needs of students. The Capturing and Using Student Voice to Improve Practice tool offers a way to collect student input related to institutional policies, practices, and programs that directly and indirectly impact students on a larger scale.

GUIDE FOR EMPOWERING RACIALLY MINORITIZED STUDENTS ON COMMUNITY COLLEGE CAMPUSES THROUGH MENTORING

Authors: Antonio Jackson, Keith Kirkland, Greg McCarthy, Aubria Nance

Disparities in postsecondary retention, persistence, and completion rates among first-generation, racially minoritized students (RMS) in comparison to their white counterparts have been the subject of numerous research articles and scholarly papers over the last 50 years. Explanations for these disparities are equally abundant, ranging from socioeconomic and academic background factors like poor academic preparation (Astin, Tsui, & Avalos, 1996), low socioeconomic status (SES) (Bjorklund-Young, 2016; National Center for Education Statistics, 2013), generational status (Crawley, Cheuk, Mansoor, Perez, & Park, 2019), students' lack of social capital (Almeida, Byrne, Smith, & Ruiz, 2019; Smith, Beaulieu, & Israel, 1992) or poor social and academic integration (Tinto, 1975; Astin, 1982;) to more institutional and systemic factors like hostile campus climates (Hurtado & Carter, 1997) and institutional cultures exacerbated by overt racism, microaggressions and implicit bias (Supiano, 2018).

Acknowledging and tackling historical and persistent disparities in degree attainment among racially minoritized students is an equity imperative. To address barriers that impact racially minoritized students' retention, persistence and completion, higher education institutions must strive to foster and maintain inclusive campus climates that encourage and support this diverse population. It is also important for higher education institutions to design support systems and services that are flexible enough to engage students in various ways that account for cultural differences while helping them navigate their educational pursuits. To this end, the development and implementation of services and programs designed to connect the academic and social systems of higher education environments to better support students' needs has been critical (Ray, Carley, & Brown, 2009; Wunsch, 1994).

Acknowledging and tackling historical and persistent disparities in degree attainment among racially minoritized students is an equity imperative.

The development and implementation of mentoring programs is one prime example of programmatic efforts utilized by colleges and universities to better support racially minoritized students' postsecondary pursuits and address persistent retention and completion gaps among this group. Mentoring in higher education has been posited as important for student success (Eby & Dolan, 2015; Gold, 2000; Lovitts, 2001, 2008). This is particularly true for racially minoritized students who often do not have the same resources—including financial and social support systems and social capital—as their white counterparts (Castellanos & Jones, 2004; Ceballo, 2004; Hurtado, Carter, & Spuler, 1996). Culturally responsive mentoring programs that are intentionally focused, aware, knowledgeable and respectful of students' cultural differences and promote positive identity development among these students, hold the promise of engaging and meeting these students where they are, and can provide the social capital and guidance they need to successfully navigate higher education systems and the various institutional factors that often impedes their success.

Mentoring and Social Capital

In the educational context, social capital is the mechanism by which students benefit from the resources gained from individual and social networks and relationships attributed to members of a group, organization, or institution (Bourdieu, 1986). The lack of social capital can hinder the ability of racially minoritized students to effectively navigate institutions of higher education which can present challenges for full engagement in their academic endeavors (Crawley et al., 2019). In order to increase the social capital of racially minoritized students and avail them of the necessary resources to overcome barriers to academic success, institutional agents can be particularly useful.

In “Delineating the Ways That Key Institutional Agents Provide Racial Minority Students with Access to Social Capital in College,” Museus and Neville (2012) describe sociologist of education Ricardo Stanton-Salazar's (2011) conceptualization of institutional agents as follows:

He asserts that agents who are committed to the success of students of color can provide them with social capital by offering them various funds of knowledge (e.g., information about social norms and cultural nuances), serving as human bridges between them and social networks, and providing them with opportunities to engage in educational activities, programs, and opportunities across their organizations. Finally, Stanton-Salazar notes that institutional agents can advocate for students, role model behavior,





provide emotional and moral support, and impart evaluative feedback, advice, and guidance (p. 437-38).

Ultimately, institutional agents engaged in mentoring relationships can provide critical academic knowledge and resources (Smith, 2007), i.e. the social capital, beneficial for racially minoritized students as they navigate institutions of higher education.

Description of the Tool

This guide is designed to provide postsecondary institutions, specifically community colleges, with a framework for developing a culturally responsive mentoring program, that utilizes institutional agents (e.g., administrators, faculty, and staff) as mentors, in efforts to retain racially minoritized students and help them persist through completion of a degree or certificate program, or successful transfer to a four-year college or university.

The principles outlined in this guide, will enable community colleges to develop a mentorship program in which institutional agents serve as mentors to address the needs of racially minoritized students by:

- creating identifiable role models
- allowing for shared experiences between mentee and mentor
- increasing the feeling of belongingness and inclusion within the campus culture
- providing support for leveraging students' social and cultural capital

Intended Audience and Outcomes

This guide offers a framework for community college personnel (e.g., faculty, staff, administrators) to develop a culturally responsive mentoring program in which they, and other institutional agents, serve as mentors for racially minoritized students as they navigate their institutions through to completion of either degree, certificate, or transfer to a four-year institution.

The concept of “institutional agents” is critical to the framework highlighted in this guide and relies on Stanton-Salazar’s (2011) definition of institutional agents as:

[A]n individual who occupies one or more hierarchical positions of relatively high-status and authority. Such an individual, situated in an adolescent’s social network, manifests his or her potential role as an institutional agent, when, on behalf of the adolescent, he or she acts to directly transmit, or negotiate the transmission of, highly valued resources (e.g., high school course requirements for admission to 4-year universities) (p.1067).

While this guide is designed with the intent of supporting racially minoritized students

via a mentoring program in which institutional agents are the primary mentors, it recognizes that personnel varies among community colleges. Therefore, while same race or same gender mentoring relationships may be desirable (especially in a culturally responsive mentoring program), they may not be feasible simply because of the demographic composition of the institution's personnel. In fact, the personnel demographics of higher education institutions, including the traditionally more diverse community college settings, are often mismatched with the student demographics of the institution, with faculty and staff being consistently and persistently less diverse than the student body (Davis & Fry, 2019). As such, rather than seeking institutional agents of certain racial/ethnic/cultural backgrounds to be mentors for racially minoritized students, this framework requires instead only that institutional agents be committed to developing (and exhibiting) cultural competency and responsiveness. It is critical that mentors are willing to commit to practicing cultural responsive mentoring—that they embody and exhibit the attitudes, behaviors, practices, and a willingness to work with mentees of different cultural backgrounds (Sanchez, Colon-Torres, Feuer, Roundfield, & Berardi, 2014) and that they validate these students' identities, help them navigate invalidating experiences, and reinforce their self-efficacy



(Byars-Winston, Estrada, Howard, Davis, & Zalapa, 2010).

How to Utilize the Tool

Building a Culturally Responsive Mentoring Program for Racially Minoritized Students

The framework highlighted in this guide is comprised of four critical components that are essential to developing and establishing a successful culturally responsive mentorship program for racially minoritized students:

1. **Building Coalitions** is an important and necessary component of developing a culturally responsive mentorship program. Institutional agents leading and building the coalition must be champions that not only support the mission of the initiative (i.e., developing a culturally responsive mentoring program for racially minoritized students), but also actively engage and influence other agents of the institution to support it as well. Coalition building should be wide-ranging and all-encompassing to include institutional agents from units and

departments across the institution—academic and student affairs personnel, as well as from student processing centers like enrollment services and the bursar’s office. The coalition leadership group should understand and be knowledgeable about both academic and non-academic support services such as transportation, child-care, and financial aid. Lastly, while institutional agents may not be matched by race or gender, it is important that the coalition leadership racial makeup be similar to the racially minoritized students at the institution. All members of the coalition should be committed to understanding the intersectionality of services across campus and their impact on racially minoritized students’ retention, persistence, and completion and how they can provide social capital in the form of resources and knowledge to assist students develop self-efficacy, increase their sense of belonging, and successfully reach their academic goals. In short, promoting the need for the program, identifying champions and creating a culture of support for the program, establishing a sense of urgency, and recognizing and overcoming institutional resistance are critical objectives to be considered and strategies must be employed to ensure buy-in by the larger college community.

2. Leveraging campus resources first requires an extensive examination of the community college’s infrastructure to identify the resources, processes, and programs that currently exist to serve racially minoritized students. This requires a thorough inventory and assessment of existing student support services such as counseling and career services, as well as the human resources willing and available to participate in the development, planning, and implementation of the mentoring program. Assessing the potential impact of the program by reviewing literature and working with the institutional research office to analyze existing student achievement and outcomes data is also critical as the goals of the program are identified and implemented, especially those related to retention, persistence, and completion of racially minoritized students. Moreover, identifying potential funding sources both internally and externally, especially those that will commit to long-term support, will be a necessary consideration as program leadership explores program sustainability and equitable student outcomes.

3. Developing and strengthening cultural competency among institutional agents developing the program as well as those serving as mentors is crucial. There should be ongoing opportunities for institutional agents to engage in self-reflection and make the necessary adjustments to existing belief systems and bias. This requires key stakeholders and potential participants to develop an awareness of one’s own world view, explore and address implicit bias and microaggressions and developing an overall culturally relative mindset (i.e. not using one’s own culture as the standard by which all other cultures are evaluated/compared). For institutional agents serving as mentors, developing an asset-based mindset (opposed to operating from a deficit-based mindset) with respect to racially minoritized students is critical as recognizing the strengths, skills, gifts, and potential of these students allows both students and mentors to use the positive attributes to increase student’s self-efficacy and sense of belonging, and ultimately can impact their persistence, retention and completion. Addressing factors related to cultural competency also requires stakeholders to unpack and develop a common language related to minoritized students (minoritized, minority, marginalized) (see Appendix B for a glossary





of important terms to consider when developing a common language). Institutions committed to developing a culturally responsive mentoring program should also consider offering regular professional development opportunities that are focused on developing and strengthening cultural competency among institutional agents.

4. **Developing the Mentor/Mentee Relationship** is paramount. While the other three framework components are important to establish and sustain the overall program, the ultimate success of the program, as marked by improved educational outcomes (e.g., retention, persistence, and completion) and collegiate experiences for racially minoritized students will result from mentors and mentees fostering a relationship that will empower and enable students to utilize the resources and support mentors are able to offer. Creating this dynamic requires full engagement from all involved institutional agents—both program development leaders and mentors—in a number of critical ways. Most immediately, the development of a mentoring philosophy is imperative, and should at a minimum:

- Develop mentoring ethics
- Outline the purpose, goals, and objectives of the program
- Consider various mentoring approaches (e.g., formal vs. informal, individual vs. group, etc.).
- Define the mentoring relationship (including rules and protocol for mentor/mentee matching, engagement, and accountability)
- Methods to evaluate and assess mentoring relationships that garner mentor and mentees perspectives

Assessing the Tool

Prior to applying the framework to develop a mentorship program for racially minoritized students, institutions should evaluate and assess the feasibility of the framework for their own institutional context, beginning with an examination of data related to the academic retention and completion outcomes of racially marginalized students. Assessing outcomes related to this student population is critical as institutions establish the goals and potential outcomes of the mentoring program. Additionally, once the program is developed and implemented it is essential that it is regularly and continuously assessed and evaluated to determine whether the implementation of the framework is achieving the outlined goals and outcomes, or whether there are areas for improvement. It is recommended that the program is at a minimum evaluated at the midpoint and end of each program cycle (Evaluating Mentoring Programs, 2006). Moreover, short term and long terms evaluations should be a

mainstay of the assessment and evaluation process. It is also important that when evaluating the success or effectiveness of the overall mentoring program, individual mentoring relationships are included (appropriately and adequately assessed) — pre and post assessment of the mentoring relationship, by mentors and mentees are key.

Recommendations and Implications for Policy, Programming, and Practice

Mentoring has long been established as an important and consequential factor in both the academic and personal development, outcomes, and success of many racially minoritized postsecondary students. Historically, much of the literature has focused on mentoring of undergraduates at four-year institutions and only more recently has begun to consider the role and impact of mentoring for community college students. This is particularly noteworthy as racially minoritized students are heavily concentrated on community and technical college campuses, and in fact are overrepresented in these institutions, while remaining underrepresented at four-year colleges and universities.

Given the quantitative and qualitative research on the role and impact of mentoring underrepresented undergraduates, and the overrepresentation of these students on community college campuses, there are important and relevant implications for the development and implementation of mentoring programs, policies, and practices to positively impact equitable outcomes for racially minoritized community college students. The framework presented in this guide attempts to offer community colleges a roadmap for developing such mentoring programs in efforts to address longstanding equity gaps in enrollment, retention and completion among racially minoritized community college students and ultimately to better support and improve students experiences and outcomes through the establishment and integration of effective mentoring programs, practices, and policies.

“...racially minoritized students are heavily concentrated on community and technical college campuses... while remaining underrepresented at four-year colleges and universities.”





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Appendix A

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR DEVELOPING A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE MENTORING PROGRAM FOR RACIALLY MINORITIZED STUDENTS


In addition to the four components detailed above, there are several other important elements that program leadership must consider and engage in their efforts to develop a culturally responsive mentoring program for racially minoritized students. These elements include, but are not limited to:

Assess institutional commitment: As colleges consider the implementation of a mentoring program for racially minoritized students, it is imperative to critically examine the level of commitment necessary to ensure that the program operates with a high level of efficacy. Are stakeholders within the institution committed to establishing an effective program? How do you gauge stakeholders' commitment? How do you address low or a lack of commitment from stakeholders in order to develop an effective and successful mentorship program?

In addition to developing the program and a strong mentoring philosophy, program development leadership must also **ask important questions** about the inclusiveness of its own ranks and the values held by those in its ranks. For instance, does the program leadership, staff, and mentors include people from the racial/cultural/ethnic groups the program will serve? If not, how can such representation issues be addressed?

Gather stakeholder's views about the needs of population to be served via focus groups, one-on-one interviews, workshops with small group discussions. Garnering the perspectives and voices of key stakeholders, especially those the program is intended to serve, is critical.

Customize the guide for institutional needs/context: When using the guide, to facilitate implementation and training, institutions must apply the components and/or strategies that are applicable to the needs and culture of the institution. For example, one recommendation for using this tool is for leadership to develop a timeline for the program that is unique to and aligned with the institutional culture, resources, and student needs.



Program delivery logistics (i.e., who is facilitating, serving as mentors, space, resources, format, how to recruit mentors and mentees for participation, etc.) are all considerations that program leadership must take under advisement.

Use of assessment and feedback in program/network development: In order to evaluate and ensure the efficacy of the program, institutions must implement consistent assessment practices to determine program needs and improvements.

Sustainability and systemic practice: The components and strategies of the mentorship program must be systemically integrated. A culturally responsive mentorship program cannot be an extra resource or program but must be carefully infused into the institution's processes and practices. Institutionalization of the culturally responsive mentoring program can be particularly important for advancing equity in student outcomes.

Mentor compensation/acknowledgement: How will mentors be compensated for their participation? Mentoring can be a significant investment in time and human resources. Mentors often serve the institution in many capacities with the mentoring role being an added responsibility. Finding ways to recognize and/or compensate the efforts provided by mentors can serve as a motivating factor for continued and effective participation. This is an especially important consideration in the context of developing a culturally responsive mentoring program to serve racially minoritized students, as the faculty and staff typically involved in these programs are often already overworked and undercompensated for their involvement in these types of "out-of-class" endeavors designed to support students' overall development and success.

Appendix B

GLOSSARY

Cultural responsiveness: In the education context, it is about recognizing and respecting the cultural differences and lived experiences of others, particularly those that you teach and/or provide services for.

***Ethnicity*¹:** A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history and ancestral geographical base.

***Equity*²:** ensuring that everyone receives what they need to be successful — even if that varies across racial or socioeconomic lines. In short, equity refers to the principle of fairness. Equity, is often used interchangeably with equality, which is incorrect usage of these terms as equity is the process and equality is the outcome of the process.

***Microaggression*⁴:** an “often unintentional, form of prejudice. Rather than an overt declaration of racism or sexism, a microaggression often takes the shape of an offhanded comment, an inadvertently painful joke, or a pointed insult.”

Minority: a group of less than half of the total; a group that is sufficiently smaller in number.

***Minoritized*³:** “groups that are different in race, religious creed, nation of origin, sexuality, and gender and as a result of social constructs have less power or representation compared to other members or groups in society.” For example, “women are not minorities; they are one of many minoritized groups.”

***Race*⁶:** A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic and political needs of a society at a given period of time. Racial categories subsume ethnic groups.

Social Capital: “resources and key forms of social support embedded in one’s network or associations, and accessible through direct or indirect ties with institutional agents” (Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2001, 2004).

Implicit Bias²: “Also known as unconscious or hidden bias, implicit biases are negative associations that people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically, without conscious awareness. Many studies have indicated that implicit biases affect individuals’ attitudes and actions, thus creating real - world implications, even though individuals may not even be aware that those biases exist within themselves. Notably, implicit biases have been shown to trump individuals’ stated commitments to equality and fairness, thereby producing behavior that diverges from the explicit attitudes that many people profess. The Implicit Association Test (IAT) is often used to measure implicit biases with regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, and other topics.”

Marginalized means one is on the fringes of society, excluded, or isolated.

¹<http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary>

²<https://www.edglossary.org/equity/>

³<https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary#implicit-bias>

⁴<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/microaggression>

⁵<https://www.theodysseyonline.com/minority-vs-minoritized>

⁶<http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary>



Appendix C

EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY COLLEGE CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE MENTORING PROGRAMS FOR RACIALLY MINORITIZED STUDENTS

All of these mentoring programs provide students with the social capital they need to navigate their way through institutions of higher education and are a culturally responsive process for improving retention/persistence and completion for racially minoritized students.

PUENTE PROJECT

The Puente Project is an award-winning program initiated at a California community college in 1981. It has since expanded and been institutionalized in the majority of the 115 colleges in the California Community Colleges system, which is the largest higher education system in the United States. The mission of the program is to help underrepresented students prepare to transfer to 4-year colleges and universities, and ultimately to increase the enrollment and completion numbers of underrepresented students at four-year colleges and universities. It is an interdisciplinary program, comprised of writing, counseling, and mentoring components.

Puente mentors help students build not only skills necessary for academic and career success, but the social and cultural capital instrumental to their future success as well. In highlighting the exemplary nature of the Puente Program and its sustained success, Berta Vigil Laden (1999) writes, “Among the many factors that make the Puente Project unique is its focus on welcoming students of color, primarily Latinos, into the organization by affirming who they are and what they bring with them as valuable cultural assets that provide a foundation and a framework for their learning experiences” (p. 59).

To learn more about the Puente Project, its development, implementation, and goals and outcomes visit: <https://www.thepuenteproject.org/community-college-programs>

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF BALTIMORE COLLEGE (CCBC): MALE STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVE (MSSI)

One example of a mentoring program for minoritized students is the Male Student Success Initiative (MSSI) at the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC). MSSI is a five-year-old program designed to support male students of color throughout their academic journey, leading ultimately to graduation or transfers to four-year institutions. The uniqueness of this program for RMS lies in its program structure and approach. More specifically, the program seeks to foster a community of men of color at CCBC by (1) offering a college orientation course taught by men of color that responds to students' cultural context; (2) pairing each student with a success mentor/ coach who is also a man of color; (3) providing individual referrals to on-campus student support services; and (4) bringing students to workshops, conferences, and college visits focused on leadership and career preparation” (Welbeck & Torres, 2019). These program components are anchored in five features: community and brotherhood, student support service referral, professional and leadership development, culturally responsive instructional support and success mentors.

To learn more about the Male Student Success Initiative, it's development, implementation, and goals and outcomes visit: <https://www.ccbcmd.edu/Campus-Life-and-Activities/Male-Student-Success.aspx>



Appendix C cont.

NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM (NCCS): MINORITY MALE MENTORING PROGRAM (3MI)

The North Carolina Community College System's (NCCS) Minority Male Mentoring Program designed to strengthen minority male student outcomes by encouraging participation and collaboration among student participants and institutional departments. Each participating college makes a three-year commitment to assessing and enhancing the student success outcomes of minority male students. Ultimately, the goal of the program is to increase the enrollment and completion rates of minority male students. To accomplish this goal, participating colleges implement practices that provide the following:

- Integrated and targeted supports and interventions when they are most effective.
- Aid student's progress through programs that lead to valuable credentials, without unnecessary detours.
- Assist students in making informed decisions which result in understanding the requirements and processes to succeed (North Carolina Community Colleges, 2019).

To learn more about the Minority Male Mentoring Program, its development, implementation, and goals and outcomes visit: <https://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/student-services/student-life-and-engagement/minority-male-success-initiative>



TALLAHASSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE: SISTER TO SISTER

Sister to Sister (S2S) program is a mentoring program for female students of color at Tallahassee Community College (TCC) that aims to establish a sisterhood or campus community that provides programs designed to increase minority success, retention and completion through mentoring, leadership development, social development, academic support and career guidance. Members participate in scheduled S2S activities, meetings, civic engagement and community service opportunities and have an opportunity to apply for the S2S program scholarship. Students of color the primary focus of the Sister to Sister program, but all female students are invited to join. The goals of the program are to provide holistic support that allows members to:

- Achieve a sense of belonging;
- Develop a sisterhood committed to goal setting and career building;
- Develop character and scholar identity;
- Support emotional, familial, social and intellectual development;
- Facilitate career guidance, networking skills and goal setting;
- Promote civic engagement and community service; and
- Stimulate and retain the values for college success

To learn more about the Sister to Sister Mentoring Program, its development, implementation, and goals and outcomes visit: <https://www.tcc.fl.edu/academics/academic-enrichment/sister-to-sister/>

Appendix D

RESOURCES

Mentorship Program Development

- Hostos Community College: [*\(Re\)Establishing the Hostos Mentoring Program*](#)
- Halifax Community College PRIDE Mentoring Program
 - [*Policy and Procedure Manual*](#)
 - [*Training and Workshop Manual*](#)
- [*Effectively Mentoring Women of Color on the College Campus: A Holistic and Intersectional Ecology \(HIE\) Model*](#)
- [*Institutionalizing Mentoring in Community Colleges*](#)

Culturally Responsive Mentoring

- National Mentoring Resource Center
 - [*Fostering Culturally Relevant Mentoring Practices: Reflection Activities*](#)
 - [*Mentor Training for Cultural Competency*](#)

Evaluating and Assessing Mentoring Programs

- Ida Abbott Consulting: [*Evaluating Mentoring Programs*](#)
- National Center for Women and Technology: [*Evaluating a Mentoring Program*](#)
- UW Institute for Clinical and Translational Research: [*Mentor Evaluation Form Examples*](#)



Appendix E

SAMPLE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP ASSESSMENT FORM

Note: This is a sample assessment form. It should be modified as program leadership deems appropriate – which may include utilizing entirely separate and distinct assessments protocols for mentors and mentees.

1. How would you describe your mentoring relationship?

_____positive _____ somewhat positive _____negative

Please briefly explain your response:

2. If you had a positive relationship with your mentor please list three reason why the relationship worked.
3. What benefits did you received from the mentoring relationship?
4. Do you feel your mentor understood you as person and respected you?
5. Do you feel that your mentor could relate to your current life situation?
6. Did you feel comfortable sharing your life experience with your mentor?
7. Did your mentor provide you with suggestions for handling personal challenges?
8. Did you mentor provide you with suggestions for handling academic challenges?
9. Did you mentor identify with your culture values (what is important to you)?
10. Did you mentor identify resources to assist you with removing barriers to success?
11. Did your mentoring experience help you to feel that you belong on campus?
12. What recommendations do you suggest that would enable you to have better mentoring experience with your mentor?

TAKING AN EQUITY-FOCUSED, TRAUMA INFORMED APPROACH TO SUPPORT RACIALLY MINORITIZED COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

Authors: Lisa Bergin, Corey Lansing, Jaclyn Randall, Alvina Thomas

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the United States Department of Health and Human Services premier behavioral health agency, recognizes trauma as “a widespread, harmful, and costly public health problem” (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014, p. 2). Trauma results from a physically and/or emotionally harmful experience, or a series of experiences compounded over time, and can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, geography, or sexual orientation (SAMHSA, 2014). Some of the most commonly understood forms of trauma include physical and sexual violence, childhood abuse and neglect, natural disasters, and community violence (e.g. bullying, war, gang culture). There are also less well-understood forms of trauma, including racism, urbanicity, poverty, inequality, oppression, and historical trauma (i.e., the legacy of entire groups having experienced violence such as slavery, the Holocaust, or genocide) (SAMHSA, 2014). Although many people who experience a traumatic event will not suffer lasting adverse effects, others can have more difficulty and suffer traumatic stress reactions that affect all aspects of their lives. Ultimately, all forms of trauma and its effects “place a heavy burden on individuals, families, and communities and create challenges for public institutions and service systems” (SAMHSA, 2014, p. 2).

Traumatic Stress Effects on Educational Experiences and Outcomes

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are defined as “traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years)” and are “linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance misuse in adulthood...and can also negatively impact education and job opportunities” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). Moreover, the prevalence of ACEs is evident by research that estimates that 26% of children in the United States witness or experience trauma before the age of four (Briggs-Gowan, Ford, Fraleigh, McCarthy, & Carter, 2010) and 60 to 85% of adults report experiencing traumatic events as children (CDC, 2020; Corcoran and McNulty, 2018). Racially-minoritized children are at an even higher risk of experiencing traumatic events throughout their childhood with lasting effects on their ability to learn and perform well in their studies (Cavanaugh, 2016; Diamonduros, Tysinger, & Tysinger, 2018).

Trauma can manifest in the classroom in a variety of ways including absenteeism, lack of concentration, and behavioral issues all of which affects students’ academic success (Davidson, 2017) and negatively impacts students’ mental, physical, and social well-being (Grayshield, Rutherford, Salazar, Mihecoby, & Luna, 2015). Therefore, recognizing and understanding the impact of trauma and stress on brain function and learning is

important to better serve and meet trauma survivors' emotional needs and aid their success in the classroom (Barr, 2018). However, traumatic stress effects are often left unaddressed among school-aged children (Goodman, Miller, & West-Olatunji, 2012) and many children continue to experience trauma stress-related symptoms as they enter college.

Researchers have found that reported trauma exposure peaks between 16-20 years of age with 66% to 94% of undergraduates experiencing at least one traumatic event during their life (Frazier, Anders, Perera, Tomich, Tennen, Park, & Tashiro, 2009). Traumatic events impact students academically. Some researchers have found that college students exposed to multiple traumas, or who display trauma stress-related symptoms, are less likely to persist to their senior year, or drop out altogether, often due in part to difficulty adjusting emotionally and academically to the pressures of college (Boyraz, Horne, Owens, & Armstrong, 2013). For community college students in particular, a history of trauma “can be a factor in their reduced ability to meet age-appropriate expectations (e.g., reliability; healthy communication and relationship skills with faculty, staff, and other students)” (California Community Colleges Health & Wellness Program, n.d., p. 2)

Importance and Impact of Trauma-Informed Approaches in Higher Education

Community colleges are a gateway to higher education for large numbers of nontraditional, low-income, and marginalized students, including racially minoritized students. Undoubtedly, all students experience some challenges during their transition to college, but as Davidson (2017) notes, “it can be all the more difficult for those who arrive on campus with a history of trauma” (p. 3). Additionally, college students are high risk for experiencing new trauma, like sexual assault (Galatzer-Levy, Burton, & Bonanno, 2012). Racially minoritized college students in particular also experience the compounding trauma and effects of systemic racism and discrimination. While traumatic experiences subsequently impact students' mental health and well-being and ultimately their academic success, there is a disproportionate impact of trauma for racially minoritized students.

For example, trauma-exposed African American female students are more likely to leave college before the end of their second year; similarly, the effect of trauma exposure on leaving college is higher for African American students at predominantly white institutions (Boyraz et al., 2013).

As Davidson (2017) points out, “traumatic experiences increase one's susceptibility to depression and substance abuse” and therefore “it is a pressing concern for campus mental health and student services professionals”



(p.3). To support and retain minoritized students and advance racial equity, community colleges must meet the specific needs of minoritized students, including the mental health, socio-emotional, and behavioral needs of those who are trauma survivors. Yet, little research currently exists that studies the effects of adverse childhood trauma among minoritized community college students, despite the fact that 66% – 94% of college students report exposure to one or more traumatic event (Frazier et al., 2009).

However, change is on the horizon, as more educators spanning the P-20 pipeline from preschool teachers to university professors are increasingly recognizing and supporting trauma-affected students by developing and engaging resources and spaces that support their learning (Davidson, 2017). This can be particularly important at postsecondary education institutions. Students affected by trauma are capable of persisting in higher education, and “those who do can thrive as models of resilience and success—if the campus community works together with a sense of shared responsibility for their physical, social, emotional, and academic safety” (p.3). Therefore, it is imperative that institutions and institutional agents strive to better understand the various facets of trauma, including historical trauma, and their impact on the educational experiences of racially minoritized and marginalized populations and subsequently develop and utilize trauma-informed approaches to foster and support learning environments that increase long-term mental health benefits and improve academic success for these students.

Davidson (2017) points out that “colleges are systems and creating a trauma-informed climate requires the entire campus community—faculty members, administrators, staff members, counselors, and clinicians—to deepen its shared understanding of trauma’s impacts on learning and agree to a campus-wide approach” (p.14). Therefore it is important that all institutional agents work together with a shared sense of purpose and responsibility to attend to students needs holistically—that is to say, not only the academic needs of students, but their physical, social, and emotional needs as well, as those subsequently impact students educational outlook, outcomes, and overall well-being. Utilizing trauma-informed approaches requires institutions and institutional agents to adopt a holistic, student-centered approach, which is no easy feat as it necessitates, “a paradigm shift at both the staff and organizational level because they reshape a college’s culture, practices, and policies” (Davidson, 2017, p.16). The shift required by institutions and institutional agents to support students via trauma-informed approaches is aptly and simply described as a fundamental movement “from thinking ‘What is wrong with you?’ to considering ‘What happened to you?’ (Sweeney, Filson, Kennedy, Collinson, & Gillard, 2018, p. 319). Ultimately, higher education institutions, and community colleges specifically, must commit to recognizing and understanding “the widespread prevalence and effects of trauma on students and incorporate this into their policies and procedures” (Sweeney et al., 2018, p. 323).

Description of the Tool

This tool was created to raise awareness of the impact of trauma on racially minoritized students’ experiences and outcomes at the postsecondary level, specifically at community colleges. It aims to help institutional agents better understand the effects of trauma on learning and development and to offer trauma-informed practical methods and strategies they can utilize to better support, trauma-affected racially minoritized students as they navigate higher education.

This tool offers several assessments to help community college practitioners – faculty, administrators, student support service professionals – all of whom play an instrumental role in creating supportive learning environments, better understand and take action steps towards implementing a culturally responsive, trauma informed approach. These assessments are critical for the work of community colleges and practitioners striving to fully incorporate best practices in supporting racially minoritized students.

The assessments that comprise this tool were developed utilizing SAMHSA's "six key principles of a trauma-informed approach," (SAMHSA, 2014, p.10) which are described below:

1. Safety – prioritizing and ensuring that trauma-affected individuals feel physically and psychologically safe in the institution and interactions with agents of the institution
2. Trustworthiness and transparency – the institution is committed to being and maintaining trust and transparency with trauma-affected individuals.
3. Peer support – the institution encourages supportive interactions and relationships among and between trauma-affected individuals (i.e., "trauma survivors")
4. Collaboration and mutuality – the institution develops and sustains supportive relationships between institutional agents and trauma-affected individuals
5. Empowerment, voice and choice – the institutions empowers trauma-affected individuals to trust their voice and choices as they develop tools to advocate for themselves
6. Cultural, historical, and gender issues – the institution is aware and understands various cultural, historical and gender issues faced by trauma-affected individuals and is appropriately responsive to their needs.

SAMHSA notes that these six principles are generalizable across settings and thus the developers of this tool determined them to be particularly relevant for the postsecondary institutional context, and community colleges in particular.

Intended Audience and Outcomes

This student-centered tool is a flexible guide for community colleges to enhance their equity focused, trauma-informed, institutional practices. The tool focuses on historical, generational, and current, on-going traumas faced by racially-minoritized populations and can be utilized by a variety of institutional agents, including administrators, faculty, and staff irrespective of institutional structure and resources.

Recognizing that all individuals engaging with this tool have multiple and intersecting identities, building and strengthening awareness about traumas linked to other identities is relevant and useful to the goal of supporting the whole student. There are several specific student populations at community colleges that may have elevated risk of trauma including those who are veterans, LGBTQIA, immigrants and/or refugees, current or former foster youth, and nontraditional adult learners. Utilizing this tool is one strategy to assist practitioners striving to improve how these student populations are supported as they pursue their educational goals.

Some specific and important student outcomes that may result from using this tool and increasing community college practitioners' ability to provide equity-focused, trauma informed services include:

- Increased student engagement
- Increased student success
- Decreased equity gaps
- Increased student well-being and wellness

How to Utilize the Tool

This tool offers several assessments and reflections designed to help community colleges understand where they are in terms of moving towards a culturally-responsive, trauma-informed approach that incorporates best practices to support racially minoritized students. Utilizing this tool requires dedicated personnel. More specifically, institutions need a group of champions for a culturally-responsive, trauma-informed approach who are committed to: 1) assessing the extent to which the institution currently provides equity-based, trauma-informed service and teaching, 2) using that assessment to create a plan for shifting practices and policies to deepen the institution's commitment to this important framework, and 3) building support for bringing the plan to fruition. To best and most effectively use the tool, the creation of a trauma working-group tasked with developing trainings for faculty and staff, reviewing policy and practices, and evaluating the effectiveness of your efforts to support the success of racially-minoritized students through increasing your campus's proactive responsiveness to the traumas of racism, is recommended.

Assessing the Tool

Assessment is built into the structure of this tool. It is recommended that institutions start by assessing their current student population and any equity gaps in student outcomes and success. This data should be gathered on an ongoing basis as the institution continues to expand its culturally-responsive and trauma-informed practices. Beyond the assessments contained in the tool, garnering student voice via focus groups with students and student-centered questionnaires or surveys could also be useful for determining next steps for implementing trauma-informed best practices.

Recommendations and Implications for Policy, Programming, and Practice

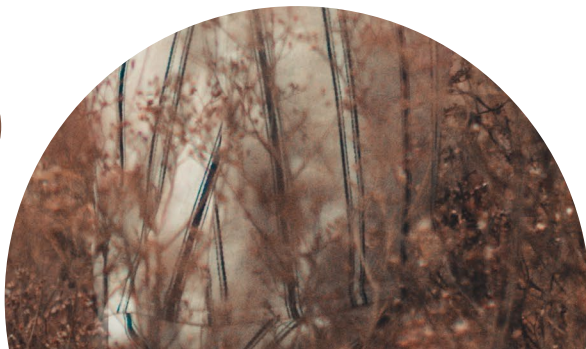
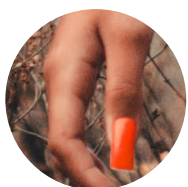
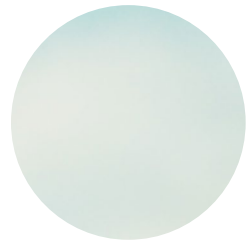
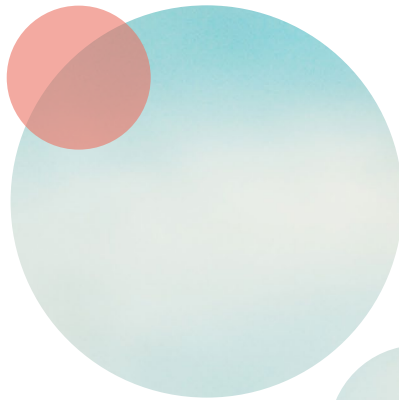
As has been noted trauma has real and substantive implications for the educational experiences and outcomes of students across the P-20 pipeline. Therefore, this tool, designed to assist community college practitioners better support racially minoritized trauma-affected community college students is not only timely and relevant, but also has important implications for community college policy, programs, and practices. Specifically, institutions committed to supporting students wholistically can utilize this tool, and other trauma informed approaches, as part of a larger student-centered, culturally responsive equity-focused plan to improve and advance student success. The institutionalization or incorporation of trauma-informed approaches is critical to this work and its ultimate success.

With respect to programming, this tool can be utilized to assess the degree to which current student support personnel and the services they offer effectively recognize and utilize trauma-informed approaches, especially in relation to supporting racially minoritized and marginalized student populations. Moreover, as new programs are developed and implemented, this tool should be utilized to assess their potential impact on racially minoritized trauma-affected students.

Finally, all practitioners who work with students should engage in using this tool, and other trauma informed approaches, to develop and broaden their understanding of trauma and its impact on students. In particular, using this assessment tool can help faculty, administrators, student support professionals, recognize trauma-affected students and assist and support them in the most relevant and effective ways to impact their overall well being and ultimate academic success.

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Appendix A

Administration

Use the questions below to assess the extent to which your community college uses an equity-focused, trauma-informed approach.

Key Principles					
Safety	Trustworthiness & Transparency	Peer Support	Collaboration & Mutuality	Empowerment, Voice, and Choice	Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues
10 Implementation Domains					
Governance and Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does our college leadership (president, vice presidents, HR, administrators) communicate its support and guidance for implementing a culturally responsive, trauma-informed approach? How do our college’s mission, vision and values statements, and strategic plans include a commitment to providing culturally responsive, trauma-informed services and supports? How do our leadership and governance structures demonstrate support for the voice and participation of students and staff, and especially racially minoritized students and staff, who have trauma histories? 				
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do our college’s written policies and procedures include a focus on the traumas experienced by racially minoritized students (and staff) and how do we include issues of safety and confidentiality? How do our college’s written policies and procedures recognize the pervasiveness of trauma in the lives of racially minoritized students, and express a commitment to reducing re-traumatization and promoting well-being and recovery? How do our college’s staffing policies demonstrate a commitment to staff training on providing services and supports that are culturally relevant and trauma informed as part of staff orientation and in-service training? How do human resources policies attend to the impact of working with racially minoritized students (and staff) who have experienced trauma? What policies and procedures are in place for including students who are racially minoritized and trauma survivors in meaningful and significant roles in college planning, governance, policy making, services, and evaluation? 				

<p>Physical Environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the campus promote a sense of safety, calming, and de-escalation, for racially minoritized students and staff? • In what ways do staff members, (administrators, staff, and faculty,) recognize and address aspects of the campus that may be re-traumatizing for racially minoritized students (and staff), and work with people on developing strategies to deal with this? • How has the college provided space that both students and staff can use to practice culturally appropriate self-care? • How has the college developed mechanisms to address gender-related physical and emotional safety concerns, (e.g., gender-specific spaces and activities,) that are also culturally responsive?
<p>Engagement & Involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do racially minoritized people with lived experience of racial trauma have the opportunity to provide feedback to the college on quality improvement processes for better engagement and services? • How is transparency and trust among staff and students promoted? • What strategies are used to reduce the sense of power differentials among staff and students, and especially between white staff and racially minoritized students? • How do staff members help racially minoritized students to identify strategies that contribute to feeling comforted and empowered? • How do staff engender listening responsively, treating racially minoritized members of the community with respect, and supporting racially minoritized students in planning?
<p>Cross Sector Collaboration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a system of communication in place with other partner agencies working with our racially minoritized students for making trauma-informed decisions? • Are collaborative partners culturally responsive and trauma-informed? • How does the organization identify community providers and referral agencies that have experience delivering evidence-based, culturally responsive trauma services? • What mechanisms are in place to promote cross-sector training on trauma and culturally responsive, trauma-informed approaches? • What communication systems are in place with partners for making culturally responsive trauma-informed decisions? • Who can I collaborate with on-campus to increase my knowledge about, and ability to engage in, culturally responsive trauma-informed practices?

* Chart adapted by L. Bergin from SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach, July 2014, pp. 14-16; adding in suggestions from Dr. Laura Kerr [*Live within Your Window of Tolerance Guide*](#); Ryan C. Van Wyk, PsyD, LP. Lives Interrupted: Understanding Trauma, Helping People Heal presentation. 10/30/18; Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child's [*3 Principles to Improve Outcomes for Children and Families*](#)

<p>Screening, Assessment, Treatment Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are racially minoritized students’ own definitions of emotional safety included when supporting their progress through their education? • Is timely culturally responsive and trauma-informed screening and assessment available and accessible to racially minoritized students? • Does the college have the capacity to provide culturally responsive trauma-specific treatment or refer to appropriate trauma-specific services that are also culturally responsive? • How are culturally responsive peer supports integrated into the service delivery approach? • How does the college address gender-based needs in the context of trauma screening, assessment, and treatment? For instance, are gender-specific and culturally responsive trauma services and supports available for both men and women? • Do staff members talk with racially minoritized people about the range of trauma reactions and work in a culturally responsive way to minimize feelings of fear or shame and to increase self-understanding? • How are these culturally responsive trauma-specific practices incorporated into the college’s ongoing operations? • Where do I refer racially minoritized students if they are interested in having a trauma-informed screening, assessment, and treatment? How do I encourage racially minoritized students to do this in a trauma-informed manner? • How do I let racially minoritized students know about our trauma support services in a culturally responsive way?
<p>Training & Workforce Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the college address the emotional stress that can arise when working with students who have had traumatic experiences due to historical, generational, and/or current racial injustice and violence? • How does the college support training and workforce development for staff to understand and increase their trauma knowledge and interventions, including the traumas caused by racism? • How does the college ensure that all staff (direct care, supervisors, front desk and reception, support staff, housekeeping and maintenance) receive basic training on trauma, its impact, and strategies for culturally responsive, trauma-informed approaches across the college and across personnel functions? • How does workforce development/staff training address the ways identity, culture, community, and oppression can affect a person’s experience of trauma, access to supports and resources, and opportunities for safety? • How does on-going workforce development/staff training provide staff supports in developing the knowledge and skills to work sensitively and effectively with racially minoritized trauma survivors. • What types of training and resources are provided to staff and supervisors on incorporating culturally responsive, trauma-informed practice and supervision in their work? • What workforce development strategies are in place to assist faculty, administration and staff in working with peer supports and recognizing the value of peer support as integral to the college’s workforce?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I address my own emotional stress when it arises through working with students who have had traumatic experiences due to historical, generational, and/or current racial injustice and violence? • What supports do I reach out to? What supports are available to me? What peer supports do I reach out to? • How do I increase my trauma knowledge, especially traumas caused by racism? • Knowing that as a leader on campus, my own emotional state will influence that of others on campus, how do I stay in my window of tolerance (calm, alert, curious, compassionate, as opposed to approaching fight, flight, freeze states)?
<p>Progress Monitoring and Quality Assurance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a system in place that monitors the college’s progress in being trauma-informed and culturally responsive? • Does the college solicit feedback from both racially minoritized staff and students? • What strategies and processes does the college use to evaluate whether racially minoritized staff members feel safe and valued at the college? • How does the college incorporate attention to culture and trauma in college operations and quality improvement processes? • What mechanisms are in place for information collected to be incorporated into the college’s quality assurance processes and how well do those mechanisms address creating accessible, culturally responsive, trauma-informed services and supports?
<p>Budget and Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the college’s budget include funding support for ongoing training on racial trauma and culturally responsive, trauma-informed approaches for leadership and staff development? • What funding exists for cross-sector training on racial trauma and culturally responsive, trauma-informed approaches? • What funding exists for peer specialists? • How does the budget support provision of a safe physical environment?
<p>Evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the college conduct a culturally responsive, trauma-informed institutional assessment or have measures or indicators that show their level of culturally responsive, trauma-informed approach? • How does the perspective of racially minoritized people who have experienced trauma inform the college performance beyond consumer satisfaction survey? • What processes are in place to solicit feedback from racially minoritized students and ensure anonymity and confidentiality? • What measures or indicators are used to assess the college’s progress in becoming culturally responsive and trauma-informed? • What processes do I have in place to solicit feedback from racially minoritized students and ensure anonymity and confidentiality? • What measures and indicators do I use to assess my own progress in becoming culturally responsive and trauma-informed?

Appendix A

Faculty

Use the questions below to assess the extent to which your community college uses an equity-focused, trauma-informed approach.

Key Principles					
Safety	Trustworthiness & Transparency	Peer Support	Collaboration & Mutuality	Empowerment, Voice, and Choice	Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues
10 Implementation Domains					
Governance and Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I as a leader in the classroom and on campus committees communicate my support and guidance for implementing a culturally responsive, trauma-informed approach? • How do my syllabus and other course materials communicate my support and guidance for implementing a culturally responsive, trauma-informed approach? • How do my class structures demonstrate support for the voice and participation of racially minoritized students who have trauma histories? 				
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do my class policies and procedures include a commitment to providing culturally responsive, trauma-informed teaching and learning practices and supports? • How do my policies and procedures recognize the pervasiveness of trauma in the lives of my racially minoritized students and express a commitment to reducing re-traumatization and promoting well-being and recovery? • What policies and procedures are in place for including racially minoritized students who are trauma survivors in meaningful and significant roles in course planning, course policies, and course evaluation? • How do my class policies find a balance of healthy stress with stable and culturally responsive relationships? • How do my policies convey hope and confidence in racially minoritized students' abilities to succeed? • How do I scaffold (use small, incremental steps with frequent feedback to meet goals)? • How do I teach learning-how-to-learn skills? 				

<p>Physical Environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do the physical environments of my office/classrooms promote a sense of safety, calming, and de-escalation, for racially minoritized students and myself? • In what ways do I recognize and address aspects of the classroom environment that may be re-traumatizing for racially minoritized students, and work with people on developing strategies to deal with this? • Where on campus do I direct students (and myself) if they/I would like to practice culturally responsive self-care? • Where on campus do I direct students (and myself) if they/I would like to participate in gender-specific spaces and activities, or race-focused spaces and activities, or ability-focused spaces and activities, etc.?
<p>Engagement & Involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do my racially minoritized students have the opportunity to provide feedback to me on improvements that could engender greater engagement from students experiencing trauma due to historical, generational, and/or current racial injustice and violence? • How do I promote trust between myself and racially minoritized students? • How do I promote trust between students? • What strategies do I use to reduce the sense of power differentials between myself and racially minoritized students? • How do I help racially minoritized students identify strategies that contribute to feeling secure and empowered? • How do I engender listening responsively, treating racially minoritized members of the community with respect, and supporting racially minoritized students in planning?
<p>Cross Sector Collaboration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who can I collaborate with on-campus and/or off-campus to increase my knowledge about, and ability to engage in, culturally responsive, trauma-informed practices? • If applicable: are collaborative partners to my courses culturally responsive and trauma-informed? • If applicable: what system of communication is in place with collaborative partners for making culturally responsive, trauma-informed decisions?
<p>Screening, Assessment, Treatment Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are racially minoritized students' own definitions of emotional safety included when I am supporting their progress through their education? • Do I talk with racially minoritized people about the range of trauma reactions and work in a culturally responsive way to minimize feelings of fear or shame and to increase self-understanding? • How are peer supports around trauma built into my courses? • Where do I refer racially minoritized students if they are interested in having a trauma-informed screening, assessment, and treatment? How do I encourage racially minoritized students to do this in a trauma-informed manner? • How do I let racially minoritized students know about our trauma support services in a culturally responsive way?

<p>Training & Workforce Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I address my own emotional stress when it arises through working with students who have had traumatic experiences due to historical, generational, and/or current racial injustice and violence? • What supports do I reach out to? What supports are available to me? What peer supports do I reach out to? • How do I increase my trauma knowledge, especially traumas caused by racism? • Knowing that as a leader in the classroom, my own emotional state will influence that of others in the room, when difficulties arise in the classroom, how do I stay in my window of tolerance (calm, alert, curious, compassionate, as opposed to approaching fight, flight, freeze states)?
<p>Progress Monitoring and Quality Assurance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I solicit feedback from racially minoritized students? • How do I incorporate attention to culture and trauma in my continual improvement processes? • How do I share information with colleagues so that it can be incorporated into the college's mechanisms for creating accessible, culturally relevant, trauma-informed education?
<p>Budget and Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I select/build course materials, recognizing that I will have students who have or are experiencing the traumas of racism, and the potential overlaps of the traumas of poverty, homelessness, racism, sexism, ableism, etc.
<p>Evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What processes do I have in place to solicit feedback from racially minoritized students and ensure anonymity and confidentiality? • What measures and indicators do I use to assess my own progress in becoming culturally responsive and trauma-informed? • What is my role in bringing these evaluative tools to my department and school?

* Chart adapted by L. Bergin from SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach, July 2014, pp. 14-16; adding in suggestions from Dr. Laura Kerr [*Live within Your Window of Tolerance Guide*](#); Ryan C. Van Wyk, PsyD, LP. Lives Interrupted: Understanding Trauma, Helping People Heal presentation. 10/30/18; Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child's [*3 Principles to Improve Outcomes for Children and Families*](#)

Appendix A

Staff

Use the questions below to assess the extent to which your community college uses an equity-focused, trauma-informed approach.

Key Principles					
Safety	Trustworthiness & Transparency	Peer Support	Collaboration & Mutuality	Empowerment, Voice, and Choice	Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues
10 Implementation Domains					
Governance and Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does my office communicate our support and guidance for implementing a trauma-informed approach? • How does my office’s mission statement include a commitment to providing culturally responsive, trauma-informed services and supports? • How does my office demonstrate support for the voice and participation of students and staff, and especially racially minoritized students and staff, who have trauma histories? 				
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do our office’s policies and procedures include a commitment to providing culturally responsive, trauma-informed services and supports? • How do our offices written policies and procedures recognize the pervasiveness of trauma in the lives of racially minoritized students, and express a commitment to reducing re-traumatization and promoting well-being and recovery? • How do our college’s staffing policies demonstrate a commitment to staff training on providing services and supports that are culturally relevant and trauma informed as part of staff orientation and in-service training? • What policies and procedures are in place for including students who are racially minoritized and trauma survivors in meaningful and significant roles in office planning, policymaking, services, and evaluation? 				
Physical Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the physical environment of our office promote a sense of safety, calming, and de-escalation, for racially minoritized students, and myself? • In what ways do I recognize and address aspects of the office environment that may be re-traumatizing for racially minoritized students, and work with people on developing strategies to deal with this? 				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where on campus do I direct racially minoritized students (and myself) if they/I would like to practice culturally appropriate self-care? • Where on campus do I direct racially minoritized students (and myself) if they/I would like to participate in gender-specific spaces and activities, or race-focused spaces and activities, or ability-focused spaces and activities, etc.? • How has our office developed mechanisms to address gender-related physical and emotional safety concerns that are also culturally responsive?
<p>Engagement & Involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do racially minoritized people with lived experience of racial trauma have the opportunity to provide feedback to our office on quality improvement processes for better engagement and services? • How is transparency and trust among our staff and students promoted? • What strategies are used to reduce the sense of power differentials among our staff and students, and especially between white staff and racially minoritized students? • How do our staff members help racially minoritized students to identify strategies that contribute to feeling secure and empowered? • How do our staff engender listening responsively, treating racially minoritized members of the community with respect, and supporting racially minoritized students in planning?
<p>Cross Sector Collaboration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a system of communication in place with other partner agencies working with our racially minoritized students for making trauma-informed decisions? • Are collaborative partners culturally responsive and trauma-informed? • How does our office identify community providers and referral agencies that have experience delivering evidence-based, culturally responsive trauma services? • What mechanisms are in place to promote cross-sector training on trauma and culturally responsive, trauma-informed approaches? • What communication systems are in place with partners for making culturally responsive trauma-informed decisions? • Who can we collaborate with on-campus to increase our knowledge about, and ability to engage in, culturally responsive trauma-informed practices?
<p>Screening, Assessment, Treatment Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are racially minoritized students' own definitions of emotional safety included when supporting their progress through their education? • If applicable: Is timely culturally responsive and trauma-informed screening and assessment available and accessible to racially minoritized students? • If applicable: does our office have the capacity to provide culturally responsive trauma-specific treatment or refer to appropriate trauma-specific services that are also culturally responsive? • How are culturally responsive peer supports integrated into our service delivery approach? • If applicable: How does our office address gender-based needs in the context of trauma screening, assessment, and treatment? For instance, are gender-specific and culturally responsive trauma services and supports available for both men and women?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do our staff members talk with racially minoritized people about the range of trauma reactions and work in a culturally responsive way to minimize feelings of fear or shame and to increase self-understanding? • How are these culturally responsive trauma-specific practices incorporated into our office's ongoing operations?
Training & Workforce Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I address my own emotional stress when it arises through working with students who have had traumatic experiences due to historical, generational, and/or current racial injustice and violence? • What supports do I reach out to? What supports are available to me? What peer supports do I reach out to? • How do I increase my trauma knowledge, especially traumas caused by racism? • Knowing that my own emotional state will influence that of others in my workspaces, how do I stay in my window of tolerance (calm, curious, compassionate, as opposed to nearing flight/fight/freeze states)?
Progress Monitoring and Quality Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a system in place that monitors our office's progress in being trauma-informed and culturally responsive? • Does our office solicit feedback from both racially minoritized staff and students? • What strategies and processes does our office use to evaluate whether racially minoritized staff members feel safe and valued at the college? • How does our office incorporate attention to culture and trauma in our operations and quality improvement processes? • What mechanisms are in place for information collected in our office to be incorporated into the college's quality assurance processes and how well do those mechanisms address creating accessible, culturally responsive, trauma-informed services and supports?
Budget and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does our office's budget include funding support for ongoing training on racial trauma and culturally responsive, trauma-informed approaches for leadership and staff development? • What funding exists for cross-sector training on racial trauma and culturally responsive, trauma-informed approaches? • What funding exists for peer specialists? • How does the budget support provision of a safe physical environment?
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does our office conduct a culturally responsive, trauma-informed institutional assessment or have measures or indicators that show our level of culturally responsive, trauma-informed approach? • How does the perspective of racially minoritized people who have experienced trauma inform our office's performance? • What processes are in place to solicit feedback from racially minoritized students and ensure anonymity and confidentiality? • What measures or indicators are used to assess our office's progress in becoming culturally responsive and trauma-informed? • What is my role in bringing these evaluative tools to my office and school?

Appendix B

Glossary

The following are terms discussed in this tool that are important for understanding equity-focused, trauma informed practices:

- **Culturally-responsive practices:** practices that recognize, value, and incorporate the strengths and assets students bring to the classroom that are effectively utilized to support students' learning and achievement.
- **Equity vs. Equality:** Equity strives to ensure that everyone has what they need to be successful. Equality strives to treat everyone the same. Equality assumes everyone starts from the same place and needs the same help to achieve success, while equity recognizes individuals may require different help and supports to achieve success.
- **Historical trauma:** "the complex and collective trauma experienced over time and across generations by a group of people who share an identity, affiliation, or circumstance" (Mohatt, Thompson, Thai, & Tebes, 2014).
- **Racially-minoritized:** "Minoritized refers to the objective outcome, experienced by 'minority' racial-ethnic groups, of the exclusionary practices of more dominant groups resulting from historical and contemporary racism (Gillborn, 2005). The use of the expression 'minoritized' in preference to 'minority' reflects the ongoing social experience of marginalization, even when groups subject to racial-ethnic discrimination achieve a numerical majority in the population" (Chase, Dowd, Pazich, & Bensimon, 2014, p.671).
- **Trauma:** "Trauma can be defined as any experience in which a person's internal resources are not adequate to cope with external stressors (Hoch, Stewart, Webb, & Wyandt-Hiebert, 2015)" (Davidson, 2017, p. 4).
- **Trauma-informed Approach:** The term trauma-informed describes an approach that recognizes the pervasiveness and impact of trauma on survivors, staff, organizations, and communities, and ensures that this understanding is incorporated into every aspect of an organization's administration, culture, environment, and service delivery. Using a trauma-informed approach to care can create a safe, accepting, respectful environment which is often needed to reveal thoughts or behaviors associated with trauma, suicide, or Intimate Partner Violence (SAMHSA, 2014)
- **Trauma reminders (commonly known as triggers):** Any stimulus (can vary in intensity from some stress, anxiety, or distress to a "flashback" which causes the person to relive past trauma without intention and lose track of the present moment) that evokes a memory of past traumatizing events, including the thoughts, feelings, and sensations associated with those experiences (Warshaw, Tinnon, & Cave, 2018). The reactions vary in intensity from mild levels of stress to flashbacks, nightmares, and psychological reactivity (Goodman, Miller, & West-Olatunji, 2012).
- **Trauma-responsive practices:** Strategies that understand, recognize, and respond to the effects of all types of trauma.
- **Traumatic stress:** Refers to a specific stress that occurs as the result of exposure to painful, intense, shocking, and distressful events. SAMHSA: The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation.
- **Self-Care:** Performing deliberate activities or behaviors that bolsters the self's health and overall well-being (Rupert & Dorociak, 2019).

Appendix C

Resources

Below are links to various trauma-informed resources specific to higher education and community colleges in particular:

- [*Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: What's Poverty, Mindfulness, Trauma, Open-educational Pedagogy \(and Love\) Got to Do with It?*](#)
- [*Leveraging the Neuroscience of Now: Seven Recommendations for Helping Students Thrive in Times of Trauma*](#)
- [*Reflections From Practitioners Who Advance Equity-Guided Change*](#)
- [*Trauma Informed Care Fact Sheet*](#)
- [*Trauma-Informed Care on a College Campus*](#)
- [*What Does Trauma Informed Teaching Look Like?*](#)



CAPTURING AND USING STUDENT VOICE TO INFORM PRACTICE

Authors: Jennifer Billingsley, Richard Hayes, Brenda Refaei, Gabrielle Thompson, DeSandra Washington, Joseph Alonzo, Richard Diaz, Maati Ka'awa, Julius Lloyd, and Sarah Wolfe

Community colleges occupy a unique space in higher education. Founded as institutions to provide general education courses and broad access, they have evolved into sites for workforce development and career and technical education over time. They have become the leading provider of higher education experiences for students with various constraints (Baber et al., 2019; Dowd, 2007). Currently, community colleges enroll over 11 million students, with a majority being racially minoritized students (American Association of Community Colleges, 2020). With this significant enrollment of racially minoritized students, the context of their experiences on campus is tethered to the culturally responsive climate of their institutions. However, the faculty, staff, and administrations on these campuses remain overwhelmingly white and fail to reflect the diversity of the student population (American Association of Community Colleges, 2020, 2018; Jones, 2013). This disconnect in representation often contributes to perpetuating structural and cultural inequities, chilly campus climates, and ultimately fewer racially minoritized students completing their academic programs (Baber et al., 2019; Harper & Hurtado, 2007). Even as community college leaders recognize the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion work, many continue to struggle to make their campuses more hospitable for racially minoritized students (Jones, 2013). Furthermore, when espoused commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion are not met with the proper resources to fully operationalize the approaches necessary for safe campus spaces, a lack of cultural responsiveness can serve to exacerbate an already chilling experience for minoritized and marginalized students. Thus, capturing and utilizing the student voice to inform the development and implementation of culturally responsive and sustaining policies, programs, and practices is one critical strategy to both improve students' collegiate experiences and advance equitable student outcomes.

Incorporating students' viewpoints has been recognized as a practical approach for allowing space for students to contribute to an institution's decision-making process. By capturing student voice and effectively utilizing it, community colleges can, for example, improve the experiences of parenting students by providing childcare resources; develop services designed to accommodate the unique needs of undocumented students, or prepare students for transfer pathways (Jain, Melendez, and Herrera, 2020). Moreover, as colleges and universities struggle to navigate issues related to race and bias on college campuses and the presence of student activism increases, students' voice continues to be paramount in meeting the needs and demands of students (Templeton, MacCracken, & Smith, 2019). When students' voices are centered in campus decision-making areas such as enrollment, student support services, and academic affairs, campus leadership can save valuable time and resources in fostering practices and experiences directly aligned with the voiced concerns

of students. As Harper (2009) describes, race-conscious student engagement activities are mutually beneficial to all campus stakeholders and normalize the experiences of racially minoritized students. As a result of such approaches, campus actors are encouraged to utilize resources to create a positive campus experience along with shifting the responsibility of labor for an inclusive campus from the student to campus staff. Thus, there is a critical need to expand more avenues to capture student voices, especially those of racially minoritized students, to influence further adoption of culturally responsive policies and practices that create an equitable experience for racially minoritized students at community colleges.

The Capturing and Using Student Voice to Improve Practice tool encompasses two tools that offer distinct strategies for community colleges to solicit the voices of racially minoritized students. As a result, campuses can incorporate student voice into the institutional decision-making that directly impacts their educational experiences and outcomes. While both tools are similar in their recognition of the value, power, and utility of student voice, they differ in their approach to gathering, assessing, and effectively operationalizing student voice, as well as in the outcomes they seek. More specifically, one tool – the Supporting and Promoting Education Awareness and Knowledge (SPEAK) survey – is tailored to soliciting student voices to identify their more immediate or essential needs. Subsequently, campus practitioners and other institutional actors can connect students with the proper campus resources to meet those needs to better support and advance their academic progress and success. Conversely, the Hear Us/We Hear You tool is intended to offer community colleges a mechanism to collect student input related to institutional policies, practices, and programs that directly and indirectly impact students.

Although the two tools that comprise the Capturing and Using Students Voice tool differ, they are well-aligned in the value they place on the power of student voice and the need to pay particular attention to the voices of racially minoritized and marginalized students. Additionally, the tools share a common language that is important and relevant for understanding and effectively using them.

- **Student Voice** - Students advocating for their educational experience by taking action, making decisions, and holding higher education institutions accountable to address systemic inequities to positively impact their education (Templeton, MacCracken, & Smith, 2019).
- **Shared Governance** - A fundamental principle of inclusion in key areas of institutional responsibility and decision making (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 2017).
- **Minoritized Students** - Groups that are different in race, religious creed, nation of origin, sexuality, and gender and, as a result of social constructs, have less power or representation compared to other members or groups in society (Smith, 2016).

Ultimately, the Capturing and Using Student Voice tool aims to provide community colleges with multiple strategies they can adapt, develop, and implement to actively acquire and incorporate the voices and feedback of racially minoritized students in both the higher and lower level institutional decision-making that occurs that ultimately impacts students' overall collegiate experiences and educational outcomes.

Suggested Citation:

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THE SUPPORTING AND PROMOTING EDUCATION, AWARENESS, AND KNOWLEDGE (SPEAK) SURVEY

Authors: Jennifer Billingsley, Richard Hayes, Brenda Refaei, Gabrielle Thompson, and DeSandra Washington

Recognizing that community college students have an array of unique needs and often require a variety of resources and supports to help them achieve their academic, professional, and personal goals, the purpose of the SPEAK (Supporting and Promoting Education, Knowledge, and Awareness) survey is to provide community colleges with a streamlined process they can use to identify and meet the expressed needs of racially minoritized students as they navigate their educational pathways. More specifically, the SPEAK survey provides students an easily accessible and readily available channel to share their immediate needs and concerns with campus personnel who have the knowledge and capability to connect students with the appropriate services and resources directly, efficiently, and quickly.

Intended Audience

The SPEAK survey was created with two primary audiences in mind – community colleges and racially minoritized students. This survey is intended to be adapted for use by community colleges seeking to improve how they serve and support racially minoritized students. More specifically, this tool charges designated community college personnel – administrators, faculty, and staff in developing and ensuring easy access to the SPEAK survey, collecting and analyzing the survey responses, and providing the appropriate wrap-around services and support to meet students’ expressed needs.

The SPEAK survey is intended to be an easily accessible way for students to exercise agency and voice their needs and concerns directly to those with power and the capability to address them. As many students are often unaware of the various supports and services offered by their institutions and how to access them when needed, providing a widely available and easily accessible tool for students will aid the speed at which students can express a need or concern and subsequently be connected with the appropriate supports and services that can provide the specific assistance they require as they pursue their educational goals.

Ultimately, the SPEAK survey aims to serve two audiences and two aligned purposes. The survey seeks to connect students to the support services and resources they need to succeed while also helping community colleges identify students – especially racially minoritized students – who need support to quickly offer the necessary assistance that directly impacts these students’ collegiate experiences and outcomes.

How to Utilize the Tool

While surveys such as the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Community College Survey for Student Engagement (CCSSE) are readily available, they evaluate the student experience from a 50,000-foot view. Smaller-scale and more narrowly tailored surveys like the SPEAK survey, which seek to garner the perspectives of racially minoritized students about their more immediate, day-to-day needs and how institutions can meet them, can be instrumental for not only identifying and attending to students' needs but also ultimately improving their experiences and outcomes.

The SPEAK survey is intended to be utilized as an online survey, as administering surveys tends to be financially feasible for most colleges, especially given the prevalence and accessibility of several digital survey platforms like Survey Monkey and Google Forms, among others. As institutions adapt and develop the SPEAK survey for their specific institutional needs, it is strongly advised that institutional technology personnel are involved in all aspects of the survey's design, development, and administration to ensure the appropriate security and effective administration of the survey as inadequately implemented surveys have the potential to create further barriers, rather than rectifying existing ones.

Institutions are advised to identify an office, or a team, dedicated to receiving and reviewing incoming survey results. The college personnel who serve as survey review team members will vary among institutions and can include personnel like mental health counselors, financial aid counselors, career services coordinators, facility managers, and a host of other student-facing positions. More importantly, college personnel serving in this role should have extensive knowledge of the various institutional services and resources that can be used to address a variety of issues raised by student respondents, as well as the limitations of existent institutional services and resources that may need to be further developed or expanded to meet specific student needs.

As institutions make plans to adapt, develop, and administer their own versions of the SPEAK survey, two options for implementation are presented for consideration for optimal impact and student usage. First, institutions should consider embedding and prominently featuring the survey on their institution's website so that all students are aware of it and have easy access to it, if and when they need it. The second option for institutions to consider – which can be done in addition to embedding the survey in the institution's website – is to ensure designated personnel has the ability to send targeted emails, that include a link to access the survey, directly to students who could benefit from using it to meet an immediate need. For example, a

However, given the known (and some unknown) technological challenges some students must navigate, it is critical that the SPEAK survey is also available and accessible in a paper or other non-digital format.

student might be invited to complete the survey prior to a scheduled meeting with a faculty or staff member. However, given the known (and some unknown) technological challenges some students must navigate, it is critical that the SPEAK survey is also available and accessible in a paper or other non-digital format. Similarly, it is also important that students have access to the SPEAK survey independent of any interaction(s) with an institutional agent/actor. This independent access ensures that students have a level of confidentiality for situations that they may be reluctant to share with unfamiliar campus personnel – such as issues of housing or food insecurity – and can also potentially serve to positively impact students’ level of comfort in seeking out institutional support.

Finally, the data collected via the SPEAK survey should be primarily utilized to ensure that all students’ needs, but especially those of racially minoritized and marginalized students, are being effectively identified and met by the institution (i.e., community college). Although the attached SPEAK survey is lengthy, it is not exhaustive in its inclusion or representation of all areas students may seek resources and support. Rather, the SPEAK survey offers an example of some broad areas institutions could include in their own versions of the survey to identify and address various student needs in a host of areas relevant to their academic, career, and personal development and success. Ultimately, institutions are strongly encouraged to adapt the SPEAK survey in ways that are focused on identifying and meeting the specific and expressed needs of their particular student population, especially their racially minoritized students.

Assessing the Tool

The SPEAK survey’s utility and effectiveness should be evaluated by the institution and personnel charged with collecting and reviewing respondents’ data, as well as by students. Two types of assessment of the survey should be conducted by the institution. First, the survey should be evaluated to determine whether it is meeting the needs of the personnel charged with providing supports for students. The survey should be modified based on personnel’s assessment of ways to improve it to best allow them to provide the services and supports students are seeking and need. Secondly, the survey should be evaluated by the institution more broadly to help it identify areas for campus-wide improvement. For example, institutions could use disaggregated survey data to identify and address gaps in services that students may experience or to identify factors that may impact students’ awareness of available services. The SPEAK survey should be assessed after the first full quarter or semester of implementation to evaluate whether the personnel using it are obtaining the information, they need to meet students’ expressed needs and to improve student’s access to services and resources they need. Based on the results of an initial assessment (and subsequent ones), the survey should be modified accordingly to best meet the individual and specific needs of the institution and its student population.

In addition, to evaluate the effectiveness of the SPEAK survey, a post-survey evaluation directed toward student respondents should also be administered to assess students’ usage of the survey, as well as collect students’ feedback on its relevance, utility, and ultimate effectiveness with respect to connecting them with the appropriate services and resources to best meet their needs. Moreover, institutions should also consider developing and administering a brief post-intervention survey to evaluate students’ experience and level of satisfaction after receiving the campus resources with which they were matched. Ultimately, engaging in timely and regular assessment and evaluation of the tool and its impact is critical, especially for the continual development and enhancement of the survey to ensure it is being used effectively to best serve and meet the needs of students, especially racially minoritized students.



Recommendations and Implications for Policy, Programming, and Practice

The following recommendations include approaches that community colleges should consider further engaging as they adapt the SPEAK survey to address the unique needs of their racially minoritized and often underserved student populations.

- **Develop the survey and utilize its results in ways that prioritize creating inclusive institutional policies and practices that decrease barriers for racially minoritized students.** Students are best positioned to identify practices and policies that prevent them from achieving their educational goals. Once students have identified policies and practices as barriers, it is incumbent upon administrators, staff, and faculty to revise and change them, so they are inclusive. As changes are made, the survey can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of new practices and policies that seek to promote the inclusion of racially minoritized students.
- **Utilize the SPEAK survey to inform the creation of, or to sustain, student affinity groups that support racially minoritized and marginalized students.** Affinity groups can be developed as a co-curricular activity to provide a place for students to share common concerns as well as resources they have found helpful in overcoming challenges and barriers to their educational success. Moreover, affinity groups can also provide valuable networking opportunities between students and local community members who can also serve an integral role in addressing some of the unique needs and concerns racially minoritized community college students might experience.

- **Incorporate SPEAK survey data in institutional professional development and training activities for faculty and staff that are organized around improving racially minoritized students' experiences and better serving and meeting their needs.** Community colleges are situated in a variety of locations, which also contributes to the college's climate. This survey can identify the specific concerns of racially minoritized students that can be used to help faculty and staff better understand the specific experiences of the students they serve. For instance, there are several high-impact practices that can be used to improve college success for racially minoritized students. However, not all practices are appropriate for all institutions. Using the SPEAK survey to hear directly from students' and better understand their experiences can help tailor these practices to the specific needs of the college's student population. For community colleges that have a designated office for faculty and staff development, the survey results can also suggest areas for developing programming and other opportunities to create an overall more equitable and inclusive learning environment.

Ultimately, the SPEAK survey has the potential to have a substantial impact on the experiences and outcomes of community college students, especially for an institution's racially minoritized and marginalized students. It offers institutions a tool to demonstrate to these groups that their voices are valued, and their needs are important, and that the institution is invested in hearing and learning from students to bolster institutional efforts to increase students' success, improve their experiences, and advance equitable outcomes.

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HEAR US/WE HEAR YOU



Authors: Joseph Alonzo, Richard Diaz, Maati Ka’awa, Julius Lloyd, and Sarah Wolfe

In 2018, the National Campus Leadership Council (NCLC) released the Student Voice Index (SVI) to analyze the impact student voices have on the decision-making process on college and university campuses (Templeton et al., 2019). While student voice is critical in the decision-making process, authority and power to make institutional decisions typically lie with the governing board and key institutional leaders (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 2017). Student voices are often excluded, which results in the silencing of students and can lead to a lack of awareness of students actual needs and concerns.

Creating avenues that center and support the experiences of racially minoritized students is critical to their educational success. As a hallmark for creating an inclusive environment, Harper (2009) suggests that successful campus practices require knowledge of campus environmental factors that assist or hinder student engagement, which subsequently allows campus actors to identify and scale-up high impact practices that improve the campus environment. Recognizing the power of student voice to effect institutional change, the Hear Us/We Hear You tool was developed to offer community colleges a simple roadmap to actively solicit racially minoritized student voices and input in the shared governance process. This tool encourages and provides a strategy for institutions to not only procure but also incorporate racially minoritized student voices in the decision-making processes that directly affects students’ academic and professional development, collegiate experiences, and outcomes. Ultimately, soliciting and effectively utilizing student voices and perspectives to identify challenges and barriers to students’ academic and personal development and subsequently contribute to institutional strategies that address such challenges and barriers is paramount for both student and institutional success.

Intended Audience and Outcomes

The intended audience for the Hear Us/We Hear You tool is community colleges that are seeking to increase and improve the inclusion of student voice and input, especially those of racially minoritized and marginalized students, in the decision-making processes that directly (and indirectly) impact their experiences and outcomes. While this tool was created specifically to engage students, by soliciting their perspectives with respect to institutional processes, it requires institutional agents like administrators, faculty, and staff to develop the tool and make it available and accessible for students to use.

There are multiple intended outcomes of the tool. Its primary intent is to actively engage and include racially minoritized student voices in the broader campus conversation (Hear Us) geared towards improving the institutional climate and student’s overall collegiate experiences via policies, practices, and programs that promote racial equity and inclusion. Community colleges that utilize the tool to solicit and incorporate students’ perspectives and feedback (We Hear You) will not only actively demonstrate the value they place on student voice, but also provide students an important and much-needed seat at the table that allows them to make positive and important contributions that inform the decision-making, strategic planning, and resource

allocation of the institution. Ultimately, effective use of the Hear Us/We Hear You tool should result in minoritized students seeing and experiencing a cultural shift in campus experiences that directly reflect their voices and perspectives. As a result, campuses should see a direct return on their investment through an increase in the matriculation and success of their racially minoritized student populations.

How to Utilize the Tool

The primary purpose of the Hear Us/We Hear You tool is to allow racially minoritized students, space in the institutional decision-making process by offering an easily accessible and readily available way for them to express their views and perspectives on institutional decisions that directly and indirectly impact their educational experiences and outcomes. More specifically, this tool essentially creates a campus-wide, student-centered instrument whereby students can provide critical feedback to institutional decision-makers about policies, practices, and processes that disproportionately affect racially minoritized students. It also offers institutional leaders and decision-makers an opportunity to frequently and appropriately engage with students' feedback and to respond via direct action. It is important to note that the Hear Us/We Hear You tool as described here is only an example and is designed to be adapted and further developed by individual community colleges according to their institutional needs and capabilities to garner the student voice and input that it is designed to acquire. For example, the tool can be developed as an online survey or offered in a paper format that can be completed and deposited in drop-boxes around campus, or via QR codes that are linked to the survey, which could be strategically placed campus-wide (especially in heavy student traffic areas and buildings).

Institutions have leeway to determine how they will develop and deliver the Hear Us/We Hear You tool. They can choose from among a wide range of existing innovative methods (or create new ones) that allow students opportunities to make their voices heard with respect to institutional decisions that impact policies and practices that directly affect them. Moreover, we would caution against its use in singularity--no one person, department, or division should solely be responsible for implementing the tool. To be functional, this tool must be supported by a campus-wide leadership as well. It is suggested that leadership and oversight should include a steering committee that should include but is not limited to academic deans, campus diversity, equity, and inclusion administrators, faculty, student affairs administrators, auxiliary services, budget and finance staff, student leaders, campus technology staff, campus assessment and institutional research staff, students, and anyone else deemed appropriate. For student representation, we suggest inviting members of student organizations such as student government and identity-based student groups. However, institutions should not rely solely on students in official leadership roles and should seek to be more inclusive of various members of the student body—like parenting students, non-traditional aged students, and first-generation students. It is recommended that this tool is administered via student leaders, as often student-led initiatives garner a higher response rate. Utilizing student leaders to deploy the tool will also create a sense of shared ownership among students in improving the experiences of racially minoritized students on campus.

Institutions may need to assess their readiness for implementing the Hear Us/We Hear You tool by completing an environmental scan to determine the campus's capacity (fiscal, personnel, and climate) for instituting such a tool. It is important to note that all institutions will not have the same resources available, however engaging in such a process is important for identifying both the strengths and areas for improvement in the functional areas that would be responsible for the scaling of the Hear Us/We Hear You tool.

Ultimately, as institutions adapt and develop their versions of the Hear Us/We Hear You tool, they should consider using a range of qualitative data collection methods, such as interviews, focus groups, and targeted solicitations for student feedback, to actively garner the voice of of racially minoritized students on a variety

of matters such as, the proposed implementation of new policies and initiatives like opening a campus food pantry, or changes to existing campus actions such as tuition and drop dates, campus parking policies, dress codes, campus activities and programs, and academic advising policies.

Assessing the Tool

It is highly recommended that as institutions adapt and develop the Hear Us/We Hear You tool, they establish clearly defined periods of time during which the tool is available and accessible for students to use – for instance, an open commenting period each quarter or semester paired with in person follow-up as required. It is also recommended that the tool is assessed for its usefulness and effectiveness each quarter or semester as well. Moreover, it would be ideal for students to have a role in the assessment of the tool to not only contribute to its further development and improvement over time but also inform institutional decision-making practices. Ultimately, as the data is reviewed and analyzed each semester or quarter, it should be used to create more opportunities for students, especially racially minoritized students, to have roles in institutional governance, as well as to gain more knowledge and a better understanding of issues minoritized students face on campus, and addressing them via institutional policies, programs, and practices.

Recommendations and Implications for Policy, Programming, and Practice

The following recommendations include approaches that community colleges should consider and further engaging as they adapt the Hear Us/We Hear You tool to address the unique needs of their racially minoritized student populations.

- **Develop an optimal adaptation of the tool to incorporate student voice to support student success.** Incorporating racially minoritized student voice into the fabric of campus engagement creates a culture that demonstrates institutional support and value of their rich experiences. Further, such work can increase student retention and aid in racially minoritized students developing a sense of belonging. As such, this tool can be utilized as a catalyst to create more spaces and practices that are culturally responsive and keenly aware of both the academic and social needs of this population.
- **Increase student involvement in campus decision making processes.** When effectively leveraged, the Hear Us/We Hear You tool can foster and promote a change in the limited role students currently play in most institutions' governance and decision-making processes and ultimately change the way institutions engage and value students' input, insights, and experiences. Further developing this tool has the potential to allow students to contribute to the development and implementation of policies and practices that directly impact their collegiate experiences, academic and personal development, and educational outcomes. For example, student voice is critical for decisions such as advising hours and practices to meet the needs of all students, campus support services offerings, and facility needs. Institutions that seek to demonstrate their commitment and the value they place on student voice and input on operational matters that both, directly and indirectly, affect students, especially minoritized and marginalized students, are especially encouraged to explore and engage the Hear Us/We Hear You tool.

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Appendix

SPEAK Survey

Click here to access the SPEAK survey: This link will allow institutions to edit the survey and adapt the survey according to institutional needs.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About SPEAK Survey

Institutions should develop their own set of FAQs to answer anticipated questions students may have about accessing and using the SPEAK survey. A shortlist of sample questions is presented below. Institutions should also consider including a confidentiality statement to ensure students that any information they provide via the survey is confidential and secure.

- How do I access the survey?
- Who will see the results?
- Can I change my answers at any time?
- How many times may I take the survey?
- Who will respond back to me?
- Is the survey confidential?

Sample Methods and Questions for the Hear Us/We Hear You Tool

As previously discussed, there are numerous ways community colleges can choose to develop and adapt the Hear Us/We Hear You tool. Two examples are presented below.

- **Virtual Drop Box:** One potential use for a virtual drop-box could be to allow students an opportunity to provide feedback on different departments, offices, and programs around campus once they have interacted or engaged with the department, office, or program. The virtual drop-box should be marketed to all students and include targeted marketing towards racially minoritized students to ensure that they are aware of the tool, its purpose, and how to use it. Below is a sample of questions that students might be asked via a virtual drop-box questionnaire after interacting with a campus office. Note that the questions an institution chooses to use to solicit student feedback should reflect the intended outcomes of the tool.

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1. Staff was courteous
 2. The staff listened to my needs
 3. The staff fully answered my questions
 4. The staff took adequate time with me
 5. I was satisfied with my interactions with this office
 6. I would you recommend this service to other students
 7. Please name a staff member you would like to recognize (Optional):
 8. If you could change one aspect of your experience, what would it be? (Optional)
 9. Please provide additional comments here (Optional)
- **Survey:** Another way to engage students and solicit their voices and input is via a simple survey. Surveys can be developed to garner feedback on a range of issues as determined by the institution. Students can be made aware of the survey, its availability, purpose, and how to access it via marketing by the institution. Students could access the survey via a direct link, QR codes, or even through their student portal. Note: The following survey questions are samples that can and should be amended based on each institution's specific desired outcomes (i.e., the issue, concern, challenge, etc., that the institution wants or needs student input and feedback).
 1. From your perspective as a student, what are your suggestions for improving the campus climate for racially minoritized students?
 2. Has your campus experience met your expectations as a student?
 3. Please describe your overall experience on campus:
Excellent - Very Good - Good - Fair - Poor - Very Poor
 4. If you could change one thing about the college, what would it be?
 5. Have there been any barriers or obstacles created by the college that we could remove?
 6. Can you discuss one experience you have had that you would rate as a great experience here at the college?
 7. Can you discuss one experience you have had that you would rate as "needs improvement" here at the college?
 8. Please provide additional comments here (Optional):

For the following statements that reference the racial climate of the campus, indicate your level of agreement:

1. The campus is racially diverse

Strongly Agree - Agree - Neither - Disagree - Strongly Disagree

2. You have a positive sense of belonging here on campus

Strongly Agree - Agree - Neither - Disagree - Strongly Disagree

3. You are not stereotyped while on campus

Strongly Agree - Agree - Neither - Disagree - Strongly Disagree

4. You hear racially charged comments by faculty members during class

Strongly Agree - Agree - Neither - Disagree - Strongly Disagree

5. You hear racially charged comments by students during class

Strongly Agree - Agree - Neither - Disagree - Strongly Disagree

6. You hear racially charged comments by faculty and staff outside the classroom

Strongly Agree - Agree - Neither - Disagree - Strongly Disagree

In order to obtain student voice in shared governance decisions, it is critical that there is an anonymous but easily accessible way to provide a space for students to share their input. Students, in general, are not familiar with the shared governance process. Further, racially minoritized students are often silent in giving feedback because they do not feel safe or confident to provide input for fear of being ostracized. Below are sample questions to gather students' input around the current community college reform effort – Guided Pathways.

1. How did you learn about _____ college?

2. Why did you choose _____ college?

Please state whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1. It was easy to apply to the college

2. It was easy to apply for financial aid

3. When I had a question, I knew where to find the answer

4. It was easy to select a major

5. I know what classes I need to take to complete my program of study

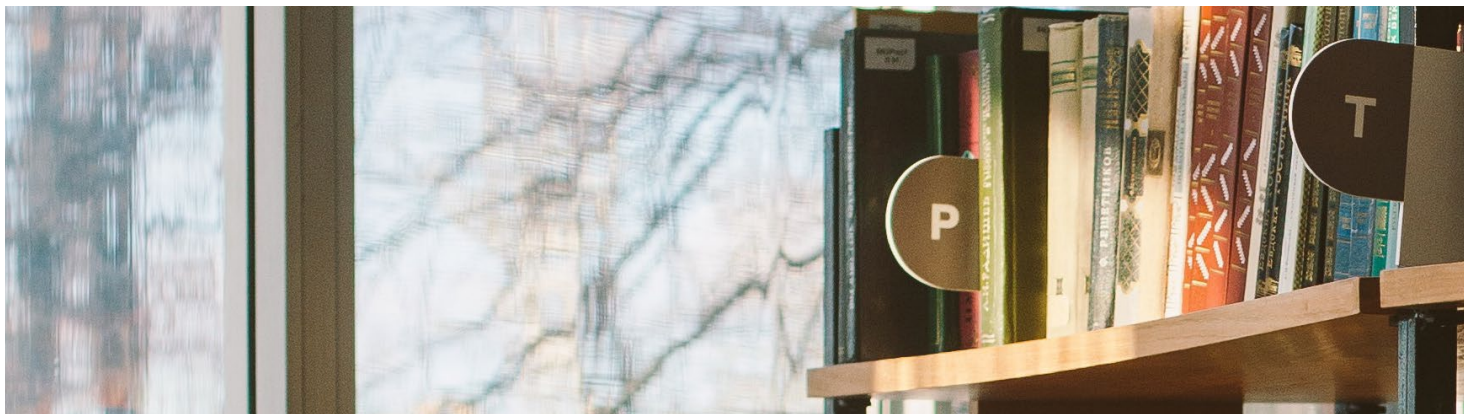
6. I know how long it will take me to complete all classes here at _____ college

7. I know what my university transfer options are
8. I know what employment options I have with the major I have chosen
9. I know how much money I can earn with the major I have chosen
10. I feel connected to campus
11. I feel supported by campus staff members
12. I feel supported by campus faculty members
13. I have a sense of belonging on campus
14. My voice and concerns matter on campus
15. I feel safe on campus

Frequently Asked Questions About Hear Us/We Hear You Tool

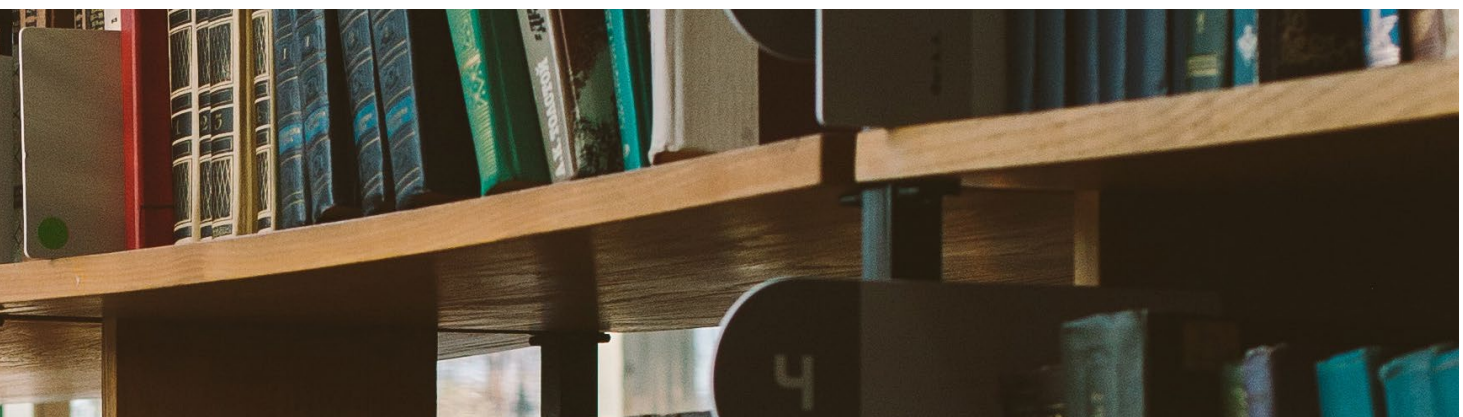
This is a sample of questions that may arise, and other considerations that institutions may need to address as they develop the Hear Us/We Hear You tool for their own institutional purposes. Community colleges are encouraged to develop their own FAQs that reflect the important questions they anticipate relative to their version of the tool.

- When do you begin the assessment process at your institution (e.g., each semester/quarter)?
- Are you collecting demographic information in your intake form? Consider asking for student numbers or any simple identifier that can be used to pull demographic information for further disaggregation of the data to determine whose voices are privileged in this process.
- Where are students accessing assessment questions (i.e., peer to peer, online, paper)?
- Has the number of responses increased over time?



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