Advancing Equity Through Guided Pathways Series Discussion Guide #4:

Fostering Faculty Diversity

Edward Bush, Cosumnes River College
with Introduction by Kay McClenney,
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SERIES OVERVIEW

The Advancing Equity through Guided Pathways series aims to foster critical campus conversations about how to close persistent gaps for historically marginalized students. Developed by the National Center for Inquiry & Improvement for the California Guided Pathways Project, the series was generously supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, and the Foundation for California Community Colleges.

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Introduction

As community colleges endeavor to strengthen equity through their Guided Pathways work, they inevitably confront the reality that in most institutions the faculty does not reflect the racial and ethnic composition of the student population. This is a problem that does not fix itself. The use of data, reflection on students' experiences with faculty, and rigorous review of institutional hiring policies and practices are all part of the solution.

Bringing Awareness to the Misalignment between the Race/Ethnicity of Students and their Educators

To illuminate the necessity and urgency to implement Guided Pathways, many colleges engage in an exercise wherein faculty, staff, and administrators are asked to create an educational plan that would allow a student to complete a particular degree program within two years. When conducted at my college, this exercise was an eye-opening experience, as staff quickly recognized the unintentional barriers in our degree programs and course schedules that made it literally impossible for students to complete many of our programs in the desired two-year window. For our campus, this exercise hammered home the consequences of perpetuating systems that were not designed with the student experience at the center.

Assuming that the aforementioned exercise had a similar impact at other institutions, I propose that college leaders revisit their program maps, this time examining them through a racial equity lens. In this iteration, it is important not only to consider the courses and their sequence, but also to reflect on who is teaching each course, the race and ethnicity of the faculty member, and the race and ethnicity of the students whom the faculty member will be teaching. Likely, this exercise will reveal significant misalignment

How to Use this Guide...

The *Advancing Equity through Guided Pathways* series aims to foster critical campus conversations about increasing student equity under a Guided Pathways umbrella. Institutional redesign teams can…

- Read the introductory framing on creating student connection and belonging upon college entry

- Use the discussion questions to facilitate conversations related to planning and action

- Conduct the research tasks to help better understand your students' experience of this topic

Some guides, including this resource, address issues in the student experience aligned to the stages of the Completion by Design Loss/Momentum Framework, while others address issues of culture and leadership. Across all guides, authors bring their own unique perspectives on and approach to the issue. No guide is intended as the definitive word on its topic.

For related content, discussion questions, and research tasks, review *Leading Culture Change to Promote Equity: Perspectives from a CEO of Color* (Guide 2) and *Leading Culture Change to Promote Equity: Perspectives from a White CEO* (Guide 3).

For all guides and additional information on the series, visit http://www.ncii-improve.com/.

between the race and ethnicity of students and their educators.

Recommendations for Fostering Faculty Diversity

The topic of hiring and maintaining a diverse faculty is widely discussed, but much like conversations around barriers to student success, it does not come to full focus until viewed through the experience of our students. In my conversations with African American and Latinx students, many have revealed that they have gone through their entire educational pathway K-14 without ever having a teacher who looked like them. Meanwhile, research has shown that diverse faculty have a positive impact (in terms of grades and course success) on all students, but particularly on African American and Latinx students.

The fundamental question remains: what can college leaders do to ensure the hiring of more diverse faculty? The following recommendations are offered not as an exhaustive list but as a framework for college leaders committed to diversifying their faculties.

Address the "isms" head-on.
It is imperative for college leaders to acknowledge that the "system" has been rigged and that white people in general, and white men in particular, have been the beneficiaries of this engineering. Thus, the lack of representation of faculty of color within our colleges is not a result of their intellectual ability or academic qualifications, but rather is a direct by-product of persistent and pervasive practices which have severely limited opportunities for African Americans, Latinx, and other historically marginalized populations. This acknowledgement must further recognize that the vestiges of these practices still exist within our college structures. Therefore, college stakeholders must actively seek to expose the practices and to mitigate their effects. Concrete ways to address the "isms" can include (but are not limited to) hosting college forums around race, hiring equity consultants to facilitate college-wide professional development on issues of race and equity, providing training to address conscious and unconscious bias, and creating a clear race-conscious institutional definition for diversity and inclusion.

Invest.
Colleges must allocate resources to identify potential full-time and part-time faculty. For example, at Cosumnes River College we used state-allocated student equity dollars to hire a contract employee who reached out to graduate programs and other organizations with a high concentration of diverse populations. This individual not only recruited diverse applicants but also assisted them throughout the application process. In addition to fiscal investments, college leaders—particularly CEOs—must invest their social capital by making the hiring of diverse faculty a college strategic priority and then by asserting presidential power to suspend searches when the hiring pool does not include diverse applicants.

Disrupt.
There has to be explicit recognition that long-standing practices have not led to the hiring of racially diverse faculty. Given this reality, colleges must rigorously examine all hiring practices, including minimum qualifications, equivalency processes, content specializations, travel reimbursement policies, and hiring committee make-up.

Ensure Accountability.
There is no commitment that does not also come with accountability. If the college asserts the intention to hire diverse faculty, then it is imperative that clear accountability measures are in place to monitor progress. Accountability measures can include transparency around the demographics of current full-time and part-time faculty, clear institutional goals on the hiring of faculty of color, and annual reports to the governing board regarding the demographics of new faculty hires.

How to Get Started

Use the following Discussion Questions and Research Tasks to advance planning and action related to fostering faculty diversity as part of Guided Pathways implementation.

Discussion Questions

1. Using the data gathered under "Research Tasks" below, convene key faculty, advisors, and administrators connected to each program area at the college and discuss the following questions (*questions can be modified to address other marginalized student populations, in accord with the college's student demographics*):

    a. Is it possible for a student to complete a degree program and never have an African American or Latinx instructor?

    b. How many African American or Latinx instructors would a student likely encounter on their path?

    c. What is the percentage of students of color in a particular program compared to the percentage of faculty of color who teach in that program pathway?

    d. What are the academic outcomes for African American and Latinx students who did not have courses in their pathway taught by a faculty member of color versus outcomes for those who had diverse faculty?

    e. What are the potential unintended consequences for students of all races who never or seldom will have an instructor of color?

2. Has the college and its governing board established goals for increasing faculty diversity? If yes, what are the accountability and reporting measures associated with those goals? If no, what should the goals and associated accountability and reporting measures be?

3. What elements of the college's hiring process need review and revision in order to strengthen diversity in faculty hiring? What next steps will be taken to complete that review/revision process? Consider:

    a. Job descriptions

    b. Minimum qualifications and equivalencies

    c. Recruitment processes

    d. Hiring committee composition

    e. Interview approaches

4. What outside consulting assistance would help the college move through this work of faculty diversification?

Research Tasks

1. As suggested above, analyze faculty and student diversity in each program area at the college, beginning with the highest-enrollment programs.