Taking Action Towards Equity: Apply a Multi-Institutional Colorado Project using Practitioner-Led Data Analysis and Inquiry to your Institution

Saturday, March 28th, 2015
Introductions

The Community College of Aurora Evidence Team

The Metropolitan State University Evidence Team

Above: The University of Colorado Denver Evidence Team, Estela Bensimon, and Debbie Hanson
Worksheet

1. Clarity in language, goals, and measures is vital to effective equitable practices.

Examples of principle 1:

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2. “Equity-mindedness” should be the guiding paradigm for language and action.

Examples of principle 2:

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3. Equitable practices and policies should be framed in the contexts of students’ learning.

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4. Enacting equity requires a commitment to analyzing data, and questioning assumptions.

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5. Equity must be enacted as a principle.

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6. "Equity-mindedness" should be the guiding paradigm for language and action.
Agenda

• The Equity in Excellence Project
• Theoretical Foundations
• The Five Principles of Equity & Campus-specific examples
• Three minute reflection
• 1st Q&A
• The Five Principles In Developmental Math
• 2nd Q&A
• Conclusion
Equity in Excellence

WHO WAS INVOLVED?

- MSU Denver; the University of Colorado, Denver; and Aurora Community College
- Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE), the Colorado Community College System, the Center for Urban Education (CUE) (based out of the Rossier School of Education at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles) and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)

HOW WAS IT FUNDED?

- Ford Foundation
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Institutional Funding

WHO CONTRIBUTED TO POLICY, PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE, AND TOOLS?

- Center for Urban Education
- WICHE
The Equity Scorecard Process

- Laying the Groundwork
- Defining the Problem
- Assessing Interventions
- Implementing Solutions
- Evaluating Results

- Five-phase project
- Institutional commitment to equity
- Study of interventions
- Campus climate
- Institutional accountability over student responsibility
Equity is...

Representational Equity: The proportional participation of historically underrepresented student populations at all levels of an institution.
Equity is...

Access Equity:
Representation in academic pathways that is proportional to each racial/ethnic/SES group’s share of the total student population.

Measure Equity in Access:
Proportional representation by race and ethnicity in each system

High School Graduates by race & ethnicity in 2014-15
WICHE: Knocking at the College Door, 2013

Equitable Enrollment by race & ethnicity
Equity is...

Retention Equity: Equitable representation in retention and progress within academic pathways leading to a degree and/or transfer.

Transfer Equity: Equitable representation in pathways and programs that intensify students’ motivation and readiness for transfer.

Completion Equity: Equitable representation in attainment of degree, transfer-ready status, and actual transfer to four-year institutions.
Diversity ≠ Equity

Equality ≠ Equity
The five principles of Equity
1. Clarity in language, goals, and measures is vital to effective equitable practices.
What if full-time Hispanic/Latino students who entered in 2009 had not only achieved equity in three-year graduation/transfer rates compared to all students (34.9%) but reached the same graduation/transfer rates as their white counterparts (40.4%)?

If 10 additional Hispanic/Latinos had graduated/transferred in 2012, Aurora would have achieved this goal.

“Put your arm around a student and see to it they succeed”
2. ‘EQUITY-MINDEDNESS’ SHOULD BE THE GUIDING PARADIGM FOR LANGUAGE & ACTION.
Campus Discussions on Race & Equity
3. EQUITABLE PRACTICES AND POLICIES ARE DESIGNED TO ACCOMMODATE DIFFERENCE IN THE CONTEXTS OF STUDENTS’ LEARNING--NOT TO TREAT ALL STUDENTS THE SAME.
Aurora’s Math Classroom
4. ENACTING EQUITY REQUIRES A CONTINUAL PROCESS OF LEARNING, DISAGGREGATING DATA, AND QUESTIONING ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT RELEVANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS.
Mission Statement for Equity in Excellence Project

In the spring of 2013, Metropolitan State University of Denver began work on an exciting new initiative called Equity in Excellence with the objective of closing equity gaps in outcomes at MSU Denver and making recommendations.

Following the initial work of the Equity in Excellence Task Force and publication of the 2014 Equity Scorecard, a standing committee was created on campus to continue this work and to integrate the value of Equity in Excellence into the structure and culture of MSU Denver.

- A Steering Committee, which will meet monthly for about an hour during the 2014-15 “Celebration of Inclusive Excellence,” will provide oversight to ensure the initial Task Force recommendations are addressed and
- An Advisory Committee, which will meet at least once a semester beginning this fall, as needed. The Advisory Committee will help determine next steps and how to phase in the expansion of recommendations to other campus units over time. The Advisory Committee will be instrumental in helping to identify key personnel who can serve on smaller committees to infuse equity-consciousness into all that we do.

Equity in Excellence Task Force Recommendations
First Year Success

[Table with recommendations and data]

Inclusive Excellence Shield
Inclusive Excellence is the practice of moving beyond numeric measurements as the only strategy to promote diversity. Inclusive excellence involves embedding the practices and philosophies that encourage diversity in every aspect of an organization. Moreover, inclusive excellence involves institutionalizing systemic practices and philosophies that also achieve an educational experience of the highest quality, therefore generating a broader outcome.

More about the selection criteria
5. EQUITY MUST BE ENACTED AS A PERVERSIVE INSTITUTION- AND SYSTEM-WIDE PRINCIPLE.
University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz Medical Campus

University Strategic Priority 5
Enhance diversity university-wide and foster a culture of inclusion
3 Min. Reflection

1. Clarity in language, goals, and measures is vital to effective equitable practices.

Examples of principle 1:

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2. “Equity-mindedness” should be the guiding paradigm for language and action.

Examples of principle 2:

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3. Equitable practices and policies should be designed and implemented in the contexts of students' learning experiences.

Examples: shared in the presentation | In place or missing from my department / institution | That I can take action on in my department / institution |
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4. Enacting equity requires a continuous refutation of fault lines in data, and questioning assumptions about what equity looks like.

Examples: shared in the presentation | In place or missing from my department / institution | That I can take action on in my department / institution |
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5. Equity must be enacted as a personal and collective principle.

Examples: shared in the presentation | In place or missing from my department / institution | That I can take action on in my department / institution |
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Starting with Data and Goal Setting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>Teacher A</th>
<th>Overall Average</th>
<th>Equity Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>79.5%</td>
<td>-23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
<td>55.8%</td>
<td>-12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
<td>69.9%</td>
<td>+9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>63.8%</td>
<td>-38.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>65.9%</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
<td>-6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>298</strong></td>
<td><strong>168</strong></td>
<td><strong>56.4%</strong></td>
<td><strong>65.7%</strong></td>
<td><strong>-9.3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clarity in language, goals, and measures is vital to effective equitable practices.
Comparison of Language found in the Syllabus

Teacher A
“The 2 to 1 rule - The scope of the MAT 050 class will cover the equivalent of three years of math in a traditional pre-college classroom. For every hour spent in class, you should expect to spend an average of 2 hours outside of class preparing, studying and completing assignments...If this is not possible, you should consider making changes to your schedule.”

Teacher B
“Do your homework soon after class, while it is still fresh in your mind. Check each answer in the back of the book as you complete each problem. If you got it wrong, try it again! Remember, you can find explanations and examples in the book and in your notes. If you struggle with much of your homework, seek extra help (with me, in the tutoring room, or even online) BEFORE it is due!”

2. ‘EQUITY-MINDEDNESS’ SHOULD BE THE GUIDING PARADIGM FOR LANGUAGE & ACTION.
From the Observation of the First Day of Class

The course syllabus stated
“Attendance is Mandatory! There is no such thing as an excused absence. Up to 90% of your grade in the course will be based on your participation in activities that take place in class.”

The observation of the first day of class showed
• Students coming in late
• Texting in class
• One student leaving to answer a phone

The syllabus’s expectations and those exhibited in the classroom did not match.

2. ‘EQUITY-MINDEDNESS’ SHOULD BE THE GUIDING PARADIGM FOR LANGUAGE & ACTION.
Themes from Conversations

If I take this step for this one student, isn’t that enabling? Isn’t that giving him an advantage that others don’t have?

It’s not the students who have the skill level who are struggling in the class. It’s the students who never learned this the first time around who are struggling.

I teach adults, not school children. How can I make them come to class on time?

2. **EQUITY-MINDEDNESS** SHOULD BE THE GUIDING PARADIGM FOR LANGUAGE & ACTION.
Themes from Conversations

“In the past, I had thought of my students as adults, free to choose their own path – I gave every student equal opportunity to pass or fail, but the decision to attend class, complete assignments, study for tests, take advantage of office hours and tutoring was up to them. Who was I to tell them what to do?”

2. ‘EQUITY-MINDEDNESS’ SHOULD BE THE GUIDING PARADIGM FOR LANGUAGE & ACTION.
Maybe there is something I am doing.

“I came to see that many of my behaviors were white middle-class woman behaviors. While another person who looked like me might be able to understand that my suggestions voiced to the class as a whole were really individual mandates, those black and Hispanic males from 18-25 were hearing that it was fine with me if they chose to fail. Much like T-shirts – one size does not fit all.”

3. EQUITABLE PRACTICES AND POLICIES ARE DESIGNED TO ACCOMMODATE DIFFERENCE IN THE CONTEXTS OF STUDENTS’ LEARNING--NOT TO TREAT ALL STUDENTS THE SAME.
“So I tried something different. I got in the faces of these huge boys and told them that they were too smart to fail my class and I was not going to put up with it. Then the weirdest thing happened... They kept showing up. I would arrive at school to find them camped outside my office door, waiting for help. They moved to seats in the front of the room and started to volunteer to present problems and answer questions. They went to the tutoring center to do their homework after class. When the student I’d caught cheating on his first test and then sentenced to weekly meetings in the tutoring center and mandatory meetings with me for quiz and test corrections came to me at the end of the semester to thank me for being the first teacher who ever believed in him, I burst into tears.”

4. ENACTING EQUITY REQUIRE A CONTINUAL PROCESS OF LEARNING, DISAGGREGATING DATA, AND QUESTIONING ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT RELEVANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS.
### Success Rates Over a Two Year Period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>Teacher A</th>
<th>Overall Average</th>
<th>Equity Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>77.8%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
<td>+9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>+16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>77.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>-14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>70.8%</strong></td>
<td><strong>64.7%</strong></td>
<td><strong>+6.1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Enacting equity requires a continual process of learning, disaggregating data, and questioning assumptions about relevance and effectiveness.
Mentoring other faculty on issues of equity

“She firmly believed that her practice of treating every student the same was the only fair way to teach and that the success/failure of different groups was due to the individual behaviors/skills of the students – all conditions over which she had no control or influence. I was unable to get her to see this view as a paradigm rather than a truth.”

5. EQUITY MUST BE ENACTED AS A PERVERSIVE INSTITUTION-AND SYSTEM-WIDE PRINCIPLE.
Thank you for attending our session!

Questions, Comments?
Clarity in language, goals, and measures is vital to effective equitable practices.

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“Equity-mindedness” should be the guiding paradigm for language and action.

Examples of principle 2:

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Equitable practices and policies are designed to accommodate differences in the contexts of students’ learning—not to treat all students the same.

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Equity must be enacted as a pervasive institution- and system-wide principle.

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Reducing inequities in educational attainment by race and ethnicity will require deliberate and explicit effort. In this handout, we outline strategies for higher education institutions to take action based on the five overarching principles for ensuring equity by design*:

**Principle 1:** Clarity in language, goals, and measures is vital to effective equitable practices.

**Principle 2:** ‘Equity-mindedness’ should be the guiding paradigm for language and action.

**Principle 3:** Equitable practice and policies are designed to accommodate differences in the contexts of student’s learning—not to treat all students the same.

**Principle 4:** Enacting equity requires a continual process of learning, disaggregating data, and questioning assumptions about relevance and effectiveness.

**Principle 5:** Equity must be enacted as a pervasive institution- and system-wide principle.

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*The content in this handout was adapted from *America’s Unmet Promise: The imperative for equity in higher education*, written by Witham, K., Malcom-Piqueux, L. E., Dowd, A. C., and Bensimon, E. M. (2015). To order a copy of this publication or to learn about other AAC&U publications, visit [www.aacu.org](http://www.aacu.org).*
Clarity in language, goals, and measures is vital to effective equitable practices.

Institutions achieving Principle 1 in a strategic plan, for example, would name:

- The racial/ethnic student group(s) reforms are meant to support. (Avoid terms that continue to aggregate and hide differences in outcomes, like underrepresented minority--URM).
- The specific experience/outcome in which equity is to be achieved.
- A ‘baseline’ measurement depicting the size of current equity gaps.
- An ‘equity goal’ to close the equity gap that will be regularly monitored.
- The ‘number of additional students needed to close the gap.’ This helps frame the size of the problem for audiences and the actions needed.
- The equitable practices & policies introduced to close this gap & achieve the goal (perhaps by college, department, program, etc.)
- A plan for ongoing assessment of the impact of the proposed equitable practices & policies.

Example strategic plan text.

**Equity Gap:** African American students’ four-year graduation rate in 2014 was 37.2%. Compared to the all student graduate rate of 58.9%, this represents a -21.7 percentage point equity gap.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>African Americans</th>
<th>94</th>
<th>35 = 37.2%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled at Example College in Fall 2010</td>
<td>Graduated within four years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>1485</td>
<td>875 = 58.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Latino Students at Example College are experiencing an Equity Gap in Four-year Graduation Rates</td>
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**Equity goal:** By 2020, we will increase Latino/a student’s four-year graduation rates to 63% -- or to ideally matching the 2020 all student graduation rate.

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<tr>
<th>Envisioned Equity</th>
<th>94</th>
<th>58.9% = 37.2%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled at Example College in Fall 2020</td>
<td>Graduated within four years</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Actual</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>37.2% = 58.9%</td>
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If 20 additional African Americans had graduated in 2014, Example College would have achieved Equity.

The following strategies will be implemented to achieve this goal:

- All academic departments and student support programs will report to the provost each semester on the participation and/or success rates of students, disaggregated by race/ethnicity.
‘Equity-mindedness’ should be the guiding paradigm for language and action.

Institutions achieving **Principle 2:**

**A.** Adopt language (in syllabi, websites, admissions materials, course catalogs, advising materials, etc.) that focuses on the actions of educational institutions and systems, *not the actions of students they have been failing.*

This language:

- **Foregrounds institutional responsibilities** rather than students’ deficiencies.
- **Names positive goals** and the expectation that all students can achieve them.

**B.** Remove all language that:

- **Reflects assumptions about students’ views of their own identities** (For example, who self-identifies as “at risk” or “disadvantaged”?).
- **Blames students.**

**C.** Providing regular training for faculty and staff that:

- Includes ways to engage them in understanding how their practices may communicate assumptions that students perceive as discouraging, alienating, or even hostile.
- Builds authentic opportunities and incentives for faculty and staff to learn and engage in changing their practices.

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**Example A: Support program website language.**

**College Student Support Program**

The Pathways to Academic Success Program is designed to *make academic requirements and sequences more clear and accessible, and to remove barriers that delay students’ progress,* particularly for underrepresented students, toward *earning a credential or transferring.*

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**Example B: Support program website language.**

**College Student Support Program**

The Pathways to Academic Success Program is designed to help *at-risk students...***

....*make good choices about courses* in order to make timely progress toward earning a credential or transferring.
Equitable practice and policies are designed to accommodate differences in the contexts of student’s learning—not to treat all students the same.

Achieving equality in outcomes does not mean—in fact cannot mean—treating all students as though they are the same. Rather, equity in design means it is our responsibility to inquire into, understand, and account for the different ways students may access educational opportunities.

Institutions achieving **Principle 3:**

**A.** Assess and adapt their education models so that they:

- **Best fit local contexts and populations.**

- Allow for ongoing adaptability and flexibility by incorporating different approaches to learning.

- Create feedback loops and points of input for students to help shape their own experiences and to evaluate and improve initiatives.

**B.** Monitor programs and innovations to ensure that they do not create or exacerbate patterns of stratification. Examples of questions to monitor equity-in-design include:

- *Does the program/innovation create stratification between different student groups, for example, commuters and residential students, or between those who have regular access to the Internet and those who do not?*

- *What is the racial/ethnic representation among participating student groups (commuters, residential students, students with/without internet access) – are there racial ethnic groups that are over- or under-represented in a way that could cause further inequities?*
Enacting equity as a principle for the design of new educational models requires that we build into the process of implementation the capacity to continue to learn, question assumptions, and evaluate outcomes.

Institutions achieving **Principle 4:**

**Collect data disaggregated by race and ethnicity each semester** to determine if there are inequities in representation or outcomes.

**Conduct self-assessment** (like interviews with faculty, staff, and students) to determine actual day-to-day practices and how students experience them. *Do not be deterred by initial findings that blame students* – continue on until you discover how institutional practices are or are not serving specific student group needs.

**Use findings from self-assessment to change practices** to fit the unique needs of their students.

**Create plans to re-evaluate practice changes** after they are implemented – it’s important to see if the changes are addressing the root cause of any inequities.

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A public Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) realizes that its *Latino students are retained at lower rates than other students.* Administrators survey first-year students and find that many Latino students express a lack of awareness about academic and social supports available to them. Administrators also survey faculty and professional staff and find that many on campus believe that the university “does enough” to support Latino students, but that the students themselves do not make time to seek out support. The institution redesigns the summer orientation program so that students and their families have an opportunity to meet with representatives from various student support services. The institution also implements ongoing professional development for faculty and student affairs staff on cultural inclusivity.
Equity must be enacted as a pervasive institution- and system-wide principle

Equity has to be a pervasive quality of institutional practice and policy. At Institution’s achieving Principle 5:

- Equity initiatives permeate all areas of the institution, including “core” management operations such as budgeting, hiring and promotion policies, assessment, and internal accountability structures and indicators.

- There is clear, compelling, and consistent messaging about the urgency of reducing disparities through equitable policies and practices – and these messages are adapted to the needs of unique audiences.

- Messages about the importance of achieving equity are communicated from all levels of campus leadership.

- Equity is an explicit dimension of the framing and communication of all new models and model-reforms (e.g., alongside economic or other rationales). Equity does not appear as an “add-on” goal buried within the messaging about an initiative.