

ASCC  
JULY 2020

# SENATE

# Rostrum







“I’m no longer accepting  
 the things I cannot change...  
 I’m changing the things I cannot accept.”  
 – Angela Davis

Front Cover Photos clockwise from top left: Dr. Erick Bell. Civil rights march on Washington, D.C. / [WKL]. | Library of Congress. Dr. Nathan Jones. Lance Heard , "Graduation". Rachel Hastings, "Mourning", Photo submitted by Dr. Nathan Jones. Adrienne Brown, Donald Essex faculty at Chaffey College, and Brittany Gray faculty at LA Harbor College. Son of Dr. Nyree Berry. Valerie A. Udeozor. Protest photo by Julian Wan on Unsplash. This Page Photos left to right. Top Row: LaTonya Parker, "Togetherness". Dr. Flora Brown, a faculty emeritus of Fullerton College, standing before a solidarity mural in Belfast Ireland. Katrina Taylor. Briana Moss, LA Harbor College Alum, Adrienne Brown, Andrew Horsely LA Harbor College Alum at the LACCD Black Graduation Celebration (all three have AfroLatinx ancestry). Bottom Row: Dr. Erick Bell. Photo submitted by Dr. Nathan Jones. Lance Heard. Son of Dr. Nyree Berry, Photo submitted by Dr. Nathan Jones. [5/34] Image from the George Floyd vigil held Sunday evening, June 7, 2020, at the Rotary Pavilion in Gastonia. [Stephanie Felts/Special to The Gaston Gazette.].

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# Foreword

July 2020

*We are honored to bring you this special edition of the ASCCC Rostrum. In light of the events of recent months which has once again surfaced our country's ongoing issues of systemic racism, accountability, and justice to the forefront, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges Executive Committee, and our Equity and Diversity Action Committee (EDAC) and Faculty Development Leadership Committee (FDLC), engaged Black faculty from around the state to provide their voices on topics ranging from personal experiences to necessary changes in disciplines, institutional constructs, and hiring practices. These articles are a powerful call to action to all faculty within our system. We hope that you find strength, hope, and unity as we come together collectively to listen to the stories and voices. We hope that you use the articles in this Rostrum as resources to continue to engage in the work of addressing and educating ourselves, our students, and our institutions. Lastly, we must not be afraid to use our own power, privilege, and position to change those systems that we have the power to change.*

*In solidarity,*

Dolores Davison, President, ASCCC

Krystinne Mica, Executive Director, ASCCC

# SYSTEMIC RESISTANCE: Inherited Acts of Self-Defense

by **Dr. Rachel N. Hastings**, MiraCosta College

**T**he last thing my father told me before I left for college was, “Don’t forget about the Black man.”

I then stepped off our front porch and walked straight into the intellectual lion’s den.

No amount of scholarships could have prepared me for the type of education I would undergo.

I was thankful to be raised in an environment that taught me how to be politically gangsta. My mother said, use your words.

My father said, don’t hit first.

Both of them believed in standing your ground.

I took my first college class at fifteen.

The Humanities and International Studies Program I graduated from schooled me on the connections between literature, culture, and politics.

Over the years, I learned how to verbally spar against the gaslighting and microaggressions from classmates and colleagues.

I navigated the hidden curriculum of how to teach your teachers—and bosses, to respect all of who you are. And smile.

I battled against personal acts of student and collegial aggression for accurately assessing lack of capability. Who did I think I was? Telling someone they were culturally illiterate and professionally incompetent. And in such a nice way.

I’ve been called a Black bitch.

Had my food undercooked at Midwestern restaurants.

Been surveilled by police officers in convenient stores.

Had a temporary dean drive by my classroom in a golf cart, just to peer in and make sure I was teaching. On the day after I had won an exemplary teaching award.

My intellectual journey has served me many battle wounds.

But the ones that have taken the longest to heal are those that involve Black men.

The history of my professional life as a Black female professor in higher education is intimately intertwined with the death of Black men at the hands of the police.

The same year I was hired at Southwestern College in 2012, Trayvon Martin was shot and killed by George Zimmerman.

In 2013, I resurrected the Black Student Union.

Just in time to mourn Michael Brown in 2014.

And Freddie Gray.

And Walter Scott.

We offered many libations during those years, as we honored the lost lives of people who looked like us. Student stories began to pour out. A never-ending stream of self-knowledge about Blackness, policing and othering coming together to shed light on cycles of criminalization and systems of violent abuse.

I shared my own story in 2015. Of how I became a loved one to an incarcerated individual. How it lit a fire in my soul that I could not dampen.

In February 2016, I curated an art exhibit dedicated to sparking a dialogue about the Cycle of Criminalization plaguing Black Men in the United States. We made an homage of paper-mache headstones for the 115 Black men and women killed by the police during the previous year. They became the backdrop to many of my performances in the years to come.

During one of my public lectures about the relationship between the pre-school to prison pipeline and our police relations, the San Diego police shot and killed Alfred Olango. Half the room stood up and left to join the growing protests.

By 2018, I was a tenured professor and a single mother of three Black children. We watched the news together when Stephon Clark was killed. And mommy had to explain that this was the same neighborhood that she grew up in.



I left Southwestern that year to join MiraCosta College. In 18 months, I proved that I was an exceptional colleague worthy of early tenure. The week our Governing Board made it official, COVID-19 forced us to close our doors to the public we served.

And then the Minneapolis police killed George Floyd. And Blackness bled globally, like a pandemic virus spreading panic into the white imagination.

This Black fury began to grow in me. To be stuck in the house. Forced to endure the savage rhetorical violence spewing from all platforms and mediums. An oversaturation of racial realism shining from the living room television, looming over me like a spotlight. Calling on me to serve in some way other than marching in the streets.

I started to make more paper-mache headstones. I spread warm gooey glue over recycled Amazon boxes and layered them with gray packing paper. It became a form of therapy. A type of mourning that allows me to create and rage. Create and rage. Create and rage.

We paper-mache boxes as a family art project. My 7-year-old daughter is making an armoire for her stuffed elephant, Ella. She's fancy like that. She asks me if I am making my boxes for "the men." I smile. Yes, I am.

I start to tell my daughter the stories of these lost lives. I tell her about Trayvon Martin. Michael Brown. Tamir Rice. I tell her about George Floyd, and why people are protesting. We talk about racism and anti-Blackness. We dip our fingers into the glue and paste pieces of paper onto our recycled boxes. I see her thoughtfully digesting everything I tell her. And then she changes the subject to how her armoire is going to have double doors that open and close.

The next day, I am stacking our paper-mache headstones neatly in the garage. My 2-year old keeps coming behind me, knocking them down. Like blocks. I rebuild them. One by one. Only to have him crush them as a whole. This is the cycle I aim to break.

My daughter is on the phone with her "best friend." My best friend—another tenured Blackademic female in higher ed, happens to be sheltering in with us for the month. She overhears something in the girls' conversation that triggers her. Something about protesting. Or looting. Or something. She couldn't quite hear, so she discreetly follows my daughter to eavesdrop like the good village sister she is.

Later, she enters the garage.

“Girrrrrlllll, them babies...” and then she tells me of how my daughter navigated her first conversation about race in America. She tells me how my daughter’s friend was talking about the looting and how horrible it was. How my daughter, Anyah, gently corrected her friend on the details of what was happening.

“No, I know what happened,” explained Anyah. “There was a man named George Floyd. And he was a good man. And the police killed him. And that’s why everyone is upset. And protesting. Because the police killed him...”

A brief pause in the conversation. And then, “Oh! Did you know we’re gonna get a new president?! I hope we get a new president.”

I smack my hand against my face. My eyes open wide with surprise. I can’t believe what I’m hearing. I’m laughing and crying at the same time, as I listen to my friend tell me how proud she is of the way Anyah handled that situation.

I think about how important it is for my children to be able to address these issues. How my daughter has been her own advocate since the moment she entered preschool.

Asking people not to touch her hair.

Listening to the kids tell her that her afro puffs were crazy.

Being called a monkey.

Listening to her white “friend” tell her not to touch her because her skin is Black.

Being told her skin is different.

More than once.

By a classmate.

Being more than just observant.

But also, judgmental.

My 7-year-old daughter is no novice when it comes to defending her culture. One of her teachers looked me dead in my face and told me that 4-year olds don’t know how to exhibit racist behaviors.

There’s a reason I homeschool my children. And it isn’t COVID-19.



It's now mid-June in the year 2020. I decide to leave my house after about 10 days of solid sheltering in. I am taking the kids to get McDonald's as a special treat. And also trying to make sure the battery in my car doesn't die on me from lack of being used. I haven't filled my tank since March.

I turn my head to the left, and I see that my neighbor has added a Trump 2020 flag to the library of patriotic symbols flying proudly from his roof. A Chicago Cubs flag. An American Flag. And now, a Trump 2020 flag. I purse my lips and think about the cemetery of headstones in my garage.

I have not forgotten about the Black men. I have not forgotten about the Black women. About the Black people. Across all of our differences. Who are still fighting.

I am still fighting. Every day. For freedom.

# Shifting from Passion to Purpose: Moving Past Our Emotions So We Can Do What's Right All the Time

by **Erick O. Bell**, Las Positas College

**T**here are few sayings that make most people shake their heads (often in disgust), like the phrase “find your passion.” For many, pursuing passion means sacrificing your livelihood. For instructors though, we are part of the few who can proudly say, *I have found my passion*. Whether we are teaching English, Women’s Studies, or Accounting. We love what we do, and we love sharing our expertise with others.

The definition of passion is “strong and barely controllable emotion” or “a state or outburst of strong emotion” or “a thing arousing excitement.” In all cases, passion speaks to our emotions or a feeling we are experiencing at a certain point in time.

As an African American 45-year-old man, I find myself exhausted and frustrated with another murder of someone who looks like me or looks like my son at the hands of law enforcement. I am even more exhausted and frustrated by the outpouring of “support” that is plastered everywhere. I walk down the streets and see storefronts with strategically placed signs saying “Black Lives Matter.” These signs are right next to the sign that reads “We are still open for takeout.” It makes my cynical mind wonder: Are these signs really code for “please don’t break my window --I’m just trying to run a business here.”

I have seen this level of support before. In 2014, I saw the same outrage and outpouring of support when police officers murdered Michael Brown. Then, nothing. In 2016, police officers murdered Philando Castile with his girlfriend’s 4-year-old daughter in the back-seat. This was followed by outrage and outpouring of support. Then, nothing. In 2018, Botham Jean, an accounting student who parlayed his education into a position with one of the four largest accounting firms in the world, was murdered in his own home at the hands of a police officer. Again, outrage and outpouring of support. Then, nothing.

I cannot change the world, I cannot change the country, and maybe not even my community. But, I can change myself. I can change the environment that I choose to work within (an environment that I proudly share *is my “passion”*). It is imperative that all California community college instructors take a long hard look at themselves. We each should take a personal inventory of our biases and what experiences have led us to those biases. Then, we need to take the next important, and painful step, of aligning how our biases have contributed to the systemic racism and disenfranchisement of African Americans in education. According to EdSource, “Blacks comprise about 6 percent of California’s population between ages 18 and 24. Compared to that, black students are underrepresented at UC (2 percent) and CSU (4 percent) while close to representation at community colleges (7 percent) and private non-profit colleges (6 percent)” (Gordon, 2019). This tells me that most African American students pursuing a college education are in the California community college system, and we have a direct line to provide support above and beyond hanging a door sign or throwing up our fist at a protest.

But alas, I am not holding my breath for my non-African American colleagues to take on this challenge in a meaningful and sustainable way. Why, because we are still teaching out of “passion.”

Passion is an emotion, and we all know emotions change directions the wind. We need more instructors in the classroom because of purpose. Teachers everywhere had to pivot on a dime in March 2020 to transition learning to an online format. I had a hard time accepting this transition and spent the first two weeks thinking about whether we would be back on campus in 4 or 6 weeks. I was very passionate about teaching accounting, but I realized that my passion (or emotions) were stoked when I saw a student’s eyes light up when she connected the concept, or a student raise his hand with excitement to share a current event that relates to the accounting topic being discussed. If I was going to finish the Spring 2020 semester strong, I needed to dig deeper.

And I did. I looked past my passion and called on my purpose. I have been given a responsibility to encourage students to pursue careers in accounting. If students choose not to pursue this career, then my responsibility is to make them knowledgeable about the language of business to help them be successful, regardless of the career they pursue. Equally important, my purpose is to stand in front of the classroom as a 45-year-old African American man and speak my truth. Reminding students that success is not a singular path but requires many twists and turns and dead-ends and “woulda-coulda-shoulda’s.”

My call to action for all my colleagues is to shift from passion to purpose. Let's understand the position we have been given and the significant opportunity we can provide to so many African American college students. When we start living this truth, we will not need to hang door signs that say "Black Lives Matter." Our actions will demonstrate our purpose—and the message will be clear, consistent, and credible.

#### REFERENCES:

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# Can You See Me?

## The Realities of a Life of a Black Educator

by **Dr. Sam Foster**, ASCCC South Representative

**R**ecently, a group of Orange County residents showed up at a meeting of the county board of supervisors furious because of an order that requires them all to wear masks. While the exact reason for their resistance in the middle of a pandemic is unclear, perhaps they feel that masks conceal who they really are and even violates their freedoms. I could not help but recognize the irony. I, and many others like me in America, are forced to wear a mask that says Black man. A mask adorned with suspicion, stereotypes, injustice, and disrespect.

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A summer day during graduate school, practically starving after a long day of research at UCLA, I was heading back to Orange County. I stopped at a little coffee shop that only took cash. I had none, so seeing my bank in the distance and trying to avoid fees, I headed into the Beverly Hills area. Parked in front of the bank was a police car with an officer sitting inside. I tried to get his attention to ask if there was an ATM at this bank. Unsuccessful, I decided to look on my own. I noticed a second police car arrived. By the time I approached the front door of the bank, a third car had arrived. Late at night on this quiet street, I knew I was in danger. I headed back to my car just as a fourth vehicle arrived. As I carefully pulled away, I was flanked by a police car on either side with an additional one behind me. To a neutral observer, I looked like a researcher dressed in jeans and a shirt with a car full of books, but they could not see past the mask. All they could see was a threat. They escorted me to the border of Beverly Hills before leaving.

Why did I leave the area? From an early age, I learned that regardless of my education or status, if I am in an affluent area at night, I am considered a threat and my life may be in danger. The fact that I am trained to know *that* speaks volumes.

I remember shortly after I got a full-time tenure-track position, someone from the division greeted me in the hall and welcomed me to the college.

“It must have been really easy for you to get this job,” they said.

“Why?” I asked.

“Because you are Black,” they responded.

The fact that I have a Ph.D. in chemistry does not matter, nor the fact that I was a National Science Foundation Fellow who also developed a curriculum to help underrepresented minorities prepare for the MCAT, nor did my interview itself matter. Apparently, all I had to do was put Black on the application and that was it. Just that easy. Even in academia all they could see was the mask. My accomplishments didn't matter. Thank you for the welcome.

That was many years ago. Do those things still happen today? As an ASCCC Executive Committee member, I was presenting at an institute. On my way to lunch someone stopped me and told me how much they enjoyed my session. After a little while, it was clear that I did not make the presentation to which he was referring; it was someone else: the only other Black male presenter. Although we were dressed differently and have somewhat different builds, it may be reasonable that someone may not have noticed even after spending 75 minutes with the presenter. However, the other Black male had a shaved head, and I have a full head of hair. I wear glasses and that presenter does not. After sitting through an entire presentation, all the participant saw was a Black man? Couldn't he see beyond society's mask? I do not think he was a bad person. In fact, the session he attended was on equity.

One not too uncommon experience that many Black men share is being pulled over by the police for a DWB (driving while black). In one case, I was driving through an area in eastern Los Angeles county with three white friends, when suddenly I was pulled over by the police. The officer explained that the reason he pulled me over was because I was going 40 in a 45 mile per hour zone.

He kept asking if I had guns and knives and where they were located. I assured him I had none. As I handed him my license and registration, he demanded that I get out of the car, his hand firmly on his weapon (as my friends noticed with impunity). As he “dropped” my license on the ground and asked me to pick it up, it was clear how little respect he had for me. He pulled the other passengers out of the car and searched the car for drugs that he “knew” I had, and he called for backup. Unable to find anything, he threatened to impound

the car and take it apart to find the drugs. He ultimately got another call and informed me that I had “gotten away with it this time!” My friends were incensed and demanded action. How could this happen? I just calmly explained that they had just experienced a DWB and that this was all too common. Even though I had described such episodes in the past, it was not until they saw it first-hand that they could really see the injustice.

Many in society, although somewhat sympathetic to the inequities of some systems such as the legal system, saw little need for systemic change as their views were filtered by society’s stereotypes and its justification for more disparate and aggressive treatment of Black men. But seeing these injustices with their own eyes, including the killing of George Floyd at the hands of police, seems to have driven home the realities of injustice far more than years of conversation ever could. Now people of many races and backgrounds that have joined the Black Lives Matter movement in solidarity are demanding systemic change. I am hopeful.

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A number of years ago I spent some time in an area that had little diversity.

I remember a friend saying to me, “Sam, how come you are not like other Black people?”

“How many other Black people do you know well?” I asked.

“Actually none,” he replied.

“Then how do you know I am not like other Black people?”

Perhaps, that is the problem at its core. Society must get to know Black people. They must learn of our history including our accomplishments, abuses and suffering; of our overwhelming contribution to the wealth and prominence of this country; of the inventions that have made our lives simpler; of our contributions to art, literature, science and technology through the centuries. As educators, we can begin the process of introducing America to Black people through our curriculum. They must learn to see beyond the mask that society imposes that simply says Black man and all the negative stereotypes that it implies.

Get to know me. I am many things. I am the son of a strong Black woman, a Ph.D. scholar and an educator, and an optimist among many other things. And yes, I am a proud Black Man.

# Affirming Black Male Excellence

by **Abdimalik A. Buul Ed.D.**, Professor of Counseling, San Diego City College  
**Trevor L. Bracket M.S.**, Professor of Counseling, Pasadena City College  
**Jeremy E. Hart Ed.D.**, Professor of Counseling, Mt. San Antonio College  
and **Christopher V. Williams M.S.**, Professor of Counseling, Riverside City College

**T**he African American Male Education Network and Development (A<sup>2</sup>MEND) organization is a non-profit organization comprised of African American male educators who utilize their scholarly and professional expertise to foster institutional change throughout the educational system—for the sole purpose of augmenting success rates for African American males. Recently, the organization has commenced and facilitated a series of free webinars intended to succor California Community College faculty, staff, and administrators in navigating onerous discourse pertaining to anti-blackness and police brutality in the wake of the tragic deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and the lynching of Black men in California. A<sup>2</sup>MEND has a wealth of knowledge and experience. Therefore, the organization is uniquely positioned not only to facilitate, but to lead this particular conversation as we collectively transition from a moment of avowal to a movement of solidarity and sustainable change. For this reason, during these trying times—A<sup>2</sup>MEND has established and proffered dynamic and systemic programming focused on cultivating and advancing the inherent discernment that Black minds not only matter, but they deserve to be optimized to their full potential.

This is not a novel or revolutionary agenda; it has been well over thirteen years since the inception of the first annual A<sup>2</sup>MEND Summit that convened hundreds of Black educators and students with the overarching goal of investigating best practices for constructing institutional and systemic change. For years, conference themes, keynote presenters, and workshops have both tackled the systemic and institutional barriers of the educational system and have proposed copious strategies to keep the proverbial knee off the necks of Black students and faculty. The common hallmark of these sessions is the habitual call to action that ensures this work remains at the forefront.



Leading by example, the A<sup>2</sup>MEND program has been an instrument of change. For over a decade, the program has piloted a transformational mentorship program that pairs Black community college males with A<sup>2</sup>MEND board members as well as student charter programs in thirteen California community colleges. A<sup>2</sup>MEND unequivocally believes the impact of mentorship, identity development, and academic support for African American males in higher education are critical factors in their academic success and professional trajectory. Effective mentorship incorporates affirming a sense of belonging for mentees in addition to providing guidance for crucial issues such as career choices.

A<sup>2</sup>MEND has been a trailblazer in pushing the envelope for justice and equality. For many, the phrase “Black Lives Matter” is conspicuously inadequate. We know Black lives matter. Therefore, going beyond the rudimentary baseline, A<sup>2</sup>MEND encourages and galvanizes others to postulate that Black lives not only matter; they should be affirmed, valued, and respected. Propelling and elevating the discourse to a deeper level of consciousness, A<sup>2</sup>MEND mentees have taken ownership of their educational spaces from forming a sense of belonging to belonging. Through outings, skill-building workshops, and cultural enrichment trips to African countries, the men of A<sup>2</sup>MEND invest in the cultivation and maturation of African American males. These engagements foster higher levels of self-efficacy, motivation, and elevated long-term goals.

The A<sup>2</sup>MEND mentor/mentee relationship is one of reciprocity and personal growth for both parties. Mentees value the time and efforts put forth by A<sup>2</sup>MEND towards their success in life. As the nation suffers from anti-black misogyny and the irrational fear of Black men, this mentorship program provides solace in its ability to help transform the lives of so many Black men. This mentorship program has displayed extraordinary results evidenced by distributing nearly \$500,000 in scholarships and mentoring over 400 Black males. These extraordinary results include justice impacted students transferring to UC Berkeley, Moorhouse, Harvard, and various other Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU).

Most recently, the mentees completed a series of spring workshops stemming from mental health to employment readiness and technological trainings on platforms such as Canvas and Zoom. The mentee program is one component that A<sup>2</sup>MEND board members and mentees have committed to almost every Saturday this spring. In addition, understanding the saliency of identity development not only to the self-efficacy of our students but to their overall self-esteem, mentors and mentees have travelled to the continent of Africa

for the past several years. These educational excursions have affirmed the African part in the term African American, as mentees have returned with a sense of purpose and drive that is unparalleled.

Culturally relevant pedagogy taps the surface of student success when reflected in the curriculum. Joshua Daniel, a mentee from Antelope Valley College, describes his experience: “I see my people in a different light compared to others. I didn’t read about the churches of Lalibela from a book, I didn’t hear about Gorée Island from a friend, I was there. My feet touched sacred soil. Years of colonization have stripped our Mother continent of her resources. But they can’t strip a mind that is founded on African principles.” A<sup>2</sup>MEND seeks to actualize this pedagogy by creating global change agents who are not only deeply rooted in their identity, but who are motivated and prepared to help create sustainable change in the world.

In 2015, the A<sup>2</sup>MEND organization decided it was time to elevate their passion for increasing retention and success rates for African American male students to new heights. The preponderance for increased equity and equality for African American students within the country and particularly in community college campuses has continuously been a point of emphasis for the A<sup>2</sup>MEND organization and the state Chancellor’s Office. In an unprecedented display of advocacy, the A<sup>2</sup>MEND board decided it was time to take immediate action and created the first ever Student Charter Division and approved five community colleges to have student charters on their campuses. The goal of the Student Charter Division is to provide a structure that directly supports the social and academic success of African American students on campus. With the creation of each student charter, A<sup>2</sup>MEND designates a coordinator who is responsible for working specifically with Charter Advisors and Campus Administration.

Currently, the A<sup>2</sup>MEND organization has thirteen student charters and has continued to approve five new student charters a year. A<sup>2</sup>MEND is hands-on and disseminates resources to support every newly formed student charter. The organization takes initiative by providing advisors with a recruitment curriculum and a three-day training seminar. The ultimate goal and the mission are to create a space that allows students to connect with one another, while also forming a lasting network of relationships with other Student Charter Advisors around the state. In the effort to build community, students are also invited and encouraged to participate in numerous conferences throughout the year, such as the annual A<sup>2</sup>MEND Summit and annual Leadership Conference. These charters have had a profound

impact on the development and maturation process of Black males. Joseph Merchain, former foster youth student and A<sup>2</sup>MEND Charter president at Pasadena City College stated, “It has helped me develop in ways that I could never imagine from navigating the college process, streets, and workforce, and now I can provide those skills to those that don’t have it. I have received, and I want to give it back.”

The impact of this work is not merely exclusive to students. For faculty counseling members and A<sup>2</sup>MEND board members, working within the California Community College system—these efforts are not circumscribed to our students alone, but our colleagues as well. The profound learning that exists in interacting with Black males allows us as practitioners and educators the opportunity to transition from theory to practice. When young Black male administrators Dr. Edward C. Bush and Dr. Scott Thayer founded A<sup>2</sup>MEND fourteen years ago, they envisioned augmenting the deficit mindset that has had deleterious impacts on our Black males by creating an asset approach celebrating their brilliance and challenging institutions to do so as well. This is how we transition from compliance-equity curriculum to revolutionary transformative practices.

In the midst of a pandemic within a pandemic: Covid-19 and racism—our Black males deserve an antidote that is potent enough not only to survive, but to thrive. A<sup>2</sup>MEND is at the forefront of this community healing work and encourages you to visit our various social media platforms and websites to partake in ensuring that Black minds are affirmed, valued, and respected. This summer and fall semester, A<sup>2</sup>MEND will host a series of webinars to share practical steps in ensuring Black male excellence is affirmed within the California Community College system.

# Do I Matter?

by **Dr. Elizabeth Craigg-Walker**, Part-time Instructor, Area C

**M**y great grandfather took a train ride north from his plantation in Texas to Indiana. His son, my grandfather, had the same passion to take trains and would become an engineer and a licensed Sears carpenter. My mother, one of ten children and the only daughter, was told by her father that she had two options: become a teacher or become a nurse. At 16 years old, she went to Indiana State University to study Latin, and she would spend her life as a high school Latin teacher. She pushed me to be perfect.

As a 16-year-old freshman at Pepperdine University, I was happy to be out of the house and in college, but I was not prepared for being singled out in class. I was not prepared to live in the margins of academia, but in the margins is where I existed. I pledged Alpha Kappa Alpha off campus, and it became my lifeline to tolerating being in school. I missed out on networking in school because I only networked off campus with other Black fraternities. I even went on a study abroad program, but my all-white roommates were afraid of me. Within one week of living there, I had a mandatory meeting, where they all sat down and told me they were afraid. They said I didn't say anything to them inappropriately, I didn't do anything wrong, but it was my mere presence that caused them so much fear that they didn't want to be in the same room with me. I was forced to move in with the only other Black girl. Incidents like this happened consistently throughout my years in higher education. Essentially, you live in the margins.

I have a bachelor's degree, three master's degrees, and a Ph.D. and other certifications, and I have had all of two Black professors. Both of them changed my life as they helped me visualize my career of being a college professor.

I have been a part-time faculty member in English and political science for 13 years. I have had countless evaluations, and all of them have been outstanding at all nine campuses where teach. I have heard every reason for not being offered a full-time position, and at every single campus, I have been on countless committees. I have been involved in everything I have been permitted to do, and still I have been told, "You could still do more,"



even though they hire someone that they really have no idea of what that person will do for their campus. Instead they hire people whom they are more comfortable being around – someone who is not Black. I have never given up, as I am constantly thinking of innovative ways to improve and to attract people’s attention because I have been taught to work harder and better. Yet, I have had a white colleague who was hired instead of me say, “You do too much when you interview, which is why you never get hired full-time.” I don’t know what that means because my mother instilled in me that I need to work extremely hard in everything I do. I am a perfectionist, and I don’t feel that I have the privilege not to “do too much” or to be mediocre. I am not mediocre, but maybe I should be.

But as a Black faculty member, in many cases, I am the only one or maybe the one of two in the room. So, I am consistently confused with the other Black person who looks nothing like me. But, even as a part-time faculty member, I am marginalized until I become full-time and can be fully heard. I cannot sit in every meeting and help create curriculum and propose programs. I cannot even advise clubs. What is even worse is being invisible. I attended a professional development conference recently, and all of the white faculty who were presenters spoke about the greatness of AB705, displaying Black and Brown student images in every presentation to demonstrate how they were able to diminish the educational gap. Then, on the final day, one of them spoke about Du Bois’s *double consciousness*, and used the phrase “something like that” as a flippant comment, which was not meant to be disrespectful, but I looked at the hundreds of faculty members in the room, and being one of ten Black people in the room, I was furious.

In academia, we are forced to learn and read about white, European history and literature, while the wider community is not forced to read African American scholars. How do I know? That was my educational experience. If I had no interest in learning about Black history or Black scholarship, then I would know less than nothing because it is simply not assigned. This colleague’s flippant response that seemed innocent enough is one of many incidents happening often in California’s higher education system, a community college system that has an over representation of Black students. In fact, one of my students wrote in an essay saying that college curriculum “teaches students, that doing what the negroes do, will quite literally, turn you into a negro yourself, and be the outcast of society.” The students in our community colleges that have a 75% white faculty notice that they do not see themselves in front of the room, and they do not see themselves in the curriculum.

For seven years, there has been a push to help eliminate implicit bias within the faculty. Every semester, I sit in professional development, and I am not tired of it, but I am traumatized because some of the things that my colleagues say is disheartening and hurtful. In fact, one faculty member stated in an AB705 meeting, “We are finally helping *them* succeed?” Again, being the only Black person in the room, I asked, “If *they* are being helped now, then what have *we* been doing before?” The room fell silent, and no one responded, as they moved on to the next topic.

To be frank, I cannot imagine what students are experiencing. Well, I can because I was one of these students, just on a different campus. I was silenced and voiceless. So, I think of the students, as I keep coming to these professional development meetings muting my pain to edify full-time faculty who in large majority are white. I do not mind having these discussions if full-time Black faculty are represented at least in adequate numbers of the student population. Since we are not being hired, then we are left with explaining why our students should be heard when we are still muted.

I had a student recently ask me, “Why do you even stay in this profession when academia doesn’t want Black folks?” You would have thought I shared my personal experience with this student, but I haven’t. I have thought of this question so often over the years.

At one of colleges where I work, I once had sheriff deputies follow me for a whole semester without me knowing. I was pulled over on a Friday afternoon. They told me that I was driving a nice expensive car and that they wanted to inform me that other people drive my car pretty fast, which is hard to believe since there were bumps all over the campus, and it would have wrecked my sports car. They wanted to create a list of all the drivers of my type of car. I told them no. They wanted to give my passenger a ticket, but I refused to give the sheriff the guy’s driver’s license. He was 19, and he was mortified. He was my husband’s golf mentee, and I refused to let him be harmed, so I made the officer speak only to me. After seven or eight officers showed up and 45 minutes later, I was given a front-plate ticket. The next week, the vice president called me into the office; he had spoken to the officers and told them and the chief to apologize. The vice president asked me why I didn’t say I was a professor? I told them I shouldn’t have to. I received no apology, and I never drove or parked on campus again.

So, why do I teach? Because I believe I matter, and my voice is important. But I am not sure if I will stay because my Blackness is something many of my peers cannot seem to

become comfortable with having around on a full-time basis. I am not sure if it matters to have dozens more evaluations. I am not sure how many more committees I need to join. I am not sure if being innovative in designing mock courses for interviews or having nuanced course design will matter. I am not sure doing professional development and even designing professional development for my peers matters.

To my student, I am sadly debating leaving the profession and moving on to something else because I am exhausted of being undervalued, ignored, and disregarded by my peers, exhausted with the hope that one day they will give me a chance to further serve as their full peer.

# Gitcho' Mind Right:

## Why Confronting Unconscious Bias Must Become an Actionable Item

by Professor Katrina Taylor, Los Angeles Southwest College

**T**he counselor at an inner-city middle school tells an 8th grade girl that she will become an unwed teenage mother and dropout.

A high school teacher only encourages the girl to apply for scholarships to 2-year colleges, because 4-year schools were just too hard to get into.

The girl, now a woman, works her way to a mid-sized private university. She takes a Russian Political History class for fun. One day, in the middle of a lecture about Russian/Chechen relations, the professor attempts to clarify the relationship between the warring nations by asserting, "Well, basically the Chechens are Russia's "N-word". Later when the woman brings the concern to the Dean, the Dean asks the woman, "Well, what do you want me to do about it?"

At the same university, the woman becomes a decorated member of the national championship speech team. She expresses interest in two events known for their academic rigor. Her coaches literally laugh out loud in her face. One of them says incredulously, "You? Yeah, right."

The woman is accepted into a graduate program, ranked in the top five of the country. She thrives through the rigorous challenges she is required to meet. Every week she drops into her program head's office to excitedly discuss what she is learning. He will later tell her that he's always been afraid of her because of the story she wrote in her admissions essay almost two years prior.

The woman becomes an adjunct professor. At one institution, she becomes skilled at quickly identifying which male student is going to be a thorn in her side. Two other students plot to get grades changed by launching a credibility attack against her;



administration quickly takes their side, despite evidence contrary to the accusations. Another student physically threatens her. While another disrupts a class to proclaim, “I guess they let anyone teach from Compton.”

On a separate campus, the woman is subjected to a colleague who likes to assert power in the presence of others. Her own authority, intellect, and competency are constantly challenged in the presence of students as well as colleagues from other institutions. This particular colleague also needed the woman to affirm her fragility as she literally cried about “being judged for the color of her skin.”

The woman is now a tenured professor at a predominately Black and Hispanic institution. She hears well-meaning colleagues refer to students as “lazy,” “not smart,” “crazy,” “acting like crackheads,” “loud,” “disrespectful,” “these poor people,” and “some of them will never get beyond [our campus].”

My journey through academia reflects the ways in which non-Black people impede progress through deceptive acts of violence. While not physical, each instance carries the extraordinary weight of oppressive actions which cause mental and emotional harm. I call these acts deceptive because on the surface they may seem harmless: an act of tough love, encouragement, academic freedom, jesting, protecting students, or leadership; yet, behind each instance, a more sinister force propels these actions forward: racialized biases.

It has never been lost on me that some of the worst offenders have been well-meaning white liberals, who pride themselves in “reaching back” to work with poor and underserved communities. At times, some people were working with and advocating for programs which explicitly targeted students of color. I have always been acutely aware of available resources put into place and, without contradiction, painfully aware of the barriers blocking access to them.

As people have taken to the streets in protest of the brutalization and outright murder of Black, Indigenous and other People of Color (BIPOC), as organizers put forth strategies to dismantle the oppressive systems of racism, as institutions are responding with promises to produce changes worthy of the wrongs enacted upon BIPOC lives, I am struck by the disconnect between the political and personal. To change or create new rules of an organization is political. To throw money at a problem is political. What more can we do to address the ways in which **our worlds collide** interpersonally?

Philosopher (yes, that is what he was) James Baldwin once mused that it is easier for people to cry than it is for them to change. Yet, what if we were brave enough to challenge that notion? What I propose is that in addition to the political: increasing funding, providing equitable programming, diversifying spaces of leadership, etc., that there are also personal commitments and action plans put forth which require people to do the internal work. For example, the implementation of consistent accountability driven trainings designed to eliminate issues of privilege and racial bias, the creation of environments which celebrate diversity beyond seasonal holidays or the existence of the LGBTQIA+ communities, and the utilization of “safe spaces,” where it is more efficient to call out stereotypes and other interpersonal grievances in the workplace. We must institutionalize personal accountability plans which promote growth and not just the practice of obeying the rules. For me, this is where the linchpin lies. This is what ties all our efforts together to make them work.

What does it matter if the resources are put into place but the people in charge of distributing them harbor ugliness in their minds and spirits? The same white man who confessed to being afraid of me, a Black woman from a poor neighborhood, is the same man who made sure I received a scholarship from the graduate school’s diversity assistance program. In essence, every single instance highlighted at the beginning of this article occurred as a consequence of racialized biases.

If we are going to seriously move the needle on increasing diversity, inclusion, and other equitable opportunities in academia (and of course, the world), we must be able to call the people who work in these institutions to task. There is so much work being conducted which can help people identify and better understand their biases, in order to change them. For instance, the work of Dr. Jennifer Eberhardt, a social psychologist and professor at Stanford University, whose research on the consequences of racial bias helped to decrease racial profiling in the online neighborhood communication hub Nextdoor by 75%, simply by forcing people to focus on behaviors and not just biases. Now is the time to tap into all available resources and attack the issues from all fronts.

A dear friend of mine always calls me a “bleeding heart liberal” because I choose to always want to find the best in people. In truth, I struggle at times with that level of optimism, because I am always too aware of the ugliness which thrives deep in the bones of America. That ugliness is responsible for the brutal enslavement of millions of Black people across the African diaspora, the continued deaths of Black transwomen, the horrifically high

maternal mortality rates of BIPOC women, and the deaths of Black men and women at the hands of police.

My Black soul is tired. Moreover, I will speak for the Black collective and say WE are all tired. This is why we have once again taken to the streets. We are tired of being murdered, being discriminated against, being profiled, being given less, being expected to do more and be more, and tired of knowing that the world loves everything about us, except us. This weight is too much to bear.

If Black folks can figuratively and literally put our bodies on the line to fight for an existence which isn't encumbered by racism, then the least non-black people can do is fix the ways in which they so unjustly perceive and treat us. Otherwise, this is all for naught.

# Deconstructing Collegiality and Constructing Courageous Conversations in California Community Colleges

by **Adrienne C. Brown**, Los Angeles Harbor College

**O**n Thursday June 18, 2020, I attended the ASCCC Faculty Leadership Institute for the first time. I am grateful for the opportunity, and I learned so much from all of the sessions. In one particularly impactful session titled “Creating and Leveraging Collegiality for Leadership Effectiveness,” I became very engaged in the topic and in the chat. It was so impactful to be seeing a presentation on such an important topic, while at the same time I was witnessing some of the things that the presenters were describing happening in the live chat. I saw faculty expressing microaggressions in the chat box and not understanding why the Black, Indigenous, and other faculty of color were reacting so negatively to what these chatting faculty felt was innocent curiosity. When they saw the presenters mention that the current structures that we are using in higher education are from European origin, they responded by saying that does not make them bad. I agreed, European structures are not bad, but that is only one monocultural approach, so that is not the only approach we can use. We all see the student outcomes that result from our Eurocentric approach so let’s explore other multicultural representative approaches so all are engaged. I specifically mentioned the Association of Black Psychologists and their use of the Mbongi structure in their annual conference. All campuses can explore culturally responsive, multicultural approaches from many cultural perspectives to structure our conversations and ensure healthier and more representative dialogue.

In a committee setting, I often see this play out as well, where someone’s intent does not match their impact. More often than not, those who were hurt and offended by what was stated are often then labeled as “not collegial” when they have very valid emotional reactions to the offensive behavior or comment. In the workshop session, I learned that the root of the concept of collegiality is a medieval European creation to vet faculty peers’ work to invite scholars into the exclusive collegium; it was designed to exclude. Today’s common definition implies a collegium where everyone is equal and represented; however, in our committees, we each have different positionality and power as full-time faculty, adjuncts, classified, and unclassified employees. People refer to collegiality as ideal “professional”

behavior, but how do we define professional? Does it mean no emotions can be expressed? The workshop presenters asked us to consider power dynamics: are we wielding power to oppress or shut down another colleague? They also asked us to remember equity when interacting with colleagues: are we truly equal or are there systemic barriers for some?

Antiracism is difficult work; it requires each of us to look at our own flaws--something we often do not like to do. It is easy to point out the flaws in others. If you are new to learning about these concepts and want to engage in antiracist action, I recommend the following:

1. Educate yourself. Do not rely on your Black colleagues to educate you; it requires too much emotional labor for us and results in negative health outcomes like muscle tension, high blood pressure, heart conditions, and other real physical health outcomes. Our California Surgeon General extensively researched race-related stress and how it negatively impacts the mental and physical health of our communities of color. Keywords you can explore are tone policing, respectability politics, microaggressions. Look at the research available, watch documentaries and movies, read books, take classes. Do not ask us to teach you for free; it is killing us.
2. Take classes and attend trainings. ASCCC provides a wealth of information on how we can wield the power of the Academic Senate to affect change. 3CSN provides intentional, impactful, culturally responsive professional learning where you will walk away a better person and educator. At the Basic Skills Initiative Leadership Institute (BSILI) Equity Institute and Facilitators Learning Community, they are doing the real authentic work, which is working on our own personal growth (information can be found on their website at <https://3csn.org>).
3. Show us that you value antiracism and our healing by working with your local union to advocate for all employees in collective bargaining to ensure that adjunct faculty and staff are provided adequate health coverage; Black and other adjuncts of color are overrepresented in these positions and need full health coverage. Also, get involved in hiring and ensure hiring practices are bringing more diverse employees into our campuses and conversations.
4. Bring your full self and share your authentic experiences in committee meetings, even if what you need to say is simply “I don’t know enough about this to make a decision”; ask to table topics you do not fully understand. Silence is complicity. Al Solano wrote a blog post “Transforming Instruction in Math” (<https://www.continuous-learning-institute.com/blog/transforming-instruction-in-math>) where he coined the following term Institutional

Conservatives (ICs): “ICs care about social justice outside of the academy, but don’t apply it inside the academy... sadly many (not all), of my colleagues who claim to be social justice & equity warriors had/have no problem maintaining the status quo at their institutions.”

5. Remember collegiality itself can be oppressive when it is used to maintain the status quo in our Eurocentric academic environment, and the term “collegiality” can be weaponized to silence divergent voices and to escape uncomfortable conversations. Under the guise of collegiality, we miss opportunities for vital discussions about race that could really impact change. As educators, we should encourage the space to challenge, disagree, and question any topic presented.

Lastly, I will share a personal story and email I sent to my chancellor, in response to the official district statement on the civil unrest. I received a very thoughtful response and look forward to positive change.

## A TALE OF THREE MICROAGGRESSIONS



I received an outpouring of emails and text messages after my first email to you, all supportive and many **\*confidentially\*** thanking me because they do not feel safe to express their authentic experiences.

What you see in this picture is me standing with two students at a Black graduation celebration that took place in 2016. The two students I am standing with are both Umoja graduates who were celebrating that day. **The three of us are all Spanish Speaking with Afro Latino roots.** The two students, while they appear quite different physically, both have AfroMexican ancestry, while I have AfroEcuadorian ancestry.

### Microaggression 1

The young woman at my right when she went to register for her own celebration was told by an African American faculty who made an assumption about her due to her having

lighter skin: “The family and friends check in table is over there.”. On a day that should be purely celebration and joy, the first thing she felt at the registration table was hurt that poked at an old existing wound. That people judge her for the color of her skin and make assumptions and erase her identity.

## **Microaggression 2**

Last week, I naturally slipped into saying something in Spanish in a meeting, and as often happens when people don't know my story, a white-skinned Mexican faculty expressed shock at my ability to speak Spanish. I find reactions like this and the “why do you speak Spanish?” question hurtful every time I hear it. In one quick statement or question, people are making an assumption about me based on my skin color and erasing the existence of AfroLatinos, although **\*96%\*** of the enslaved Africans brought to the Americas were taken south of our border into Latin America and the Caribbean. It erases the painful past of my grandmother, a Black woman who was born in Ecuador, a victim of human trafficking brought to California at age 11, alone, and to become an undocumented immigrant farm worker. It erases the struggle of my father who was beat up and excluded by African Americans for having an accent and beat up and excluded by white and mestizo Latin Americans for having dark skin.

## **Microaggression 3**

In the statement I wrote to you when I said, “The majority of the protestors in Downtown Los Angeles are **Latino allies**,” I myself erased all of these stories yet again, because what I really meant was white and mestizo **Latino Allies**. I made a mistake, and I am now calling myself out.

My first year at Harbor, I attended a culturally responsive training. It was the first and only time I sat in a room for a powerful training alongside staff and administrators, as they understood not only faculty need to be engaged in this work. I was deeply impacted by the stories of the custodial staff member who was in my small group. So, as I call myself out for a mistake, I am reminded that an additional suggestion I have for our district and campus is to bring these trainings back. I'm very concerned that there was only one occasion in a 7-year period where I saw this actively occurring as a campus-wide effort, and I would now also like to see as a district-wide effort. If people are attacked when they are honest and vulnerable, it will be counterproductive. If people are never given a safe space



to express what they really feel and experience, we will continue to miss the mark. If only the affected groups are engaged in this work, we will not make progress. At the end of the day, we are all imperfect, no one wants to discuss their flaws; however, that's the only way we can start to make plans to solve them.

I originally also said "faculty," but this is also a need for administrators, staff, and students. Regardless of our varying roles on campus, we are all educators. We all need to work together to unlearn these harmful status quo behaviors. These emails I am sending are not about blame; it is about getting us all focused on taking a hard look at where we really stand and what we can do to affect real change.

# The Black Superwoman and Socially Conscious Self-Care

by Erin M. Charlens, Ed.D., Professor/Counselor, Umoja Coordinator, San Diego City College

**P**lanning and nearly seamlessly executing the transition of our respective academic areas to be accessible remotely, nurturing interpersonal relationships, “crisis schooling” our children, meal planning, meal prepping, meal execution, prioritizing exercise, while adhering to a stay-at-home order, in the midst of an uprising for the attainment of justice for Black lives – Black women, we made it look easy.

While appearing externally cool, the indefinite convergence of our work and home lives, while overwhelmed with viewing the horrific lynchings of our Black brothers and sisters, left many of us laden with anxiety we had not yet known. At times, tears flowed; our bodies signaled for us to rest. With students to serve and justice to gain, rest never felt appropriate. Instead, care and concern for others, for the community, for the movement became paramount, sometimes at the cost of neglecting ourselves. How can we rest when our adversary, white supremacy, never sleeps? As Black female educators who wear many hats, we struggle to prioritize self-care. This article seeks to explore the persona of the Black Superwoman and to discuss balancing social consciousness with self-care.

## SUPERWOMAN PERSONA

The Black Superwoman: We have seen her on television and in film (think Florida Evans played by Esther Rolle in *Good Times*), and for many of us, up close and personal in our homes. She is strong at all times in spite of whatever distress she may be experiencing (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2005). Corbin et al. (2018) describe a similar persona, the STRONGBLACKWOMAN, that develops as a coping mechanism to racial discrimination and microaggressions in predominantly and historically white spaces. It is an alternative persona to the less desirable, less socially-accepted Angry Black Woman persona. It is the idea that one needs to be strong and self-sacrificing, show little vulnerability or undesirable emotions, and help others. Even when experiencing great distress or pain, the Superwoman remains strong.

When I was growing up, while my parents shared in decision-making, my father would acquiesce to my mother's will with regard to many financial decisions, as well as care and educational decisions for me and my siblings. My mom worked full-time, prepared dinner nightly, sewed clothes regularly to fit my tall frame, while being a pillar of strength in our home and in our church. It was rare to hear mom complain about her workload or express emotions that did not demonstrate strength. When mom was stressed or uneasy, no one knew. She went to her prayer closet and armored up for battle. Mom did it all, gracefully.

## BALANCING LIFE ROLES

The Superwoman persona is often passed down as young girls observe significant female adults in their lives being everything to everyone. In fact, maintaining the Superwoman persona often feels necessary to balance the various life roles that we occupy as Black women. The challenge for us now is that most of us are far more accessible to others yielding even greater difficulty balancing life roles compared to our parents. Not only do we hold full-time jobs, but as educators, the needs of students are often so vast that our work does not have an ending point. When we do leave the office, those who are mothers begin their second shift assisting the children with homework and meal preparation. In addition to high levels of engagement, success in the role of educator and parent also requires a significant amount of planning and mental energy "off the clock" that must be accounted for. Further, many of us have regular commitments outside of our paid jobs for the advancement of Black people.

Single Black mothers have the added stress of balancing the responsibilities alone. Women with partners often take on the role of being Superwoman to their partner. Partnership implies shared responsibility, though time that is freed up by having the support of a partner often turns into time redirected by the Superwoman to one of the aforementioned categories. Sharing the load with someone sometimes thrusts some Superwomen into project management-mode, incessantly checking to make sure that everything is carefully executed. While some Black women manage to take off the proverbial Superwoman cape, what happens when this way of being becomes the norm?

## REST

Most women are conditioned to believe that we are obligated to deny ourselves and give to others first. We are nurtured for self-sacrifice at an early age as we learn about

motherhood. Many of us have watched significant female caretakers execute the role of Superwoman nearly perfectly. It is not, however, sustainable. In order to shift away from this, we have to change how we feel about rest. Not only did significant adults in our lives help shape our gender roles, they also framed how we conceptualize rest. In most of the Black families that I knew, rest wasn't something that was proactively planned; it was the result of exhaustion after several hard days of work. Growing up, we enjoyed watching Black television shows, other than that, rest looked like reading, studying, and planning. Sometimes rest was sitting on the couch consuming the news. Other times rest was reading the Bible. Social activities like talking on the telephone took place simultaneously with a chore such as folding the laundry. Rarely did we simply rest. Rest was primarily reserved for sleep during the nighttime hours.

As an employee in higher education attuned to the needs of students, rest sometimes feels like a privilege. Rest can even feel selfish at times. Subconsciously, many Black people overcompensate with productivity as a counter narrative to the racist stereotype that Black people are lazy. Even when nobody is watching, some people simply will not allow themselves rest. On the contrary, hard work and high achievement are ways of demonstrating worth and credibility.

## REVOLUTIONIZING SELF-CARE

Black women are often stretched thin, particularly in historically white institutions where they may be serving on multiple committees as the single voice for Black people. Our quest for justice in our nation and equitable outcomes for our students is a marathon. Prioritizing self-care is requisite for sustainability in this work. Self-care is the personal activities we regularly engage in to promote mental, spiritual, physical, and emotional wellness. It is an act of self-love. Former Stanford University African & African American Studies student, Maysia Anderson reminds us, "Intentionally caring for your well-being, and making attempts to love yourself despite insults and dangers against your being is a radical act" (Anderson, 2015).

And so, I have some straightforward, revolutionary self-care tips for the socially-conscious Superwoman:

Develop compassionate boundaries. A boundary is an act of self-care and self-agency that defines your level of engagement in a particular activity or with a person. Often, when we

find ourselves overwhelmed, it is an indication that we need to draw a boundary, or that we failed to exercise a boundary that we previously created. When a boundary is crossed, speak on it. Emotional suppression is detrimental to our health.

Connect. We are wired for connection. We must have spaces where we can be vulnerable and process what we are feeling. If the space does not currently exist, create it. Self-care and joy are acts of resistance.

Rest. In the midst of this racial climate, it may seem inappropriate to rest or to seek out things that bring you joy. Rest is not quitting. Rest is fuel! This is a marathon; your rest at mile seven may prove worthwhile as you continue on in the movement. You cannot pour from an empty cup. Press pause and fill up your cup with things that you enjoy.

Communicate. Every voice in this movement matters. People will notice when yours is missing from the table. Be accountable. Simply share with your village, “As an act of self-care, I need to step back from activities this week. I will return to our group activities next week.”

White supremacy will continue to feed us the lie that we are not enough and that we must overachieve to be worthy. Do not believe this! You are worthy. You are entitled to assert your needs. You are entitled and deserving of joy. Resist. Resist with joy. Resist with love. Resist with rest. Resist with power.

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# How to Start Antiracist Work: Faculty Hiring Practices for Diversification

by **Dr. Abdimalik Buul**, San Diego City College

**R**ace-conscious inquiry and talking about race is uncomfortable for many because we have been socialized to avoid meaningful discussions about race, but we must persist through the discomfort. Emotions run deep and high when conversations about race emerge, but those conversations are valuable and important. Brave spaces, where the work around institutional change takes place, are needed. The challenge is, however, in answering if we are ready to invest and to investigate the patterns rooted in a dominant culture that preserves the status quo. The death of George Floyd is a glaring example of the ambivalence that ensues when we do not intervene and have necessary dialogue. If we are serious about addressing the equity gap that persists across California community colleges, we must also acknowledge the problematic equity gap that exist in our faculty hiring practices and the suffocating knees on the necks of our Black faculty resulting in the deleterious impact on our student success. Conversely, diverse faculty role models support the success, persistence, and assumption of campus leadership roles by students of color (Avery and Bartee, 2016). As educators, we know that “diversity fosters better engagement and increases perspectives on thinking, leadership, and solutions in a multi-cultural America” (Bollinger, 2007). As we grapple with transitioning from a compliance based model of DEI (diversity, equity, inclusion) checklist to actualizing equity-mindedness that intentionally evaluates practices and interrogates policies through a race-conscious lens, perhaps as educators we need to actively reflect on the questions that we might ask when leading conversations in our hiring practices.

Interest in diverse hiring practices are of prime concern for many human resources departments and policy makers across the nation’s colleges and universities (ACE, 2017). Moreover, many civil rights organizations have filed lawsuits prompting higher educational institutions to diversify their faculty and staff, and the second highest reason for complaints submitted to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (US EEOC, 2017) is employment discrimination based on race, as the commission’s statistics show racially motivated discrimination totaled 35,890 cases in 2010. For more than a decade,

California community colleges have been discussing the need for a more diverse faculty. This, however, prompted short-sighted solutions such as colleges solving the problem by having consultants conduct racial climate assessments and not implementing any of their recommendations (Harper, 2012).

Often, incentives for diverse hiring practices provide implicit bias training and allocating funds for EEO programs. Unfortunately, these extrinsic incentives fail to stimulate systemic change given that the structural racism has permeated so deeply within each campus, all the way to the departmental level. With department chairs and faculty leading most efforts to steer hiring committees, it is imperative that academic senates and human resources at the campus and district levels develop race-conscious policies and provide race-conscious training to actively counter systemic racism (McNair, Bensimon and Malcolm-Piqueux, 2020). Historically, policies and personnel are the key components that can counter systemically inherent racist systems. The need for a more diverse faculty is eminent; systemic change calls for more than talk, rather more action and accountability.

The counterpoint to discussions of faculty diversification often focus around the fear of lawsuits and reliance on adherence to Proposition 209. Conversely, the discussion on affirmative action versus meritocracy in hiring practices has also been heavily debated in the courts (US EEOC, 2017). Advocates of meritocracy believe that individuals should be selected based simply on their merits or credentials. They claim preferential treatment based on race, gender, or other indicators may cause reverse discrimination, especially against white males. Proponents of affirmative action mention this philosophy is flawed given the systemic causes of racism in education. Affirmative action supporters believe the solution is creating a more equitable playing field (Brown, 1994).

In response to this type of push back and resistance, more progressive institutions have developed holistic models that truly address issues of inequitable hiring practices, such as creating mentorship programs, committees, taskforces and intentional recruitment of minoritized candidates (ACE, 2017). Researchers recommend that committees and taskforces conduct training on implicit bias and microaggressions that hinder employment opportunities for minoritized candidates, which may also foster more positive campus climates overall (Harper 2012; Wood, 2011). Equity-minded institutions will also intentionally follow up on a holistic model by conducting a post-hiring report on the number of candidates who applied, those who were invited to an interview, and those who were forwarded as finalists. These institutions also practice cluster hiring by hiring multiple



faculty of color at once, so feelings of isolation are not so prevalent (Guenter-Schlesinger & Ojikutu, 2016).

#### Practical Steps for Anti-Racist Hiring Practices:

1. Cluster Hiring– Anti-racist institutions practice cluster hiring, where they hire multiple faculty of color at once, so feelings of isolation are not so prevalent (Guenter-Schlesinger and Ojikutu, 2016).
2. Intentional Recruitment– Diversifying pipelines by advertising positions in diverse magazines or posting advertisements with diverse organizations, as well as diversifying adjunct/part-time faculty pools.
3. Post Hiring Autops– Equity-minded institutions follow up on a holistic model by conducting a post-hiring report on the number of candidates who applied, those who were invited to an interview, and those who were forwarded as finalists.
4. Mentorship– Mentorship is critical for the professional development of any college faculty; however, due to scarcity of faculty of color, it is more salient to their success to support them with intentional mentorship, which can come from white faculty as well, as research confirms that it is a common myth that only faculty of color can effectively mentor faculty of color (Brown, Davis, and McClendon, 1999).

The ambivalence of the current power structure of governing boards and shared governance across the California Community College system cannot be detached from the continued pervasive racism that ails our campuses and negatively impacts our students and employees.

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# Selective Enforcement: Disparities in Tenure

by Faculty in support of Black Lives Matters

It is of great concern that many districts in our community college system do not take action involving inequality in the workplace. My colleagues and I are disappointed that racism and sexism continues everywhere in the world but especially in the educational sector. There have been several cases of systemic exclusion of people of color. This is one event of an injustice involving a former colleague, who was denied tenure. The female faculty member had been employed with her district for four years. She was the only African American instructor in the district hired for a full-time, tenure-track position in the last few years. But, she eventually was denied tenure.

During her first two years of tenure evaluations, she received positive and favorable reviews from her evaluation committee. After this, there was a transition of departments and administration during her third and fourth year. The new evaluation committee did not appear to provide her with mentoring, guidance, or academic support, which led to her third-year evaluation insinuating that she needed to improve, when in fact the union and the administrators were the ones unethically leaving out information and giving her unreasonable requests.

There were disparities in treatment with selective enforcement; for example, she was given deadlines that she would have to meet that her co-workers did not have. This then caused her fourth year of tenure review to show marks of unsatisfactory performance and an evaluation that led to the termination of her employment with the district.

While the instructor felt that she complied with recommendations given to her, there was little help or support from the department or administration. It also seems to be very questionable that a once prominent instructor who received excellent marks, only began to suffer after an administration and department switch. The “proverbial” paper trail documentation should have validated her work ethic and performance, instead of creating a reason to deny her of her tenure and livelihood that she worked so hard to obtain.

Faculty members wrote letters on her behalf, and all agreed that she went above and beyond in her role as an instructor and member of the faculty to support her students and campus. We watched and mentored her since she lacked the support and resources of her own campus and administration. Near the end, I and other faculty members suggested that she learn her rights and contact outside help like the campus union representative for further assistance, who then still neglected to support her or even follow up with her about the situation.

The female instructor, who unfortunately suffered from a lack of support and who was punished based on sexual bias and skin color, is talented and an excellent teacher in the education and community sector.

During this time, she assisted the college with maintaining compliance, which without would have affected accreditation. She fulfilled the campus and district committee tenure contract by regularly attending the curriculum committee meetings and serving on the campus facility committee, as well as her discipline committee. She revisited all SLOs, updating and changing as needed, and she wrote, submitted, and received approval for an AA degree in her discipline. She won a seat on the faculty union executive board. She held student events every semester despite the lack of a budget, and she hosted a high school day for surrounding schools. Lastly, the students of her program also participated yearly in the district event in her discipline.

All of this to say, there are many instructors who have resumes that lack what this Black female instructor has accomplished. It is my opinion and many others' that her case was not predicated on her academic achievements nor her talent as a recognized educator in her field. She was not unbiasedly considered for her tenure position. We stand in solidarity with our Black colleague. We urge all colleagues to take action and review your college's tenure processes.

# In the Wake of George Floyd: An Open Letter to College Educators Across the Nation

by **Nadiyah Herron**, Professor of Communication Studies, San Bernardino Valley College

*As I dial in to the campus wide open forum on race relations, staff members begin to tell of untold horrors of encounters with racism. Relayed to them by students and personal experience, there is a pernicious undertone amongst colleagues: “Why should I care? This has nothing to do with me.” As human beings, our natural reaction to issues that do not directly affect us is to misunderstand, equivocate, or emotionally disconnect. For some sorely misguided perspectives, the civil unrest experienced after the murder of George Floyd was triggered by an isolated event by one member of law enforcement who exercised poor judgment. Many of my colleagues lament about the looting and just can’t understand the visceral reactions that subsequently unfolded across America. I’m immediately triggered and internally enraged that their focus is on the loss of property as opposed to the loss of human life. I breathe, steel myself beneath a familiar indignation and try to remain professional. As I scramble on the conference call to explain microaggressions in lay terms, I am rendered speechless. One professor admits, “I know that slavery was wrong. Students ask me if it really happened, but... (she stammers) I feel uncomfortable telling my students that slavery was wrong. I feel uncomfortable teaching it.” Wait. Did a college educated professor just say that out loud? Did a human being just say she has difficulty teaching that it is wrong to massacre another group of people based on their skin color? How have we embraced a culture in academia where some of the most brilliant minds in the nation feel uncomfortable teaching something that we should be shouting? We have nurtured a culture of fear, silence, and apathy under the guise of neutrality and integrity in instruction; we have nurtured a culture that is afraid to teach truth, that is, only if it can be neatly cited and peer reviewed. Perhaps it is a scary indication of the shortcomings of our educational system and as a result the very soul of our nation.*

Do we as educators lack the resources or intellect to better serve our students? Unfortunately, the truth is much darker than we’d care to see: We lack the will to try. We lack the consciousness to take responsibility for the collective failings of student equity and the injustice ingrained in our educational system.

You should care because the classroom is one of the key battlegrounds against inequality, and students have consistently been leaders on the frontline. In 1947, before the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* case, a courageous Mexican American farming family dared to question the law and the conscience of the American justice system. They fought for equal schooling for their children. They won. The *Mendez v. Westminster* case laid the groundwork for the case that would upend segregated classrooms across the country. Sixty-three years later, we are still waiting for equity in the classroom, wildly grasping at diversity through a haze of racial tension as inequality persists.

You should care because we know that research shows that students internalize unfair treatment they experience in the classroom (Tauber, 2007). When you see them as limited, small and subhuman, they begin to believe the same about themselves. We should not tolerate such conduct from a professional segment of persons, who have been entrusted to educate, enlighten, and inspire. The truth is, if the classroom is the symbolic barometer of the climate of our nation, then instructors must intentionally embody the role they play being the link to the future health of our nation or risk certain ideological genocide. We must have equality in the classroom and restructure the function of instructors who refuse to change.

Classrooms are becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. Of the current undergraduate college student population, 52.9 percent are white, 20.9 percent are Hispanic, 15.1 percent are Black, and 7.6 percent are Asian, while the demographics of the faculty that serve them remain stubbornly monochromatic (US Census, 2018). According to the National Center for Education Statistics, among full-time professors, 81 percent are white, 11 percent are Asian/Pacific Islander. Black males, Black females, and Hispanic males accounted for 2 percent of full-time professors, while Hispanic females and American Indian/Alaska Native individuals make up 1 percent or less. There is a glaring gap in representation between faculty and the student population we claim to serve. These statistics speak to the chasms and polarization that have long impeded meaningful progress in the aim of social justice and mobilizing for change in the classroom. Moreover, this profound gap is the primer for a slurry of potentially harmful interactions, similar to what we saw with Gordon Klein, the accounting professor at the University of California, Los Angeles. His response to a question related to the recent civil unrest earned him a suspension and a petition calling for his dismissal. Furthermore, this resulted in a catastrophic break down and loss of trust in the sacred relationship of teacher and pupil. If academic minds can

come together and solve Fermat's last theorem, we can solve the problem of racism in our lifetime. If we can put a man on the moon, then surely, we can achieve improved student equity, and social justice in the classroom. We can begin by closing the representation gap in institutions of higher learning across the country. We should care because the future of our nation will look like the student population we serve today. Their tomorrow rests upon our shoulders.

If a Black student makes it to your classroom, know that they have defied the odds. Know that their existence in your classroom means that they have overcome and continue, with an impossible courage, to participate in a system designed for their failure: A system that regularly inflicts penalty based on the color of their skin, through systemic forces, economics, educational bias, institutional inequality, and hostile interpersonal encounters on Black persons in this country. A system that created laws to prevent them from gaining wealth and then criminalizes their poverty. A system that would make it illegal for them to read and then punish them for being illiterate. A system designed to send them from the classroom to the prison pipeline. A uniquely American system that assaults them on every front. From disparities in their healthcare to a mass media that manufactures and reinforces disparaging portraits of their identity by telling you that they (as Black people) are sub-human, validating the abuse they receive. Know that when these students sign their names on the papers and assignments that they turn in to you, they are more than likely signing the name of the man who owned their great-great-grandparent in slavery. Pause. Realize how deep the veins of systemic racism run. Know that they've more than likely had to anesthetize themselves from the pain of systemic barrages of mechanisms of subordination over their lifetime in order to sustain some psychological bandwidth for normal living. In truth, Abraham Maslow would be perplexed by their perseverance: they've been deprived in all their deficiency needs yet they still seek to fulfill their full potential.

Many are defeated before they even walk through the door. Even still, they walk through *your* classroom door. In spite of all these obstacles planted by seeds of racism, they still walk through the door. They are often met with teachers who express their dissent for their skin through microaggressions in the classroom and a pathologizing of their culture. These affronts are coupled with assumptions of criminality (Blacks often portrayed as violent in America, when they more often than not are on the receiving end of that violence), resulting in over policing on college campuses. They face ascriptions of their intelligence, while they are more accurately experiencing historic growth in education. "The percentage



of Black high school graduates enrolled in college jumped last year to 70.9%, exceeding that of both Whites and Hispanics. Further, high school graduation rates for Black students rose to over 70%, which outpaced the growth for any other group” (Nielson, 2015). Just because they’re brilliant doesn’t mean they do not feel. Know that, ironically, the first time many of them experienced racism was in the classroom. Know that they will more than likely continue to experience the weight and trauma of racism throughout their lifetime. I know this, too, has nothing to do with you. So the question remains: Why should you care?

As the nation recovers from the polarizing events that follow the death of George Floyd, and we return to our campuses, classrooms and community, as educators, we must acknowledge some pretty daunting realities. This is not just about the death of George Floyd. We must acknowledge that his death is only a singular occurrence in a scathing epidemic of collective race-based violence and systemic oppression perpetrated on Black people in this country since its inception. We must cease in our failure to recognize the undeniable truth: America is a country built on a foundation of hate that encompassed slavery, white supremacy, and mass genocide. A foundation that cannot stand if we choose to. Will we continue to be passive and intentional participants propagating the system of racism through prejudice, fear, apathy, and silence in the classroom? Or will we begin to develop a consciousness to be a part of something bigger than ourselves? I beseech you, colleagues, to be a part of the change. No, I beseech you, colleagues, to be the change! You have the opportunity to be a part of a solution for justice that will ripple through generations.

The academic community must adopt an iterative process of developing and enforcing meaningful strategies in the aim of peace, from systemic violence and racism aimed at minoritized communities in our educational system to society as a whole. We are here today, because a man, propelled by centuries of racial injustice, kneeled on another man’s neck for eight minutes and forty-six seconds. There were three other people there, and had one taken one of those seconds to speak up, we might not be here today: A simple admonition of the excessive force. My call to action is simple: Speak up. Say something. “Because of the prejudice and racism inherent in our environments when we were children, I assume that we cannot be blamed for learning what we were taught (intentionally or unintentionally). Yet, as adults, we have a responsibility to try to identify and interrupt the cycle of oppression. When we recognize that we have been misinformed, we have a responsibility to seek out more accurate information and to adjust our behavior accordingly”

(Tatum, 1992). Inequality persists in the classroom; it is time that we adjust our behavior accordingly. This will require collective efforts of deliberative engagement, authentic dialogic interaction, with inter-organizational, interdivisional, and interdisciplinary alignment. The future of this country will be decided in our classrooms. The future of this country will be shaped by you.

It. Is. Time. To. Care.

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# Counseling Faculty Modeling Transformational Leadership to Bring About Change

by Dr. LaTonya L. Parker, ASCCC Area D Representative, Equity and Diversity Action Committee Chair

*The answer to transformational change lies within an individual's ability to make a conscious effort to build a bridge between self-awareness and relationship management. –LaTonya Parker*

## THE ROLE OF COUNSELING FACULTY

Since 1995, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) embedded the role of the counseling faculty within the mission of the California Community College (CCC) system. In 2012, the body adopted *The Role of Counseling Faculty and Delivery of Counseling Services in the California Community Colleges* which identified counseling faculty as “...professionally trained to diagnose the difficulties students face in pursuing and achieving their educational goals, to prescribe solutions for those difficulties, and to support students as they inch or stride toward success” (p.4). The Education Code’s definition of the role of counseling faculty reiterates the critical responsibility of the counselor to support student success in such areas as student self-assessment, decision-making, goal setting, and goal implementation.

## ACCOUNTABLE ACTION

While California community colleges are held accountable by the Board of Governors’ *Vision for Success* aspirational goal to eliminate equity gaps across retention and increase transfer, certificate, and degree completion, counseling teaching faculty are held responsible for student learning outcomes (SLO) for college success strategies courses. In looking backward, the Student Success Act of 2012 mandated the CCCs, which received state funding, to report progress on moving the needle towards improving achievement among under-represented students. During that period, counseling teaching faculty began offering more college success strategies courses to address the achievement gap (Cho, 2013; Hope, 2010; Karp & Stacey, 2013). The college success strategies courses provided students

with information about campus resources, support services, college policies, study skills, critical thinking, time management, personal skills, academic and career planning (Hope, 2010; Karp & Stacey, 2013; Rutschow, Cullinan & Welbeck, 2012; Quinn, 2012). Hope (2010) indicated in her research about success strategies courses “... students would be much less likely to acquire these skills or behaviors on their own, and the course is a way to engender and promote the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary for college success” (p. 3).

## RECENT DISRUPTIONS

Recent COVID-19 disruptions and calls to action for equity-driven higher education curriculum and student services have created a sense of urgency around examining what embracing diversity looks like in the classroom and in counseling services provided to students. Looking forward, the most revolutionary influence on the equity and inclusion evolution of online learning and student services in the California Community College system will not only include equipping faculty with the latest technology tools, but also professional transformational leadership development. The purpose of this article is to offer counseling faculty a leadership approach to bring about accountable actions in moving beyond the Student Equity and Achievement Plans and the adoptions of diversity and inclusion statements.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Much has been written about leadership and management in the CCC system. Basham (2012) offered a unique perspective to higher educational management. He defined transformational leadership as the extent to which one is able to serve, and influence change across disciplines. Additional educational research suggested leadership is essential in meeting the constant changes in an academic environment (Ashbaugh, 2013; Basham, 2012; Sanchez, 2014). Gunter (2001) indicated a restructured authentic learning hybrid curriculum, and effective web-enhanced developmental learning activities were beneficial to enhance students' learning. Morales and Roig (2002) indicated technology integration in the classroom is a significant factor in promoting academic innovation.

The examination of effective instructional technology strategies for 21st century counseling faculty leaders is necessary in developing and enhancing equitable online learning in the California community colleges. Gunter (2001) researched the effectiveness of redesigning instructional strategies and implications for student learning. He stated that “to prepare

educators for the 21st century, colleges of education must be leaders of change by providing pre-service teachers with a technology-enriched curriculum” (p. 1). Several studies introduced leadership constructs associated with organizational change and innovation adoption (Aarons, 2006; Anderson & Ackerman-Anderson, 2010; Ashbaugh, 2013; Basham, 2012; Bass, 1990; & Ozaralli, 2003; Sanchez, 2014). Aarons (2006) research has shown that there were links between leadership, organizational process, consumer satisfaction, and outcome. In addition, Ozaralli (2003) investigated the effects of transformational leadership on empowerment and team effectiveness, and she discovered significant correlation. Bass (1990) asserted transformational leaders challenge the organizational culture and possess the ability to share their vision. Bass (1990) also argued transformational leaders influence others and generate awareness by inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and meeting others’ emotional needs (Bass, 1990).

More recently, Basham (2012) offered a unique perspective to higher education management. He identified transformational leadership as the extent to which one is able to serve and learn across disciplines (Basham, 2012). He stated, “Transformational leadership is essential within higher education so that adaptation can be completed to meet the constantly changing economic and academic environment” (Basham, 2012, p. 344). He introduced a Delphi study to address the question on whether presidents of higher education institutions utilize transformational leadership practices. He argued that elements of quality leadership were existent within every functioning activity representative who was serving in any capacity that could influence change. His findings concluded that presidents’ leadership competency is necessary, but further research on transformational leadership practices is needed. Although counseling faculty members are not administrators, and do not operate in the capacity as college presidents, the engaging leadership traits are noteworthy for the inevitable equity-driven system change in higher education online learning and student services. In addition, transformational leaders help followers grow and develop into leaders by responding to individual followers’ needs, empowering them, and aligning the objectives and goals of the individual followers, the leader, the group, and the larger organization (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Tuuk, 2012).

Cashman (2008), on the other hand, examined a holistic approach of personal mastery to leadership. His study integrated life’s experiences, beliefs, and conscious awareness. He offered an insightful guide for personal leadership development through awareness and authority (Cashman, 2008). According to Cashman (2008), 21st century organizational

leadership requires leading with awareness and authority. Cashman (2008) suggested one's leadership comes from intentional conscious personal discovery through clarifying identity, purpose, and vision. He proposed three essential questions for effective leadership exploration. "Who are you? Where are you going? Why are you going there?" (Cashman, 2008, p. 33). The questions were addressed by acknowledging strengths and vulnerability. According to Anderson and Ackerman-Anderson (2010), leaders with greater self-awareness direct attention towards intentional development of their innermost being. While this leadership strategy was developed for ongoing purpose-driven discovery, Cashman's (2008) ideology of reaching one's full potential with personal discovery is applicable to equity-mindedness, organizational, transformational, and instructional program development. Kirby (2011) examined organizational change in private institutions of higher learning. Her investigation revealed organizational culture and leadership were included as part of the success strategy (Kirby, 2011). Her study introduced a framework for understanding transformational leadership. Kirby (2011) through her research indicated four fundamental leadership factors for developing organizational change. These factors were viewed as innovation strategies and were as follows: charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and idealized consideration. While much of the study focused on individuals' relationship to the organization and relevant success factors, it served as a model for innovative change.

## OVERCOMING EQUITY THROUGH ONLINE CURRICULUM

Moving beyond the traditional lecturing format, counseling faculty classroom lecturing practices should include modeling numerous technology strategies (Gunter, 2001). For example, technology modeling lecture formats include Power Point, multimedia presentations, and world wide web sites (Gunter, 2001). Studies on the implementation of technology require counseling faculty to change traditional educational practices and adjust to fast changing content. Morales & Rois (2002) indicated that the traditional lecturer and the passive information absorbing of student roles have transformed. The counseling faculty in the new teaching model teach students how to learn. This success strategy actively involves students in the learning process and transforms the old instruction model to one of facilitation, which enables students to become less dependent on faculty (Miller, 2012). With the growing diversity within institutions of higher education, the role of faculty for preparing students for a global society takes on new meaning (Miller, 2012). The key factor in

implementing change includes educators changing their thoughts and using technology as an agent for transformational leadership.

Transformational leaders influence others and generate awareness by inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and meeting others' emotional needs (Bass, 1990). To be an influential leader for today's community college, counseling faculty must demonstrate the principles in the development of courses to change students' attitudes. These strategies for developing college success strategies courses, if adopted, could change students attitudes and could include the following: authentically presenting new information with the use of emerging technology; student involvement in the planning, processes, and evaluation; and intentional usage of credible technology resources (Thompson, AD, Simonson, MR, & Hargrave, CP 1996 as cited in Gunter, 2001). In reorganizing guidance course curriculum, counseling faculty must view themselves as learning facilitators. In summary, this article responded to the appeal for more accountable action related to factors associated with revolutionary organizational leadership strategies in order to implement equity-minded online courses and services that will increase student access and retention.

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# How I Have Taught Lessons on Issues of Race

by Lance Heard, Mt. San Antonio College

 One of the aspects I emphasize in Administration of Justice classes is how the personal and professional ethics of individual officers are used in the daily decisions made in the name of upholding the law and maintaining order. By creating a forum where students can consider what influences their choices and how to use their behavior to influence others, I ask students to prepare themselves by considering difficult situations before they will encounter them on the job.

One discussion involves having students share a personal story where the police were present. The story can be from a friend or a family member. Students discuss the actions of the police and critically analyze the reasons for what happened.

Having a discussion that promotes critical thinking and the exchange of diverse points of view on the topic of race and racism can bring about anxiety for some. The use of film or book material can help create a supportive atmosphere for discussion. Three films that I have used include the documentary *Mumia Abu-Jamal: A Case for Reasonable Doubt?*, the fictional movie *Crash*, and the film dramatization of the biographical book *Freedom Writers*.

I have used *Mumia Abu-Jamal: A Case for Reasonable Doubt?* in class as both a written assignment and a discussion prompt on racism, the death penalty, and police misconduct. While there are numerous facts to share with students about the disproportionate number of African American males sentenced to death row and executed, I find students respond well through the experience of an individual case. This allows students to personalize the dilemma, to humanize it, and put a face on the issue.

With a study session based on the film, students examine how the race bias of judges, the racial makeup of juries, and the culture inside police departments alter the ability of African Americans to obtain a fair trial. It provides the backdrop for a discussion on distrust some African Americans have of the police, and how that distrust translates into behaviors that might differ from those of non-African Americans in the community.

*Crash* is a 2004 drama film written by Paul Haggis. It has several different stories interwoven across metropolitan Los Angeles. It includes overt racist and misogynistic behavior by a white police officer played by Matt Dillon and racist behavior by the Los Angeles District Attorney's wife, played by Sandra Bullock. There is a rookie white police officer who does not think he has racist beliefs, played by Ryan Phillippe. There is a running subplot concerning a white police officer suspected of multiple racially motivated shootings of Black men.

The film was very financially successful and received awards from film critics and within the entertainment industry. What the filmmaker does is attempt to get audiences to rethink the assumptions they make about the people around them, and about themselves as well. It is helpful in a classroom setting by allowing students to point out behavior exhibited in the film and discuss it openly.

Another film useful for addressing systematic racism in the public-school system is *Freedom Writers*. *Freedom Writers* is not only useful because it highlights the consequences of racism but also the ramifications of poverty and discrimination on youth and public schools. The film resonates with me for another reason. I have a niece who attended the same high school depicted in the film, and she is a living example of the experiences that the book and film are based upon.

The film provides a useful tool for deconstructing traditional norms associated with classroom instruction and teacher student role identification. I like to use the film for a discussion of the amount of cultural capital that is required for a student to have the confidence and comfort level to excel. This has value not only for students to think about how they can tap into the contributions they are able to bring into the classroom, but also to help professors become aware of and acknowledge the invisible barriers; barriers for which professors must purpose to take clearly designed steps to alleviate, in part by the methods they use to interact with the class.

Questions that can come up include the aspect of whether or not the professor cares about the student and demonstrates it. How do you show a student that you care not only about what they think, or how much they learn, but also that you actually care about them as a person, and about their well-being? Why would you need to communicate that you have compassion and caring for your students? In the film, students turn a corner and begin to make progress in their learning, only after they understand that their teacher cares about them because of her actions. Above all, the things professors may emphasize in their classes,

I believe, is the area where the biggest impact on student success and student equity will be achieved.

As a side note, I'll bring to bear my personal experience as a student to shed light on this. I had a typical experience as a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade student in a predominantly white school in Kodiak, Alaska. When my father volunteered to serve in Vietnam, our family was required to leave military housing and return to Detroit, Michigan. There, my 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class had one white student. Our teacher basically gave out worksheets each hour that we were to complete and hand in. Each day, I spent five minutes and completed the assignment that the class was given an hour to work on. This gave me hours every day to wonder about what was going on with the class. 3<sup>rd</sup> grade wasn't much of an improvement, except that I now had developed bad habits trying to entertain myself with all the dead time I had with nothing to do.

When my father returned from Vietnam, we were stationed in Illinois, where I attended a Navy school for the second semester of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade with a predominantly white student body. My progress report was full of C grades, as I was behind the rest of the class in every academic area. It took me the entire semester to recover and catch up to where the students were. Thankfully, when my father went back to Vietnam, we were allowed to remain in base housing, and I completed the 5<sup>th</sup> grade at the same school at the top of the class.

Among all of the challenges in the school in Detroit, the one that was most apparent to me was how my teachers did not care about me and the other students. Years later, my mother told me that the school approached her offering to promote me from 2<sup>nd</sup> grade to 4<sup>th</sup> grade, and she turned them down because she had that happen to her and did not want me in class with much older students like she was. One example which communicated to me what my 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher thought was when the song "Say it Loud - I'm Black and I'm Proud" by James Brown came out. Of course, we were all singing it. He stopped class one day and asked us, "What do you have to be proud about?" I instantly received his tone as challenging, with the implication that we had nothing to be proud of. For a long while, I couldn't get his words out of my mind.

For an Ethnic Group Relations class, I have used the book *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* by Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton. This book helps students understand the institutional racism that permeates our society, creating disproportionate living conditions that enable those in power to perpetuate racist practices against a group of marginalized people. Here is a quote from a review of the book by D.K.

Jamieson that explains the value of this important work: “An incredibly readable book that must be studied by all Americans—liberal and conservative, black and white.”

In closing, I have a point to make about whether the nation cares about Black students, whether it cares about Black lives, whether Black lives matter, since so much of the evidence in our history would argue that they do not. You ask, is it better to have African American teachers? You ask the wrong question. Because it isn't the color of the teacher that matters; it is whether or not the teacher cares that matters. The question we need to answer is why society continues to deny African Americans the opportunities given to everyone else? Case in point: My first African American teacher was in my first year at West Point. He graduated from North Carolina A&T, an historically black university. Like most West Point instructors, he did not go to college to become a teacher, he went on an ROTC scholarship to be an Army officer. In Alaska, Michigan, Illinois, and California, why is it that I never had an African American teacher?

# Explicit Bias

By **Dr. Jessica Ayo-Alabi**, Orange Coast College and ASCCC Guided Pathways  
and Equity and Diversity Action Committee

I am sharing my reply to an implicit bias post that I read on an education listserv. I am having a very difficult time right now with what's going on in the world. As a sociologist, I do not get to separate personal from work on issues like this. My community has always been in pain, fear, and survival mode, so I don't really know how to describe what this moment in history is right now.

I have a picture of my 75-year-old mother at a prayer vigil for George Floyd in North Carolina. She has lived in segregation most of her life and mistreated for at least half of it because of her skin color. She's been chased by the Klan and survived many movements, and yet in the picture, she looks so calm sitting there because she knows that there has been progress. She also knows that it does not feel like progress for me, her grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. It is my hope that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges stays the course on these issues in a bigger way, especially in faculty hiring practices, closing equity gaps with accountability measures, and consequences for racism and discrimination on campuses.

I want to urge my colleagues to be aware that this global uprising is not really about implicit bias as much as it is about explicit bias. “**Explicit bias**” refers to the attitudes and beliefs we have about a person or group on a conscious level.

As an African American educator in California community colleges for over 25 years, I have been mostly wounded and hurt by explicit racism and discrimination by white folks who were intentional and knew very well what they were doing, the power they had to do it, and the protection they receive from the system. In this historical moment, it is time to call out all the implicit bias professional development that we have spent a lot of money on, but still see and endure the same racism in our institutions because the people who do not need the professional development are the ones who show up to the trainings and the ones who absolutely need the professional development, DO NOT! You get results when

you call it what it is, and when there are consequences and repercussions for the behavior. That is what these uprisings are saying to the world and our educational institutions are not exempt.

I am very concerned that we are in some ways going to try to insulate ourselves from blame by viewing community colleges as “not the problem,” but the solution. It will be much more authentic for us to admit being a big part of the problem and a necessary part of the solution. For example, focusing on African Americans/Umoja students and Black athletes, we should be asking important research questions like the following:

How does this data help us understand how this program is helping African American student completion rates?

This program said they did these activities to support and improve African American student achievement, but there was no improvement, why?

Why are we continuing to fund programs that show no progress in helping African American student success, but yet we keep doing the same support activities over and over and turning in the same reports?

Why are we not collecting data from African American students about what they need to be successful? Why are we not funding departments to do those things and then measuring success?

Why do we keep seeing all these programs closing the LOOP, but not closing the GAP? What is the point if the equity gap is not closing, but yet programs finish program review and colleges pass accreditation? Why should anyone be worried about Black students continuing to fall through the cracks, if institutions will not be held accountable when Black students fail?

Where is the qualitative data that shows student engagement with African American athletes and their attrition rates, thru-put rates, matriculation rates in math and English, and completion rates connected to the programs that support them and receive equity funds, AB705 funds, Guided Pathway funds, Umoja funds, and any other funds designed to help African American students?

These are direct questions we should be asking and rates we should be measuring. I have been part of at least 30 Black student discussions on social media and Zoom meetings since these uprisings have started, including six at my own campus. They exposed violent police trauma and disdain for lack of college support at many institutions, which I could not disagree with when I reflected on both my student and professional experience. Sitting in shared governance meetings listening to folks rationalize and make excuses while blaming students for their own failure is disgusting to me. We push growth mindset, but tolerate and reward deficit thinking all day long in our system. Are we going to engage and listen to Black students about what they need? If so, this is the real data needed at this time.

These are questions I am asking on every listserv I am on. It's personal and professional for me.



# Curriculum Trauma

by **Abdimalik Buul, Ed.D.**, San Diego City College  
**Kisha Quesada Turner, M.A.**, Las Positas College  
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**C**urriculum Trauma (CT) is by and large an academic theory that critically examines the ways in which academic systems (i.e., curriculum) directly harm students' ability to become independent and healthy social agents. To fully grasp CT, it is essential to define both *curriculum* and *trauma*. *Curriculum* in its broader sense can be defined as what students have the opportunity to learn in schools (Eisner, 1994). Eisner mentions the three dimensions of curriculum; implicit, explicit, and null. Therefore, it begins before any student or teacher steps into the class or publishes an online course. The preparation that instructors take to prepare course content as well as the processes that staff and institutions conduct to facilitate the student enrollment process entails the broader sense of curriculum. This includes but is not limited to course offerings, content selection, modalities of instruction and the matriculation process. It also includes what is null and absent, and thus, what is not taught is a lesson to learn as well. On the other end, *trauma*, according to Dr. Brenda Ingram, Ed.D, LCSW (2019), is an "event(s) that overwhelms the body's, mind's, and spirit's ability to be in balance." She lists eight general dimensions. Among the dimensions in which we see the manifestation of Curriculum Trauma are the psychological, developmental, racial, intergenerational/historical, and social collective domains. Hence, *Curriculum Trauma* is the ways in which educational institutions damage students and impede student success from matriculation to graduation. In the subsequent body of this paper, we will encapsulate various traumatic triggers that most educational institutions have created that foment CT.

## HOW CURRICULUM TRAUMA AFFECTS ENVIRONMENT

We begin formal/structured education at age six, and in some cases, earlier. All throughout our developmental years, schooling helps to inform our ideologies of race, gender, sexuality, power structures, relationships, bonds, etc. Therefore, our educational experiences play a crucial role in our worldview, including how we see ourselves as citizens in the world.

However, when student experiences are not considered in curriculum, it invalidates their identity. One of the manifestations of this type of curriculum-inflicted trauma is the erasure and neglect of cultural capital in the classroom. The erasure and lack of acknowledgement of culture/experiences lead students to feel that they are not valued in a space that we deem one of the most revered in our culture: school. This all weighs on students' abilities to see themselves as whole beings and feel fully accepted by the communities they come from. Such sentiments create feelings of social ineptness in their own communities.

Since we place a lot of value on school/formal education, educational experiences that traumatize our students often lend them incapable of participating as "whole" citizens in their own communities and larger environment. This systematic practice and socialization (Steele and Aronson, 1995) which devalues student experience can make students feel that they must assimilate in order to be considered "useful" or "worthy" as people in society: This is a textbook example of stereotype threat and has long-lasting impacts on self-esteem. Therefore, Curriculum Trauma manifests in students feeling the need to abandon parts of themselves and/or their communities in order to feel valuable and worthy. Sadly, this form of trauma is how grass-roots, community-based leadership is lost.

#### HOW CURRICULUM TRAUMA AFFECTS INSTRUCTION

Curriculum Trauma harms all instruction and learning. A specific example that has broad implications can be seen in the field of English Composition. In California community colleges, generally speaking, students must complete rhetoric courses followed by critical thinking or literature courses before they can *elect* courses that study literature of various periods, groups, or specific thinkers. However, these *elective* courses often reflect diverse experiences, and their status as *optional* could have damaging impacts, especially on non-English majors whose identities are marginalized. Hence, the assumption that English Composition's current course sequence is optimal should be examined for its contribution to CT. That is, what if the sequence started with critical thinking and literature before or in place of rhetoric courses? Or, what if the literatures of the marginalized were central to the sequence rather than elected? And fundamentally, what if English course sequences showed that their educators prize creative thinking and creative writing as much as they prize critical thinking and expository, rhetorical, and research writing?

Critical thinking helps students understand why they believe what they do; it teaches them strategies for thinking and coming to an opinion about controversies. It is the prime and most logical setting in which to learn and apply decolonized, non-Eurocentric theories. It also teaches them strategies for reading and writing: If a student can analyze another person's argument and recognize serious errors of thinking, it gives them a model of what to avoid in their own writing and helps them develop their own beliefs when writing and debating. Having critical thinking as a base rather than as an end point in the sequence could therefore help students crystallize a world vision that they could use as a base to opine in subsequent rhetoric classes.

Along with deciding whether to make critical thinking foundational, those who create English course sequences should investigate that their sequences do not imply biases about the lives of non-white people. That literature of marginalized groups are electives rather than required implies that marginalized people do not matter. In a historical context, the barring of non-English majors from deeply studying literature that centers marginalized viewpoints reflects the barring, sometimes with the threat of death, of Black people from literacy. This compounded barring not only invalidates minoritized people's literature; it threatens their literacy. This enables the harm of intergenerational/historical trauma in a "polite racist" way (Davis as cited in Villarreal, 2020).

Writing departments also ought to question preferences toward requiring expository, rhetorical, and research modes over creative writing. Implementing course sequences that foster the minds of creatives could be as optimal and rigorous as the established sequence is to those who are less "creatively-inclined." Instead of stifling creativity, instructors could mentor it with courses like Advanced Storytelling, The Art of Creative Nonfiction, and Advanced Myth Writing.

## HOW CURRICULUM TRAUMA AFFECTS MATRICULATION

Curriculum Trauma also presents itself in the bureaucratic structure of student services, as students are often neglected in the cumbersome process of matriculation. Intentional or unintentional, navigating the matriculation process from admission to enrollment in their first course has often resulted in multiple traumatic experiences culminating in various exit points for students to disembark their educational journey. To counter this, most colleges have created a step-by-step guide consisting of taking a placement exam

upon enrollment, filling out financial aid, registering for courses, and seeing a counselor and completing an educational plan. Assembly Bill 705 was landmark legislation and a direct output of the deleterious impact on students of color by placing them in bottleneck English and math courses. These traumatic experiences were a result of inaccurate placement tools and non-equity-minded policies hindering students from completing a college-level transferable course within their first year.

The mere fact that the governor and state legislature had to legislate policy to counter the traumatic experiences of primarily students of color speaks volumes of the inept and archaic models that inflicted so much harm to students. Furthermore, the ping pong effect of the federal and local financial aid systems on students has resulted in a litany of traumatic experiences, triggering abandonment and trust issues. This, compounded with conflicting information, creates a high level of anxiety and stress for students who often qualify for aid due to their socio-economic status. The anxiety levels of waiting for assistance with applying for financial aid is often reflected in financial aid offices having the longest line prior to the start of school. Further, the counselor-to-student ratio for students who make it past the aforementioned steps is inconceivable. Although the Student Success Act of 2012 attempted extrinsic remedies by incentivizing the hiring of counselors and staff to mitigate these traumatic experiences, the paucity of equity-minded personnel and lack of intrinsic empathic care and validation for students experiencing this form of Curriculum Trauma was void from most implementation models. Currently, Guided Pathways attempts to provide some wraparound solutions in developing completion teams; however, more training and buy-in is needed from many colleges.

## CURRICULUM TRAUMA: A CALL FOR CHANGES

*Curriculum Trauma* lends our students false feelings of inadequacy not only in school, but at home and in their communities. In all areas of instruction and matriculation, stopping to question our processes for every generation should be routine. In what case would it ever be acceptable not to audit a system for effectiveness? Students and instructors grow and change, and each generation adopts new learning norms and tools. Curriculum lurks as one of the last pillared bastions that remains resistant to fundamental changes: Why don't we sufficiently interrogate, innovate, experiment, and take big risks?

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# Breaking the Silence: The Paradox and Agony of Education

by **Nathan Jones**, Associate Professor of English, Skyline College

**E**ducation is a revolutionary act of consciousness and is presumed to be the great equalizer in a civilized world. Unfortunately, most California community colleges are in a state of paralysis when it comes to confronting the issue of systemic racism. Most historically and predominately white institutions are not truly committed to the efforts of combating institutionalized racism, structural racism, anti-blackness, or establishing culturally relevant pedagogy and a student-ready college. If California community colleges were completely invested in serving their Black student population, and dismantling racial inequalities and inequities, there would be “a draining of the swamp”; a conscious rooting out of corrupted gatekeepers who influence policies, practices and procedures, whilst continuing the perpetuation of an antiquated system of oppression co-opting politically correct academic jargon like diversity, equity and inclusion to pacify its conservative constituency, all the while hiding behind the veil of white fragility. James Baldwin prophetically affirmed, “To act is to be committed, and to be committed is to be in danger. In this case, the danger, in the minds of most white Americans, is the loss of their identity” (Baldwin, 1963). That danger is the fear of a transformed educational system that will deliberately and intentionally implement equitable and inclusionary policies and practices focusing on the needs of its disproportionately impacted students of color. Whenever an opportunity at transforming a system of oppressive education is challenged, it is met with surreptitious codified linguistic volleying push back and backlash. This is “the trigger for white rage, inevitably, is black advancement. It is not the mere presence of black people that is the problem; rather, it is blackness with ambition, with drive, with purpose, with aspirations” (Anderson, 2016, p. 3).

Too often Black instructors and administrators have to straddle the fence to placate their colleagues and to neutralize their natural essence and “asili” to fit into a structure of an institution that was not originally design, created, or established with them in mind. Many Black faculty members are isolated and feared, and their level of education, experience and professional abilities are questioned by less qualified white colleagues because their approach

to educating students, namely students of color, are uniquely different than their white colleagues. Their insight, understanding, and lived experiences bring an idiosyncratic perspective and stratagem to lesson planning, curriculum development, and culturally relevant pedagogy that might just qualify as being student-ready and progressive in some cases. In doing so, isolating spaces are contrived to allow the blackbird to fly and the caged bird to sing.

Many in these institutions quietly know “white racism is a system of everyday practices that are motivated, buttressed, and rationalized by white notions of the inferiority of the culture, personality and morality of African Americans” (Feagan, Nikitah, and Hernan, 1996, p. 90). Diversity organizations often operate as specialized programs, like Learning Communities having mediocre funding streams and budgets with no real access to resources, power, or privilege, which in turn do not serve the academic and economic needs of their students, unless a benevolent administrator has a special interest in said organizations. California community colleges “education cannot and never will move beyond these crossroads, because it cannot transcend the social, political, and economic constraints that govern it” (Portes, 2005, p. 6).

What have the California community colleges done to move the needle to hire, promote, or nurture its Black faculty and students? Once a Black instructor is hired into an institution where he or she is the minority, that individual usually becomes the token or an anomaly to satisfy some diversity, inclusion, or equity initiative. California community colleges are just as culpable as any of the four-year colleges and universities, where racist policies and practices are embedded in the institutions fabric, unconsciously promoting anti-blackness, institutionalized racism and structural racism, and lurking surreptitiously beneath the surface, microaggressing the very people the institution claims it needs to eradicate its racial inequalities and insensitive practices toward. Diversity does not change the complexion of colorblind institutions, nor does it attempt to. What changes an institution is its willingness to be an equity-minded, transformative, and a student-ready oriented community, practicing culturally relevant pedagogy, having courageous conversations, building curriculum and lesson planning with Black and Brown individuals being at the center of change.

What does a student-ready college look like? A student-ready institution must possess a certain set of characteristics to qualify. “A student-ready college is one that strategically and holistically advances student success and works tirelessly to educate *all* students for civic and economic participation in a global and interconnected society» (Albertine,

Susan., Cooper, Michelle A., Major, Thomas Jr., McDonald, Nicole., & McNair, Tia B., 2016, p. 5). More importantly, a “study-ready” campus at minimum should qualify as ensuring “all services and activities—from admissions, to the business office, to the classroom and even campus security—are intentionally designed to facilitate students’ progressive advancement toward college completion and positive post-college outcomes... Student ready colleges offer a holistic approach to leadership that empowers all members of the campus to serve as leaders and educators» (Albertine, Susan., Cooper, Michelle A., Major, Thomas Jr., McDonald, Nicole., & McNair, Tia B., 2015, p. 6). In some ways, college campuses function like ecosystems with various integral components. Learning Communities, ethnic training series, community of practice, meta majors, Guided Pathways, and Promise Scholar Programs are examples of the elements that could qualify as such entities. Additionally, a college that is equity-minded actively seeks to rid itself of organizations, curriculum, and learning environments that traditionally practice all forms of racism and sexism. Equity-Mindedness is the mode of thinking that is exhibited by practitioners who call attention to patterns of inequity in student outcomes. These practitioners possess agency, are willing to take personal and institutional responsibility for the success of their students, and will critically reassess their own bias practices. This requires “that practitioners are race-conscious and aware of the social and historical context of exclusionary practices in American Higher Education” (Equity Institute 2019, Skyline College).

In order to be a transformative institution, the college should address historical and sociopolitical causes of inequalities identified in education, and engage in data informing efforts to repair and reconstitute the educational system. A successful transformative educational framework questions the system, the tools, and the strategies of a traditional approach and creates innovative student-centered, anti-racist, anti-sexist practices, and strategies to confront anti-blackness that systemically paves the road for student success. The last component to creating a transformative California community college is actively hiring and training instructors to engage in culturally relevant pedagogical methods, ultimately displaying cultural competencies, and cultural teachings demonstrating a propensity to teach cross culturally to multi-racial and multi-ethnic students in a safe and holistic environment that acknowledges the students by using literature and texts in the curriculum that reflects their cultural background, concerns, and information that relates specifically to them and that acknowledges their lived experiences. This should be practiced across an entire campus and embraced in all disciplines; however, this is not the case as folks struggle with the thought of transforming old habits. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. stated that the “function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to



think critically. Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education.” Unfortunately, many of our colleagues still remain in a world of colorblindness and aversive racism finding “it difficult for us [them] to address these unconscious beliefs” (Diangelo, 2018, p. 42).

California community colleges are in the business of educating populations of people of all walks of life, but the challenge is to educate a people who just might think and challenge the context in which they exist at an institution, and this is precisely the dilemma. “The paradox of education is precisely this—that as one begins to become conscious, one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated” (Baldwin, 1963). The agony and paradox of education that is experienced by Black educators is that we are feared, because we hold up the mirror to our institutions, encouraging them to make real on the rhetorical promises and policies that are often found in mission statements representing the values of the college(s) which employ us. When this happens, Black educators (with a purpose) are usually dismissed, discredited, demonized, and destroyed for having values and integrity and a true belief that a system will uphold its principles of change and inclusion. This is the “American Dilemma” that Gunnar Myrdal writes about. So, the real question is, can one dismantle the house that the master built by using the master’s tools?

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# Do They Really Care About US: The Civil Right Act 1964, Diversity, and Equity

by **Dr. Nyree Berry**, Faculty, African American Outreach Initiative Lead Liaison,  
Los Angeles Community College District

 One can argue that policy making does not always lead to sustainable progress for African American students. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was intended to reconcile the egregious, abhorrent enslavement of African Americans. Oppositely, it made racism less visible, fertilized discrimination, and stagnated African American students even more. The number of African American students entering four-year colleges and universities have mostly remained the same since 1976 (Harper, 2012).

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 made structural racism visible because the policy failed to examine human behavior.

Today, 56 years after Jim Crow laws were abolished, postsecondary education is still separate and unequal despite the Brown vs. the Board of Education mandate. According to the National Center on Education Statistics (NCES) in 2017, approximately 80% of U.S. community college students from disproportionately low- and moderate-income brackets wanted to obtain a bachelor's degree. According to U.S. census data, 26.6% of African Americans (ages 25 and older) in California have earned a bachelor's degree (or higher), while 30% have attended college but have not earned a degree. Although laws have been passed very little progress has been made.

In most cases, African American students report having external obligations that impact their ability to commit to school full time. The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office MIS Data Mart reported an overwhelming majority of African American students (77%) attend community college part time (fewer than 12 units in a term), which could be due to employment, family, and other commitments that are required to sustain a livable lifestyle.

In the past, most research suggested that African American students were not capable of excelling at two- and four-year colleges and universities due to poor study habits and lack of rigor in college preparatory courses. However, the reality is African Americans encounter basic needs insecurities, environmental pressures—work, family, financial, stressful life events, racial microaggressions, racially-hostile campus climates, deficit perspectives because the civil rights act failed to address racism. The majority of African Americans attend a community college and yet, community colleges are underfunded, compared to the CSU and UC systems. For African Americans, community colleges are ostensibly accessible, but sadly structural racism and being underfunded have played a pivotal role in their lower completion rates.

With the emergence of new research and data, policymakers, educators, and practitioners decided to shift their approach to strength-based learning and an anti-deficit framework and begin lobbying for diversity and equity to be embedded in student success programs and academic programs as a way to improve completion rates for minoritized students (Harper, 2012). Scholars began to conduct research on the advantages of embedding diversity and equity into all college programs (Wells, Fox, and Cordova-Cobo, 2016; Gurin et al., 2002). Despite the growing understanding amongst policymakers, educators, and practitioners, opportunities for African American students have been less than moderately responsive to legislative mandates.

In order to understand this unfortunate phenomenon, it is important to dichotomize diversity and equity. In 1996, the state of California abolished the Affirmative Action policy in governmental institutions. In restitution, the state enacted the construct of *diversity*.

## DIVERSITY VS. EQUITY

Diversity became the mandate and the means to comply with the law and the status quo throughout the state. Diversity became the enemy of equity. Diversity allowed the state to appear to be inclusive in variety, while perpetuating the blindness to conditions institutionalized by Jim Crow laws. *Diversity* did not address nor reconcile the hundreds of years of legislation that disabled students' of color success.

Instead, diversity gave birth to racial inequity, displaying white privilege, which was once ambiguous but now unmistakable, and exemplifying how our bureaucratic systems were founded.

Goals and outcomes are important when developing a student equity plan, but racial equity is equally important to ensure those goals and outcomes are sustainable. To reduce the achievement gap, institutional responsiveness to student groups that are continuously being indexed as disproportionately impacted (DI) groups on every matrix requires a student equity plan that addresses race. In most cases African Americans, are commonly classified as a DI student group, and yet according to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office MIS Data Mart in 2018-2019, there was approximately one African American tenured faculty for every 131 African American students, and approximately one white tenured faculty for every 55 white students. African American students at community colleges have little to no connection to the curriculum and limited institutional support. Community colleges lack African American role models for student success, and culturally relevant, responsive, and sustaining pedagogy has a direct impact on enrollment, retention, and student success. The success of African American students is dependent on the elements such as engagement in frequently and educationally purposeful activities in student organizations and in campus activities, supportive relationship with campus mentors, faculty, and meaningful interactions with diverse peers (Flowers, 2003).

#### ACTION WILL SHOW THEY REALLY CARE ABOUT US

The root of the problem is the lack of awareness of the structural and systemic racism embedded into the fabric of U.S culture. Reducing inequities in educational attainment by race and ethnicity will require intention and definitive effort (Witham, Malcolm-Piquex, Dowd, & Bensimon, 2015). Additionally, there is abuse of policy and implantation in the form using *equity* and *diversity* interchangeably to avoid tackling and challenging racial inequities.

Viewing this through an equitable and social justice lens, policy implementation and evaluation is being designed based on historically predominantly white culture of colleges rather than implementing based on the new reality: that African American students are

being looked over in our educational system. Failure to have mentors that can adequately guide African American students through the institutional barriers, challenges, and opportunities in higher education is not conducive to student success, campus success, and enrollment. A racial equity framework must be the top priority.

The absence of racial equity in higher education will have a devastating impact on the aspirations of our future leaders who rarely see leaders who resemble them or know their life experiences.

While, higher education is the single greatest hope for intellectual and national progress in this country (Teague, 2015). For African Americans, education has created a national dilemma rather than the solution because the approach was not intended to improve educational attainment, decrease poverty, nor support generational wealth. Unfortunately, the sad reality is human behavior cannot be legislated and policy makers, educators, and practitioners need to show that they really care about us by admitting The Civil Rights act of 1964 did not address structural racism and anti-black practices, diversity paved the way for everyone but African Americans. When developing, designing, implementing, and evaluating programs, race and white privilege should be factored into the program design. Deliberate and intentional racial equity practices and programs, specifically for African American students will be the beginning of rectifying the misfortunes of the past.

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# Dealing with Health Disparities in Nursing School

by Valerie Udeozor MSN, RN, Pasadena City College

**H**ealth disparities, like racism, are difficult to discuss. As a health care professional and nursing faculty, I like to spend more time on how my students, the future nurses of America, can help. Health disparities were recently brought to light with the COVID-19 pandemic. The death rates of persons of color, particularly African Americans, were alarming. In Chicago, nearly 70% of COVID-19 deaths were Black people, although they only make up 30% of the population. In Louisiana, 70.5% of deaths have occurred amongst Black people who represent only 32.2% of the population (Yancy, 2020). The list goes on and on.

Health disparities are old news for African Americans. African American women are three or four more times likely to die in childbirth than white women (American Heart Association, 2019). Patients with Sickle Cell Disease in the African American community suffer from being labeled as drug addicts when they seek medication for their excruciating pain. Black women have lower rates of breast cancer incidence yet have 40% higher death rates than white women (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012).

I was pleased that our current textbook for Medical Surgical Nursing used at Pasadena City College actually addresses attitudes of health care providers, particularly nurses and cited a study where data supported the “need to improve the attitudes of health care professionals caring for individuals with Sickle Cell Disease, particularly nurses” (Hinkle and Cheever, 2018). Many textbooks shy away from these hard facts.

There are, of course, things to look and discuss such as pre-existing conditions and lifestyle, but we, as providers of care, must look at our own trends and actually listen to populations who express feelings of being unheard. I have had the honor to work on a documentary film since August 2019 that deals with African American infant and maternal mortality. We celebrate and hear testimony from amazing Black women and their families from varied socio-economic status who experienced stillborn and maternal death. We also interview Black women who had successful birth outcomes. Their sentiments were all the same: “My doctor did not listen to me when I complained of pain”; “I felt like the more questions I

asked, the more they thought I had an attitude or I was bothering them”; “No one listened”; “I kept getting sent home”; “I knew something was wrong, but no one believed me.” High profile Black women such as Serena Williams have expressed the same sentiments. These factors indicate flaws within healthcare and how we deliver it.

I would love to teach nursing like everything is dandy and everyone is treated and cared for in the same manner and given the same amount of attention and seen as quickly and listened to with the same intent, but that feels to me like telling children we live in a perfect world where everything is awesome. All of these factors and sentiments, coupled with social determinants in many (not all) cases, such as residing in higher crime rate areas and less access to healthier foods as well as bias in care, contribute to health disparities.

In the documentary “Birthing While Black,” we are focused on presenting resources and solutions for Black women giving birth. We spotlight community support and doula centers specifically for Black women in areas where they reside.

In my own life and as an African American nursing faculty who lectures to cohorts who are less than 5% African American, it is imperative to teach them to know and present resources to patients. Look at patients in the eye, slow down, and listen. I will never forget the male Caucasian OBGYN I saw back in 2008, who was rushed, not friendly, and not listening to my concerns. He told me I had fibroids because I was “Black and 37 years old.” There actually turned out to be no fibroids, and upon blood test results, the fibroids he was seeing were not fibroids but my now eleven-year-old son.

In the clinical setting, I try to teach nursing students to be nurses who do not make assumptions. It is my job to make sure they are self-aware of any biases they may have that affect the way they deliver care and present ways to be more effective. Being a nurse is demanding enough without health disparities; however, if we are preaching *treating patients as a “whole,”* we must face and deal with health disparities head on to improve patient outcomes. It is my pleasure to work with my nursing students to improve the future of health care in America.

RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE ON HEALTH DISPARITIES:

The Minority Health Project: <https://sph.unc.edu/mhp/about-the-minority-health-project-2/>



Black Women for Wellness: [www.bwwla.org](http://www.bwwla.org)

Birthing While Black documentary: <https://www.facebook.com/Birthing-While-Black-Movie-105750677843998/>

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