Skyline College's Diversity Framework:
Equity Audit using Completion by Design Framework

Developed by the Skyline College SEEED Committee

Written by Singhashri Gazmuri, Fall 2012

Introduction

Perhaps nowhere in California is the student success movement more apparent than at Skyline College, where there is a firm commitment to equitable outcomes for the college's diverse student body, and an emerging culture of inquiry into how that equity might be achieved. One example of this commitment was the formation, in the fall of 2011, of a new committee of the college's shared governance, the Stewardship for Equity, Equal Employment and Diversity (SEEED) Committee. The committee's aim is to address issues of institutional diversity, equity and student success through inquiry and action.

The SEEED Committee was formed by bringing together two previously separate groups, the original SEEED Committee and the Student Equity Committee, focused on institutional diversity and equity issues and issues of student success, respectively. By combining these two committees, the college hoped to acknowledge the complex and interlocking relationship between policies and practices at the institutional level, and student outcomes.

Rather than focusing on institutional practices, such as hiring, separately from student success challenges, such as financial aid, the college saw that a comprehensive approach was needed; an approach that considers the connections between the various levels at which an institution operates, from organizational policies and practices, to campus climate, to student supports, and finally, student outcomes[1].

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[1] These levels form the backbone of California Tomorrows Equity-Driven Systems Change (ESC) Model. The model is included in this report in Appendix A.

Over the next two years, the committee worked to identify areas of the college that they wanted to learn more about, within each area developing inquiry questions and engaging in action research to uncover potential barriers to student success within the college's policies and practices. The committee used California Tomorrow's *Equity-Driven Systems Change (ESC) Toolkit* as a guiding model for their work.[2]

Then, in the summer of 2012, committee members gathered with institutional leaders to share their findings and develop a vision and strategies to address issues uncovered in their research. The research, vision and actions developed by the committee are outlined in this Diversity Framework, and will guide the committee's work for the next 3-5 years.

Campus Snapshot

Established in 1969, Skyline College sits majestically above the Northern California coast, just six miles south of San Francisco. As soon as one steps onto campus, it becomes impossible not to appreciate the natural beauty of this 111 acre urban sanctuary. The campus was clearly designed and built with learning in mind, and a commitment to supporting the achievement of students coming from the ever diversifying communities in its midst. There is also a clear vision of social justice: etched into the wall above the entrance to the student and community center reads the famous quote by Mahatma Gandhi, "Be the change you wish to see in the world."

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[2] To download the full toolkit go to http://www.californiatomorrow.org/media/ESC-Toolkit.pdf. A model of the planning process is in Appendix B.

Skyline College was opened in 1969 and is one of three colleges in the San Mateo Community College District (SMCCD), along with Cañada College, in Redwood City, and the College of San Mateo. The county is made up of 45% White, 25% Hispanic, 24% Asian/Pacific Islander, 3% Multi-ethnic, and 3% African-American[3].

The college serves 10,250 students per semester, 53% of whom are women, and 43% men. Ethnically, students are 21% White, 19% Hispanic, 23% Asian/Pacific Islander, 17% Filipino, 12% Multi-ethnic, and 4% African-American (with 5% other or non-reported). A little less than half of the students at Skyline are under 22 years of age, a quarter is between 23-28, about 20% are between 29-50, and 7% are above 50[4].

The college's ethnic distribution closely matches that of the county, with a few exceptions, the most notable being the smaller percentage of White and Hispanic students and the larger percentage of Multi-ethnic students, when compared to the county. It's also worth noting that the college distinguishes Filipino as separate from Asian/Pacific Islander, and it is unknown whether students reported themselves as one or both of these categories. Regardless, it would seem that there is a higher percentage of Asian/Pacific Islanders, if including Filipino students, at the college when compared with the county.

Skyline offers over 40 associate degrees and over 50 certificates in a variety of programs such as cosmetology, automotive technology, and allied health. Many students choose to transfer to a four

[3] SEEED Hiring Sub-Committee presentation, August 2012

[4] Skyline College Annual Report, 2011-2012,

http://issuu.com/skylinecollege/docs/annualreport20112012?mode=window&backgroundColor=%23222222

year institution after completing lower division general education requirements. There are a number of learning communities and other programs to support the college's diverse student population, such as a first year experience program, Puente, MESA, and ASTEP.

Skyline College Mission, Vision, Values and Goals

The following are from the college's 2012-2017 Strategic plan. In order to ensure that the work of the SEEED committee is integrated into existing efforts, college leadership met in the fall of 2012 to align the current goals of the institution with the vision and strategies in this diversity framework.

Mission Statement

To empower and transform a global community of learners.

Vision Statement

Skyline College inspires a global and diverse community of learners to achieve intellectual, cultural, social, economic and personal fulfilment.

Values Statement

Education is the foundation of our civilized democratic society.

Campus Climate: We value a campus-wide climate that reflects a 'students first philosophy' with mutual respect between all constituencies and appreciation for diversity. Both instruction and student services are dedicated to providing every student with an avenue to success.

Open Access: We are committed to the availability of quality educational programs and services for every member of our community regardless of level of preparation, socio-economic status, cultural,

religious or ethnic background, or disability. We are committed to providing students with open access to programs and responsive student services that enable them to advance steadily toward their goals.

Student Success: We value students' success in achieving their goals, and strengthening their voices as they transform their lives through their educational experience.

Academic Excellence: We value excellence in all aspects of our mission as a comprehensive community college offering preparation for transfer to a baccalaureate institution, workforce and economic development through career technical education programs and certificates, Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees, basic skills development, and lifelong learning. We are committed to academic rigor and quality with relevant, recent, and evolving curriculum and well-equipped programs that include new and emerging areas of study. We are dedicated to an educational climate that values creativity, innovation and freedom of intellectual exploration, discovery, thought, and exchange of ideas.

Community Connection: We value a deep engagement with the community we serve and our role as an academic and cultural center for community including business, industry, labor, non-profits, government and the arts. We are dedicated to maintaining a college culture and institutional climate that is warm and welcoming to all.

Shared Governance: We value just, fair, inclusive, and well understood, transparent governance processes based upon open and honest communication.

Sustainability: We value an institutional culture that represents a strong commitment to environmental sustainability and justice. We are committed to the tenets of sustainability "To meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs."

College Goals

1. Develop the scope, quality, accessibility and accountability of instructional and student service offerings, programs, and services to lead the San Francisco Bay region in transferring students, awarding degrees and certificates and reflecting social and educational equity.

2. Enhance institutional effectiveness in planning and decision-making processes through cooperative leadership, effective communication, and shared governance.

3. Fulfill the college's role as a leading academic and cultural center for the community.

4. Play a central role in the preparation of the regions workforce and expand networks and partnerships with business, the community, and non-profit organizations.

5. Provide human, physical, technological and financial resources to assure excellent educational programs and student services in order to support students in attaining their educational goals and improve institutional effectiveness.

6. Establish and maintain fiscal stability and alignment of programs and services to the core mission, vision and values of the college.

7. Recruit, retain and support a world-class faculty, staff and administration that is committed ongoing improvement through access to opportunities for professional growth and advancement.

8. Internationalize the educational experience by enriching the college with a diverse community of learners representing the collective resources of humanity and engaging in a vibrant dialogue that engenders an understanding of others.

A Commitment to Equity and Excellence

As part of their commitment to equity, the leadership at Skyline College has adopted the *Completion by Design Framework: Preventing Loss, Creating Momentum*[5] to help them in defining where they might focus their energies. This framework supports colleges in assessing where they might lose students as they progress through the academic process, from when they first come into contact with the institution until they complete their academic goals, and developing strategies for retaining students as they progress. Completion by Design defines the stages of student progress as connection, entry, progress and completion.

Using this language, the SEEED Committee developed the following focus question to drive their inquiry processes:

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[5] For more on Completion by Design go to http://www.completionbydesign.org/about-us/our-approach-and-tools.

How do our practices and processes in connection, entry, progress and completion impact campus equity and student success at Skyline College?

The Inquiry Process

After developing the focus question, the committee divided their inquiry into four domains: **1) Community Connections, 2) Curriculum and Pedagogy, 3) Communications, and 4) Hiring**. They then developed a question that they would research for each domain and created action research agendas to address their inquiry questions.

Community Connections

Purpose

Skyline's relationship with local feeder high schools is an important connection and bridge to incoming students, particularly for those of underrepresented backgrounds. Additionally, general Counseling Outreach to those high schools is an essential component to the image of Skyline College at local high schools. It is therefore critical that the institution look closely at the success of our outreach efforts through general counseling.

Inquiry Question

How does our current outreach effort make Skyline College accessible for potential first generation college students at local feeder high schools?

Methods

To address the inquiry question, the group narrowed their research to the following questions:

1) What programs and services are local feeder high schools aware of? And, how is this information presented?

2) What general outreach efforts does Skyline College offer to Jefferson High School and South San Francisco High School?

Student surveys were conducted in spring 2012. There were 160 students that answered the surveys. A breakdown of student respondents is below:

- 160 high school students
    - 10th grade: 7
    - 11th grade: 31
    - 12th grade: 122

Other forms of data used included:

1) Number of outreach events attended (prior semesters)
2) Staffing and budget fluctuations for general outreach (2007-present)
3) Modes of communication for outreach efforts

Findings

93% of participants plan to attend college immediately after high school and 58% plan on attending a California Community College.

97% of participants had heard of Skyline College in the past. Among the highest responses students heard about Skyline College via:

- 76% High School Counselor
- 62% HS Teacher
- 43% College Fairs
- 31% Other (i.e. Friends and Family)
- 19% Concurrent Enrollment Program

66% of student participants are familiar with Skyline College resources. Students indicated being familiar with:

- 54% Financial Aid

- 36% General Counseling

- 32% Cosmetology

- 26% Automotive

Among others, students indicated becoming aware of Skyline College resources in the top following ways:

- 56% High School Counselor

- 41% High School Teacher

- 24% College Fairs

- 13% Concurrent Enrollment Program

- 11% Skyline College Counselor

- 10% Herman@s Program

86% of student participants have not spoken with an outreach counselor. Of the 13% who have spoken to an outreach counselor, 73% have found it successful.

In asking the students what the best way a college can provide information to them, they indicated:

- 81% High School Counseling

- 61% High School Teachers

- 48% Skyline College Counselor (Outreach)

Key Learning:

- Our local high school students hear about Skyline College from HS Staff and family/friends

- In collecting data from high schools, the process needs to happen early

- Surveys sparked questions that may be addressed through focus groups

- General Outreach efforts, outreach events, and record keeping can be strengthened

Implications

This line of inquiry has helped the college better understand the manner in which students most often receive Skyline College information. The committee's next question is: How can Skyline provide a consistent flow of accurate information regarding Skyline College's programs and resources via people and programs that most effectively interact with students.

Curriculum and Pedagogy

Purpose

Because only 5% of pre-algebra students make it through the algebra sequence to transfer-level math, the Curriculum and Pedagogy sub-committee looked at what practices and processes in the algebra sequence impact equitable student success in statistics.

Inquiry Question

What practices and processes in algebra sequence impact equitable student success in statistics?

Methods

To address the inquiry question, the sub-committee looked at the following through the auspices of the office of Planning, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness:

- How many students took Math 200, Bus 123, Psych 171 at Skyline (08/09-11/12)?
    - What were the success rates?
    - Of those students, how many students had Math 120 as their previous math course?
    - How is this enrollment disaggregated by ethnicity?

- What are the declared majors of our Elementary Algebra students (07/08-11/12)?
  - Do those majors lead into Statistics?

- What transfer level math classes do former Math 110 students (Fall 2009) take across the district?
  - How is this enrollment disaggregated by ethnicity?
  - What are the success rates?

Findings

By far, Math 200 is the most popular statistics course at Skyline College with a 71% share of student enrollment, as compared to Bus 123's share of 17% and Psyc 171's share of 13%. However, only 55-56% of students pass Math 200 or Bus 123, a stark contrast to the 86% of Psyc 171 students that are successful. And while roughly 40% of Psyc 171 and Math 200 students took Math 120 previously, only 22% of Bus 123 students did. As for ethnic breakdown, Math 200 and Bus 171 mirror the college as a whole, while Psyc 171 has a disproportionate share of Whites and Hispanics.

With regards to majors, 41% of elementary algebra students at Skyline College are undeclared and 29% are non-STEM.

District wide, Asians and Whites who took Elementary Algebra in 2009 had higher success rates in Trigonometry while their Filipino, Hispanic, and Black counterparts did better in Statistics:

Of SMCCD students who took Elementary Algebra in FALL 2009:						
Ethnicity	Math 200 Successes	Math 200 Enrollees	Math 200 Success Rate	Math 130 Successes	Math 130 Enrollees	Math 130 Success Rate
American	0	0	0%	0	0	0%

Indian/Alaskan Native						
Asian	11	17	65%	10	12	83%
Black - Non-Hispanic	3	8	38%	0	1	0%
Filipino	16	21	76%	3	8	38%
Hispanic	24	37	65%	9	18	50%
Multi Races	11	15	73%	1	1	100%
Pacific Islander	1	7	14%	0	0	0%
Unknown	19	23	83%	3	7	43%
White Non-Hispanic	29	41	71%	10	13	77%
Total	114	169	67%	36	60	60%

Implications

It appears that any intervention in the Algebra sequence should first and foremost be directed at improving success in Math 200, as opposed to Psyc 171 or Bus 123. That being said, the outstanding success rate of Psyc 171 demands further exploration, as does its disproportionate share of Whites and Hispanics. Furthermore, an intervention in the Algebra sequence would most likely benefit the Elementary Algebra students with non-STEM majors, a share of the classes that could be as high as 70%. Still, it is troubling to see that for the SMCCD Elementary Algebra students of Fall 2009, Whites and Asians did better in Trigonometry while and Filipinos, Hispanics, and Blacks did better in Statistics. Further research is most certainly needed.

Communication

Purpose

Considering that a student's financial success can affect progress, knowledge of financial aid and scholarship opportunities is an important key to student success.

Inquiry Question

How do faculty receive and share information regarding financial aid and scholarship opportunities with Skyline College students? What is its impact on First-Year students applying for scholarship opportunities?

Methods

1) A hard copy survey was disseminated to 108 students from Math, English and Communications courses.

2) A hard copy survey was provided to 10 faculty members from the Science, Math and Technology, Language Arts and Social Sciences divisions. Half of the 10 faculty members were involved with Learning Communities and half were not involved in Learning Communities.

3) Online surveys were administered through Survey Monkey. The Faculty Survey was broadcast on Skyline Shines received 1 response. The Student Survey was announced on Vanson Nguyen's Facebook page receiving 41 responses.

Faculty were asked:
- About involvement on campus
- If they receive financial aid information
- If they receive scholarship information
- How they would share the above information
- What preference they have for receiving such information

- Reasons for not sharing the information

Findings

Faculty responded that the best ways to receive information were:

- Email

- Classroom presentation by Financial Aid Office

3 faculty members responded as to why they did not share the information received

- 2 assumed students already knew

- 1 needed time to cover content

Students responded that the best ways to receive information were:

- Email

- Announcements in the classroom

Those involved with Learning Communities were more likely to respond with a "yes" when asked whether they receive financial aid and scholarship information.

The top 3 ways students heard about scholarships include:

1) Word of Mouth

2) Instructor

3) Classroom Presentation

There were not significant differences in the responses of the first-year students versus the non-first-year students.

Why students applied for scholarships/financial aid:

- 16 students responded

- 56% said they needed the money

- 31% said scholarships help

Why students didn't apply for scholarships/financial aid:

- 23% said they didn't know

- 19% said they didn't meet the requirements

- 17% said they were too lazy

- No students indicated that they applied because someone told them to

Top 3 ways students heard about scholarships

1) Instructor

2) Word of Mouth

3) Classroom Presentations

Top responses as to why they did or did not apply

1) Money (those that applied)

2) Didn't know (those that didn't apply)

3) Didn't meet the requirements (those that didn't apply)

Only 2 students said they applied because someone referred them.

Implications

- This is important data that can inform the communication effort on campus

- Learned more about students and faculty

- Involve the scholarship staff in the process in the future

- Share the data gathering process

- Conduct subsequent iterations of the survey

Hiring

Purpose

The Hiring Sub-Committee seeks to understand why Skyline isn't hiring faculty and staff that are more representative of the ethnic diversity of the college's student body.

Inquiry Question

How do our current hiring practices assist or inhibit the attracting, hiring and retaining of faculty, staff, and administrators reflective of our student population?

Methods

With the help of the Institutional Planning and Research Office, the SEEED Committee, and Human Resources Office, the Hiring subcommittee created a questionnaire that asks people who have been on Skyline College hiring committees to respond to a hiring survey. This survey was attached to the district questionnaire, which staff and faculty who have been on recent hiring committees were sent from the SMCCD District offices. It was also sent to faculty via Survey Monkey to gather a wider range of responses from people who have participated in previous hiring committees. 42 faculty responded to the survey. Responses were confidential.

Findings

Looking at the most up-to-date data, the most recent hires at Skyline are somewhat representative of the demographics of our student population, although the overall faculty is still not as

representative. The largest group that was underrepresented on the faculty/staff /administration to student ratio in the demographics of the college was Filipino and Pacific Islander.

The hiring survey revealed some strong feelings that the hiring process itself was unfair. Going through each respondent and correlating answers might give a more clear picture of the particular populations for whom the hiring process seemed to be biased.

Finally, the survey was administered at the end of a particularly busy semester hiring-wise, and for many who responded, especially if they had not been hired, it may have predisposed them to a stronger response than might have been garnered in a semester where there was limited hiring.

Implications

With more time, more committee members to weigh in and more opportunities to dig deeper on respondents initial responses (i.e., through follow-up focus groups) we might get a clearer picture of people's experiences on hiring committees. We also think that it might behove the college to make the hiring process much more transparent so as to mitigate possible misinterpretations and/or possible bias on the screening and hiring committees.

We need to make a more concerted effort to recruit, hire and retain representative faculty/staff/administrators that mirror our student population, especially those that are underrepresented (currently Filipino and Pacific Islanders).

A Vision for Greater Equity and Student Success

The following nine vision element, developed by the SEEED Committee in collaboration with institutional leaders, will guide the work of committee members and set the agenda for the institution for the next 3-5 years. The college is currently working on aligning these vision elements with the college's current mission and vision to ensure that they are integrated into already established institutional planning.

1. **An institution devoted to global learning** that draws on the collective resources of humanity and provides robust international and multicultural programs, services and initiatives.

2. **Transparent processes** reflecting the values of Skyline College that serve our internal and external communities, promoting equity and cultural competency for all students, staff, and faculty through a lens of social justice and agency.

3. **Comprehensive community outreach and access** with the promise of retention and success.

4. **A multiple points of entry online/offline model** for students based on a distributed service online/offline model by staff and faculty. (SKYMAP/Path)

5. **Comprehensive and clearly defined educational pathways** that bridge students' experiences from connection to completion and beyond.

6. **Holistic and seamlessly integrated guidance**, planning, outreach, and instruction, designed and informed by the students' perspectives.

7. **A technology advisory committee** that coordinates resources to support students and faculty through training, access and assessment.

8. **A center for transformational inquiry** that conducts, facilitates, and communicates research toward institutional effectiveness.

9. A fully resourced, staffed, coordinated, and integrated **center for transformative scholarship, teaching, and learning** that is both physical and web-based and positively affects student success.

Strategies to Move us toward our Vision

The following 3-5 year strategies will help the institution move toward their vision at all levels, from organizational policies and practices, to student outcomes. It is the responsibility of the SEEED Committee to guide progress on these strategies and reflect on progress, towards continuous improvement. Each strategy has been assigned to a sub-committee tasked with developing an in-depth implementation plan and aligning that plan with other institutional efforts already underway.

1. Cultivate a **culture of bold leadership** that intentionally engages faculty, staff, and students toward a common vision.

2. Create processes that fundamentally **change the organizational structure** to serve students equitably and efficiently.

3. **Map educational pathways** for students, perform gap analyses of these pathways, and develop SKyPath to ensure continuity of institutional support for student success.

4. **Engage the community with comprehensive outreach** involving students, faculty, staff and alums that establishes mutual connections and partnerships.

5. Expand and integrate **international initiatives** throughout the college and the community.

6. Create and **equitable hiring process** combined with ongoing capacity building, training, and information resources for faculty and staff.

7. Create a **comprehensive integrated ongoing professional development program** that focuses practices that lead toward equitable student success and recognizes and builds on employee accomplishments.

8. Create a resource that facilitates **mentoring for staff/faculty/admin** to explore technological possibilities in order to **bridge the digital divide**.

9. **Identify funding** for staffing and operational needs to establish:
   - A Center for Transformative Inquiry
   - A Center for Scholarship for Transformative Teaching and Learning
   - Online teaching and learning
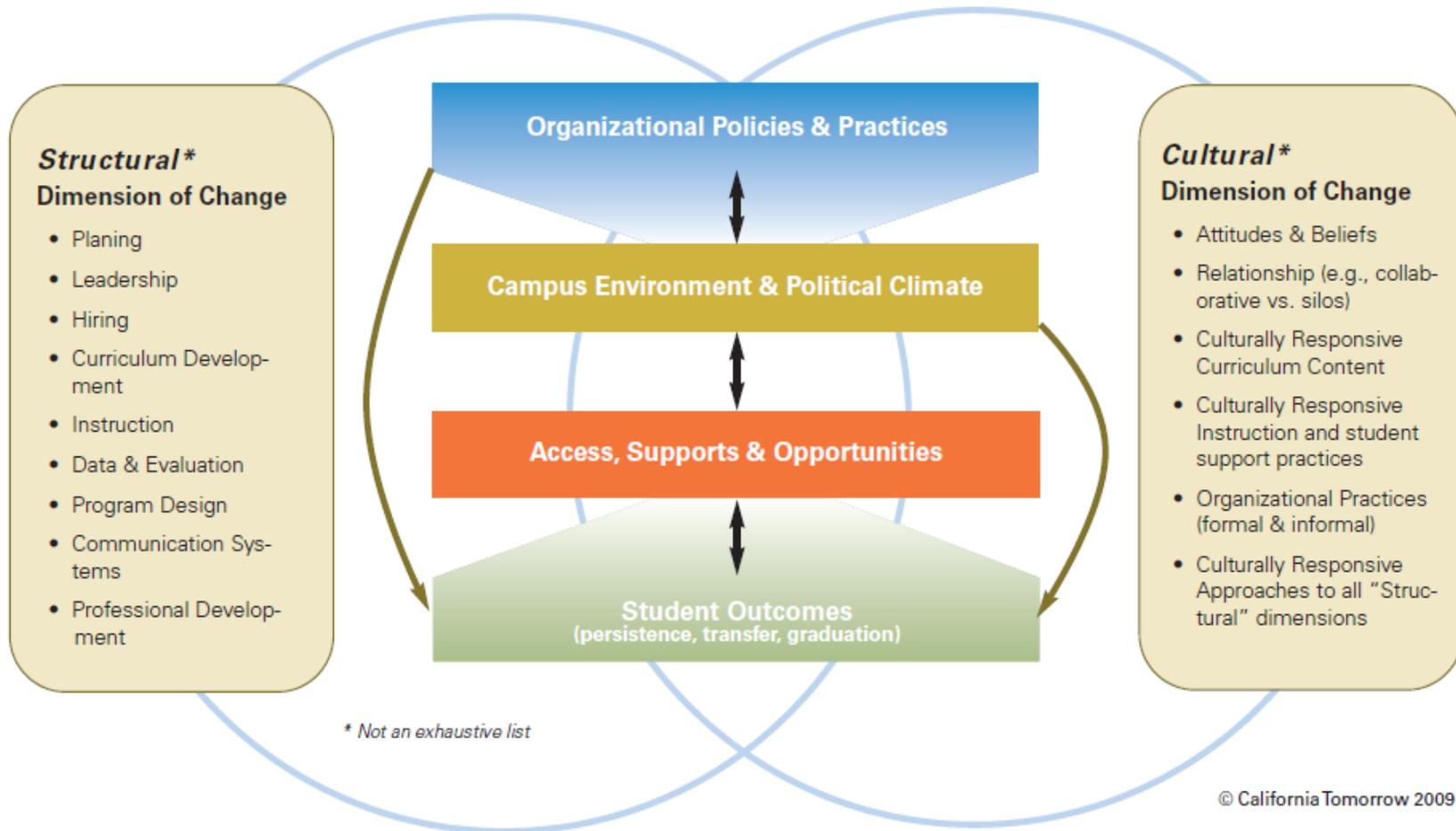   - Global Learner Institute

Conclusion

The work of improving outcomes for students in today's community colleges is not for the faint of heart. It takes courage and conviction to recognize the clear gaps in achievement among underrepresented students and galvanize those at all levels of the institution to create change. Skyline College has demonstrated a strong commitment to doing just that, with patience and understanding that change does not take place overnight.

The Skyline SEEED Committee has shown remarkable dedication to gathering and analysing data that is accurate and can be a force for change. Its members have been willing to ask tough questions, engage in difficult dialogue, and share their findings and implications with institutional leadership in the interest of being a catalyst for new and innovative initiatives, such as creating a Center for Transformative Inquiry.

Over the next five years, they will continue to work on gathering data in new areas of inquiry and guide the work of sub-committees tasked with carrying out many of the strategies outlined here. Their hope is that, over time, the culture of inquiry they've established will become part of the fabric of the institution and that all administrators, faculty and staff will engage in on-going efforts to improve the outcomes for every student that enters their doors. This culture shift will require a continued and deepening commitment to the vision of being a global and diverse community of learners achieving intellectual, cultural, social, economic and personal fulfilment.

Equity- Driven Systems Change (ESC) Model

Structural*
Dimension of Change

- Planing
- Leadership
- Hiring
- Curriculum Development
- Instruction
- Data & Evaluation
- Program Design
- Communication Systems
- Professional Development

Organizational Policies & Practices

Campus Environment & Political Climate

Access, Supports & Opportunities

Student Outcomes
(persistence, transfer, graduation)

Cultural*
Dimension of Change

- Attitudes & Beliefs
- Relationship (e.g., collaborative vs. silos)
- Culturally Responsive Curriculum Content
- Culturally Responsive Instruction and student support practices
- Organizational Practices (formal & informal)
- Culturally Responsive Approaches to all "Structural" dimensions

* Not an exhaustive list

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Appendix B

The Equity-Driven Systems Change Process

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