The Equity Imperative for Higher Education

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November 20, 2019
Student Success as “Moral Imperative”

In the world of higher education, colleges “promise” students that, if they paid their tuition and fees, attended classes, and did everything required and expected of them, they’d achieve their educational goals, be it a degree or certificate or credential. Yet, across America and in our own region, we have institutions struggling to deliver on the promise, which has, in part, contributed to a negative view of higher education.

How can we collectively do better to deliver on the promise we made to students?

Sonny Ramaswama, President, NWCCA, *The Beacon*, September 2019
Moral Imperative

**Student success** is defined by student learning and achievement that occurs as a result of the educational programs, experiences, and support offered by the college such that students accomplish their current and future academic, personal, and professional goals.

We define **closing equity gaps** as the effort to advance fairness and opportunity by providing support to promote student achievement and close barriers to academic excellence and success.

At a fundamental level, however, I view student success to be a **moral imperative**, i.e., as a compulsion to act.

Sonny Ramaswama, President, NWCCA, *The Beacon*, September 2019
Today’s Talk

- Cost
- Race
- Transfer
- Equity
- Action
Gaps in Affordability for Flagship Universities

Low-Income

$8,500 per year

$34,000 (4 years)

Middle-Income

$9,700 per year

$38,800 (4 years)

Mugglestone et al., (IHEP, 2019)
"Good Jobs"

*Good jobs pay a minimum of $35,000 for workers between the ages of 25 and 44, and at least $45,000 for workers between the ages of 45 and 64 (Carnevale et al., 2009)
Inequitable Impact on Earnings ($ Billions)

- White: 554
- Black: -202
- Latinx: -352

Carnevale et al. (2009)
The Unequal Race for Good Jobs
(Carnevale et al., 2019)

“The good jobs gap between White workers and Black and Latino workers persists as a result of discrimination, racism and other injustices. Without significant changes to the systems that perpetuate these inequities, they will continue for generations to come.”
Transfer Pathways

• Over 8 million students attend America’s community colleges
• Most diverse sector of public higher education
• Transfer (associates and baccalaureate) completion rates are not equitable – not even close!
“Racial Transfer Gap”

“45% of White community college students successfully transferred to a bachelor’s granting institution compared to 31% of African American and Latinx students”

Crisp & Nunez (2014)
“Racial Transfer Gap”

Baccalaureate-degree attainment over a 10-year period is...

• only 1 in 10 for African American transfer students
• only 1 in 12 for Latinx transfer students

National Student Clearinghouse (2017)
Transfer Partnerships

• **Power of the pair** can double or reduce the odds of baccalaureate completion up to 75%

• Race matters – A LOT!

• Selectivity matters but predictors are vary in weight and are not as predictive as race, gender and income
EVERY DAY AT SIX

Joel Ross, 2007
Transforming Systems to Achieve Equitable Outcomes
Diversity

Inclusion

Equity

Equity-Mindedness
Vision
Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges

“Leading with racial equity, our colleges maximize student potential and transform lives within a culture of belonging that advances racial, social and economic justice in service to our diverse communities.”

Adopted June 27, 2019
Lessons Learned

• Must...
  – address unmet financial need
  – understand patterns of inequity
  – close equity gaps
  – transform higher education
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• Must...
  – address unmet financial need
  – understand patterns of inequity
  – close equity gaps
  – transform higher education

Student success is a “moral imperative” and all of us must act!
‘There is no more neutrality in the world. You either have to be part of the solution, or you’re going to be part of the problem.’

Eldridge Cleaver, American Writer and Political Activist (1935-1998)
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