

Redesigning Practices Based on Shared Definitions of Equity and Justice

Equitable Counseling Approach

Dr. Monique Greene, an Associate Professor of Counseling at Riverside City College (RCC), observed that students are “struggling with a sense of belonging and are not being connected to resources that would benefit them.” Dr. Greene and a team at RCC dug a little deeper into the retention and success data to try to understand what impact that might be having on students. They found that men of color were impacted most severely in those areas. Using the findings as an opportunity to “dream big,” the team researched high-impact practices that could be embedded into first-year courses to help improve the retention and success of students, specifically men of color. These efforts led Dr. Greene to spearhead what has become a two-year community of practice and learning community effort focused on better supporting men of color at RCC.

Rallying a team of men of color serving as counseling faculty, instructional faculty, and administrators, Dr. Greene led the community of practice on a deep inquiry into what men of

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—Dr. Monique Greene,
Associate Professor,
Riverside City College



color were experiencing in and outside of the classroom. The community of practice discussed current research on supporting and teaching men of color in community college (utilizing research from Drs. Frank Harris, Luke Woods, and Khalid White), learned from students through surveys and classroom feedback, and shared their own experiences at the college and with students.

Then the counseling and instructional faculty in the community of practice teamed up to design learning communities for men of color with intentional activities, assignments, and student development approaches to supporting students in academic and non-academic spaces. The team

Call to Action for the Field

- **“Create a culture of care.”** Students need to know there is a village behind them ready to support.
- **“Break down the silos between general counseling and special population counseling and counseling and instruction.”** No one is benefiting from the silos.
- **“Create spaces for students to use their voice and lead change.”** Young people come from systems where they have been silenced. Show them their voice matters.

hosted a LevelUp event where students heard from the men of color faculty on topics such as resiliency, mental health, mentoring, and coaching. And the team hosted a family “Legacy Night” that provided space for students to bring elders and younger siblings to campus to play games, eat, experience college life, and learn about RCC’s dual enrollment and adult education opportunities and just be in community with each other.

The counseling and instructional faculty team took a year to design and develop approaches to supporting men of color with input and feedback from students. In that year, the team had an iterative process of engaging with the research, designing interventions with students, and gathering student input on the impact and effectiveness of the effort. Now they are getting ready to launch an RCC-specific resource

guide for supporting men of color to be shared campuswide, with the goal to bridge the student services practices with effective instructional practices.

The Transformational Practices

- **Apply a participatory action research approach** to understanding the student experience and strategies to remove barriers that students encounter in college. Use that learning to design student support and pedagogical interventions.
- **Build relationships with students and their families.** These connections help students to feel supported and connected.
- **Take time to reimagine what success looks like.** Let the students tell you.

RCC’s Men of Color Resource Guide **High Impact Practices**

It is important to take a holistic approach to supporting men of color in postsecondary education by addressing their unique needs, providing targeted support services, and fostering a sense of community and belonging on campus.

- **Culturally responsive teaching:** Incorporate diverse perspectives, experiences, and examples in your curriculum to make it more inclusive and relevant to men of color.
- **Build relationships:** Take the time to get to know your students, including men of color, on a personal level. Building positive relationships with them can help create a sense of trust, respect, and support in the classroom.
- **Provide mentorship and support:** Offer mentorship and support to men of color in your classroom, whether through one-on-one meetings, academic advising, or connecting them with resources on campus.
- **Encourage participation and engagement:** Create opportunities for men of color to actively participate and engage in class discussions, group activities, and projects. Encouraging their involvement can help boost their confidence.
- **Address bias and stereotypes:** Be mindful of your own biases and stereotypes, and work to create a classroom environment that is free from discrimination and prejudice. Encourage open dialogue about diversity and inclusion, and promote respect and understanding among all students.
- **Provide resources and support services:** Connect men of color in your classroom with resources and support services on campus, such as tutoring, counseling, career services, and student organizations. These resources can help them overcome academic challenges and thrive in their studies.