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ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES:
MAKING CONNECTIONS TO DIVERSE STUDENT SUCCESS

A Dissertation Presented
by
DARCY A. ORELLANA

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies
University of Massachusetts Boston
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education

May 2019

Leadership in Education

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ABSTRACT

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES: MAKING CONNECTIONS TO DIVERSE STUDENT SUCCESS

May 2019

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The lack of equitable educational outcomes for students of color continues to be a glaring problem for community colleges. Community colleges are challenged to find solutions to address long-standing achievement gaps. One institutional response has been to implement high impact practices (HIPs) as a means to improve persistence, retention, and graduation rates for all students. HIPs, however, have produced mixed results in terms of enhancing student success, and evidence suggests that students of color participate in fewer HIPs and thus receive less benefit from them. This study considers the proposition that students of color may decide not to participate in HIPs, or may not derive benefit from the HIPs in which they participate, if these practices are implemented in an organizational

culture that does not value diversity. The purpose of this study was to understand how community colleges can foster learning environments that promote success for all students where the educational benefits of diversity are valued, equitable outcomes for students are facilitated, and traditionally underrepresented and underserved groups are empowered.

This multi-site case study, using critical theory and culturally-engaging organizational culture concepts, examined the complexities of organizational culture at the perspectives of racially and ethnically diverse students. Study findings suggest that students of color at these colleges perceived the organizational culture as welcoming and valuing students, but also focusing on efficiency via enrollment and retention strategies. Diversity was understood primarily in structural and strategic terms. Furthermore, students described instances where diversity was engaged through a deficit lens that included fear of diversity. While the students described their colleges and faculty positively, they also discussed events and actions that revealed a cultural misalignment between organizational culture and the students' own definitions of success. Fear of diversity resonated in the classroom and in interpersonal relationships with faculty and peers. Diversity was not infused in the curriculum. Recommendations for colleges are presented to foster intentional questioning of how organizational cultures are enacted and to promote equitable practices that align with diverse students' definitions of success.

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¡Mil gracias!

When I describe organizational culture, I say it's like a rubber band. You can stretch it, but once you release the tension it wants to go back to its original form. This dissertation study is dedicated to all the people who joined me on my journey to completion. They are the tension. They are the people who foster organizational cultures that truly value diversity, who experience the organizational cultures, and who will form new ways of making higher education an equitable space for all people where diversity is fearlessly valued.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Nowhere is diversity a more pressing issue in higher education than in community colleges with their open-door mission of access and opportunity. Persistent achievement gaps remain between community college students of color and White students. These gaps result in inequities in educational outcomes and therefore inequities in the benefits of a college education for some groups of students. Community colleges are challenged “to adapt their programs to better meet the size, demographic composition, and academic needs” of their students (Shapiro et al., 2017, p. 5). At the state and institutional levels, policy makers and community college administrators are challenged to be “equity-minded” to raise awareness of achievement disparities based on race and ethnicity and of systems that impede equitable outcomes for underrepresented and underserved students; and then, enact policies and practices that reduce those inequities (Center for Urban Education, 2017).

On campuses, community college leaders are responsible for student success and share that responsibility with all campus stakeholders. However, shrinking campus budgets and pressures to deliver programs that support student success and reduce achievement disparities often result in colleges providing a menu of student success programs that are ad hoc in nature rather than data informed and aligned with the needs of the students they serve

(Arum & Roksa, 2011; Bailey & Morest, 2006b; Bailey, Jaggars, & Jenkins, 2015; Clayton-Pedersen & Musil, 2005; Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Such an approach leaves an institution without a comprehensive approach to equity and student success, and students may therefore experience the institution in unequal ways based on racial or ethnic identities (Arum & Roksa, 2011; Bailey & Morest, 2006b; CCCSE, 2010 2012; Clayton-Pedersen & Musil, 2005; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 2005; Museus, 2014; Tierney, 1992, 1999).

The ways in which students of color experience higher education are complex. In a study of campus racial climate at a community college that is a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), Cuellar and Johnson-Ahorlu (2016) found that while the students perceived their college positively, both Asian and Latina/o students perceived discrimination and bias in spite of the status as an HSI. Similarly, in a study of Native American student experiences in tribal colleges with a focus on native language and culture, the colleges were found to foster a sense of belonging in class, improved self-image and confidence, and helped students to better engage with their tribe (CCCSE, 2019). However, students in developmental education programs at the tribal college reported using student support services such as tutoring and skills labs less frequently than needed, exposing a gap between the need for services and the actual number of students using the services. Examining the factors that foster Black men's student engagement in community college, Wood and Newman (2017) found that faculty validation was a salient factor in student-faculty engagement, a critical predictor of success. Creating campus environments that minimized perceptions of negative stereotypes about race and gender were essential for creating cultures that support Black men on campus. Furthermore, in a study of Filipino American students' sense of belonging in

college, Museus and Maramba (2011) found that when students felt they were able to maintain connections to their culture and heritage, their sense of belonging at the college was positively affected. Together these studies show some of the ways in which students of color experience college environments in relation to their racial and ethnic identities, illustrating the need for institutions to acknowledge and address conditions that impede equitable student success.

The failure of institutions to rigorously engage in questioning how their systems, structures, and practices perpetuate racial achievement gaps in community colleges has been called the elephant in the room (Bush & Bush, 2010). The importance of administrators, faculty, and staff to proactively design environments where community college students of color experience validation of their identities, and where they engage with people and in activities that are not racist, has been shown to predict persistence and engagement (Bush & Bush, 2010; Cuellar & Johnson-Ahorlu, 2016; CCCSE, 2019; Museus & Maramba, 2011; Wood & Newman, 2017). These studies also illuminate that when colleges implement practices or foster cultures that do not align with the lived histories, experiences, and values of students of color, then students are less likely to engage in class, programs, and activities, or with their faculty. Overall, these studies illustrate the importance of creating campus environments that align with the needs of students of color in order to foster their success. When the campus culture is engaging and values the cultural identities and community histories of students of color, academic success will be more likely (Bush & Bush, 2010; Museus, 2014; Museus & Maramba, 2011; Wood & Newman, 2017).

One institutional response to achievement gaps has been to implement high impact practices as a means to positively influence persistence, retention, and graduation for all students. High impact practices (HIPs) are designed to positively impact student success by creating curriculum, experiences, and programs that require students to commit time on tasks, to make decisions that deepen their investment in the activity, and in doing so, receive frequent feedback from faculty and staff about their learning (Kuh, 2008). HIPs assume that by increasing student engagement in educational experiences, students will be more likely to persist toward degree completion (Kilgo, Ezell Sheets, & Pascarella, 2015; Kuh, 2008). However, there have been mixed results on the influence of HIPs on student success (Bailey et al., 2015; Finley & McNair, 2013; Johnson & Stage, 2018). Students of color have been found to participate in fewer HIPs than their White peers, and therefore receive less of the effect from them (Finley & McNair, 2013; Kuh, 2008; Kuh, O'Donnell, & Schneider, 2017).

Researchers and practitioners continue to promote the importance of purposeful student interactions, via high impact practices, as critical to community college student success (Bailey et al., 2015; CCSSE, 2010; Kuh, 2008; Kuh et al., 2005; Tinto, 2012). Yet how racially and ethnically diverse students experience these practices and related interactions may not necessarily be conducive to their success (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1999; Ibarra, 2001; Museus, Nichols, & Lambert, 2008; Museus & Maramba, 2011; Seifert, Gillig, Hanson, Pascarella, & Blaich, 2014).

Kuh (2008) suggests that HIPs have the capacity to equalize the chances of success for historically underserved student groups and research has shown that the positive effect of HIPs is even greater for students of color than for White students (Kuh et al., 2008).

However, not all students participate equally with HIPs. For example, African American students, according to Kuh (2008), participate in fewer of them. Finley and McNair (2013) found that student participation rates in HIPs varied by racial and ethnic groups; African American and Hispanic students participated in fewer HIPs than other groups. High levels of participation in HIPs, however, did positively impact all students' perceptions about their own learning. Some groups (Asian American and White students) perceived greater positive impacts on their learning from participating in more HIPs than other racial and ethnic groups (African American and Hispanic students). Furthermore, McNair and Finley (2013) found that students valued opportunities to engage in well-designed group work and peer interactions as well as classroom content that connected to real life with opportunities to apply their learning.

The varied impact of HIPs was further explored by Seifert et al. (2014) who suggest that the impact of HIPs on student learning is conditional, influenced by a students' precollege experiences as well as their backgrounds. Their study found that interacting with diversity and working with a faculty member on a research project had the most positive impacts on students who arrived on campus with the lowest precollege critical thinking skills. They suggest that HIPs should be tailored to the variety of students who arrive on campus in order for HIPs to yield the most positive impact on student learning.

The Documenting Effective Educational Practices (DEEP) study examined 20 high-performing four-year institutions, selected based on their higher graduation rates and scores on the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), with the purpose of identifying institutional characteristics and conditions that foster student success (Kuh et al., 2005). The

NSSE survey examines academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty, and supportive campus environments as they relate to student success. Key recommendations resulting from the DEEP project include alignment of mission to support student success as a value and practice, the expectation of academic excellence from students, promotion of innovation among all stakeholders, and commitment of resources to student success, as well as featuring diversity broadly inside and outside of the classroom, establishing a reward system to support excellence and collaboration, and mapping explicit steps to success for students to follow. However, success is limited when the norms, beliefs, and behavior entrenched in the organization inhibit student success and “efforts to enhance student success often falter because too little attention is given to understanding the properties of the institution’s culture that reinforce the status quo and perpetuate everyday actions” (p. 316). Thus, for high impact practices to be effective for racially and ethnically diverse students, the organizational culture must value diversity.

Overall, HIPs have been shown to have the capacity to positively impact student success, though in uneven and unequal ways. While it is understood that each student brings their own precollege experiences to college, organizational culture has been found to play a role in fostering or hindering the success of students of color (González, 2002; Hurtado et al., 1999; Museus, 2014; Museus et al., 2008). This is because the organizational culture of an institution reflects the beliefs, values, behaviors, assumptions, and ideology of its dominant groups (Deal & Kennedy, 2000; Geertz, 1973; Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Ibarra, 2001; Martin, 1992; Ouchi & Wilkins, 1985; Schein, 2004; Tierney, 1988). A deficit perspective about

racially and ethnically diverse communities often emerges as a cultural value or belief within the dominant culture of the institution (Gorski, 2011; Yosso, 2005).

In educational systems, a deficit perspective emerges as a means to explain and address performance gaps based on race and ethnicity by assuming that communities of color are different and therefore deficient (Gorski, 2011; Museus, Ledesma, & Parker, 2015; Yosso, 2005). A deficit perspective fails to examine the systems and structures in which racially and ethnically diverse students engage, thereby failing to question systems and structures that have been historically racist and may continue to foster racial inequity (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013; Museus et al., 2015). In this context, institutional structures and practices, including HIPs, may be implemented in ways that reinforce understandings of racial and ethnic diversity from a deficit perspective. Values present within the organizational culture shape the choices and actions of organizational members; thus, HIPs arise from choices made about curriculum content and pedagogy, co-curricular programs, and professional development (CCCSE, 2010; Hatch, Crisp, & Wesley, 2016; Kuh, 2008; Kuh et al., 2005). In this context, organizational culture can support or inhibit racial and ethnic diversity as a core value on a campus (Bensimón, 2005; Jayakumar & Museus, 2012). The importance of creating a campus culture that is inclusive, where students feel they belong and are valued by faculty and fellow students is key to student success (Clayton-Pederson & Musil, 2005; Kuh et al., 2005; McClenney & Green, 2005; Museus, 2014; Rutschow et al., 2011).

Institutional leaders may overlook organizational culture when they develop and launch high-impact practices or other student success initiatives (Hurtado et al., 1999; Kuh et

al., 2005). Bailey et al. (2015), for example, suggest that “these reforms have not produced the desired outcomes because they have stopped short of making the systemic changes necessary to shift colleges’ organization and culture from a focus on *access* alone to a focus on *access with success*” (p. 3). Student success initiatives, including HIPs, may not be effective if the organizational culture does not provide a learning environment that is supportive of racially and ethnically diverse students (González, 2002; Hurtado et al., 1999; Museus, 2014; Museus et al., 2008). Adding to this issue is research that has raised questions about whether high impact practices actually facilitate student success outcomes such as college completion; perhaps the positive impact of high impact practices has been overstated. Johnson and Stage (2018), for example, did not find that high-impact practices positively impacted undergraduate student graduation rates, and they cautioned leaders to focus on the quality of these practices more than the quantity of them at four-year public colleges and universities.

Given organizational culture’s salient role in promoting or hindering the success of students of color, the Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) model posits that when institutions identify and implement culturally engaging practices, diverse student success is more likely to be fostered (Museus, 2014). The CECE model of college student success examines the relationship between organizational culture and success for racially and ethnically diverse students. This research-based project explores the intersection of student success and campus environments that are both culturally relevant and responsive to diverse students’ needs and norms (Museus, 2014). Furthermore, a student’s perceptions of their

college's organizational culture are associated with their sense of belonging, and can therefore impact their persistence and success (Museus, Yi, & Saelua, 2017, 2018).

Several national initiatives seek to address achievement disparities based on race and ethnicity. Each initiative suggests a different approach. The Inclusive Excellence (IE) framework intentionally links diversity to excellence in all aspects of institutional practice (mission and operations) and student success (Albertine & McNair, 2011; Bauman, Bustillos, Bensimón, Brown, & Bartee, 2005; Clayton-Pedersen & Musil, 2005; Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005; Williams, 2007; Williams, Berger, & McClendon, 2005). The inclusive excellence framework focuses on student intellectual and social development, developing and establishing an environment that enhances student learning, acknowledging and responding to cultural differences of learners, and creating a welcoming community that engages all members to promote learning for students and for the organization as a whole (Clayton-Pedersen & Musil, 2005). This framework identifies four issues that hinder institutional progress in connecting diversity with excellence: 1) the ad hoc nature of diversity innovations, 2) the disconnect of diversity to college-wide improvement initiatives, 3) the disparity of educational outcomes across groups, and 4) the disconnect between diversity and educational excellence (Clayton-Pedersen & Musil, 2005). The inclusive excellence framework provides a rationale for institutional transformation and an imperative for addressing the achievement gap at the institutional level.

In 2004, the Achieving the Dream (ATD) project was launched specifically to address achievement disparities among students of color and low income students via institutional reform strategies focusing on community colleges (Rutschow et al., 2011; Torres, Hagedorn,

& Heacock, 2018). Participating institutions focus on building “cultures of evidence” (Rutschow et al., 2011) by using data to examine student success and identify barriers to academic success. During the first five years (2004-2009) of ATD, only about one-quarter of the colleges addressed changes in curriculum and pedagogy. According to Rutschow et al. (2011) instead strategies focused on developmental education (nearly 50%) and first-year students (33%). Moreover, there was sparse evidence of strategies that focused on race, ethnicity, or economic status, even though this was a stated focus of ATD. In fact, less than 10% of the strategies reached the intended target students (diverse and low income students) (Rutschow et al., 2011), an example of a possible disconnect between practice and the espoused value of diversity at ATD campuses.

Currently more than 220 community colleges in 41 states and the District of Columbia are involved in the Achieving the Dream (2019) project. “After more than a decade of experience, ATD found that improving student success on a substantial scale required colleges to engage in bold, holistic sustainable change rather than small innovations or changes at the margins” (Torres et al., 2018, p. 75). ATD campuses that demonstrated the most progress in building a culture of evidence had deeply involved senior leaders in the reforms, created accessible achievement reports by offices of institutional research (IR), and conducted regular evaluations of interventions. Also, active faculty and staff leadership guided the reforms and interventions, along with integrated committee structures that supported communication across roles and responsibilities, financial support for strategies to scale up and become sustainable, and heavy investment in professional development

(Rutschow et al., 2011). The ATD model expects that systems that disadvantage students of color will be questioned and revised through an emphasis on equity.

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) benchmarks high impact student engagement practices in the two-year sector of higher education by focusing on student actions and behaviors (CCCSE, 2010). The CCSSE focuses on teaching and learning strategies to promote student success that include “strengthening classroom engagement, integrating student support into learning experiences, expanding professional development focused on engaging students, and focusing institutional policies on creating conditions for learning” (CCCSE, 2010, p. 8). Researchers, however, have critiqued CCSSE as an instrument that does not include a means to address the additional effort that students of color must exert to stay connected to their own cultural communities in college, and the role that the colleges may have in establishing racially biased practices (Dowd, 2005; Dowd, Sawatzky, & Korn, 2011). Furthermore, the validity of CCSSE has been questioned by Nora, Crisp, and Matthews (2011) due to its limited analysis of student engagement using the five benchmarks of effective practice as the frequency of student engagement in active and collaborative learning, level of student academic effort, the academic challenge the students experience, level of faculty-student interaction in and out of class, and the students’ use of support for learning. Nora et al. (2011) suggest that the instrument focuses on student actions and behaviors to determine their level of engagement, but it lacks items to address the non-behavioral and attitudinal components such as beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions. As Nora et al. (2011) suggest, student engagement does “not occur in a vacuum...a person responds to a specific set of conditions on campus as the way of thinking and feeling about

practices and policies that will determine the student's decisions and choices and, ultimately, success in college" (pp. 125-126).

The Roadmap Project, which began in 2010 as an American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) initiative, supports community colleges to develop comprehensive academic support programs that engage entering students to be active and successful partners their own learning. With the goal of inclusive excellence, the participating institutions develop high impact, student success practices that are linked to learning outcomes, and professional development is provided to support faculty and staff (Albertine & McNair, 2011).

Building on the notion of a map is the Guided Pathways Project that Bailey et al. (2015) described as essential to move away from a cafeteria-like menu of courses and programs to one that clearly articulates courses and sequences, promotes learning, and keeps community college students on track. Bailey et al. (2015) suggest that beyond support programs and faculty and staff professional development, there is a need to provide clear academic program maps to support students to achieve their goals effectively. According to the Guided Pathways Project, a commitment to student success and equity is an essential condition for the pathways to be successful at an institution. The Guided Pathways project launched in 2019 as a collaborative effort between AAC&U and the Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE). Similarly, the Completion by Design initiative, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in 2011, strives to create affordable and coherent educational pathways for community college students (Chaplot, Rassen, Jenkins, & Johnstone, 2013).

These projects expect community colleges to keep equity in the forefront of their efforts, yet do not provide a clear emphasis on the need to question systems and practices that fail to validate the cultures and identities of the students they enroll. Instead these programs focus on efficiency by prescribing pathways. All of these national initiatives are designed to address the achievement gap for historically underserved college students. However, these projects have yet to yield widespread impact on closing the achievement gap (Bailey et al., 2015; CCCSE, 2012). These programs mention the need to create conditions that promote equity; however, they do not explicitly foster cultures that are both culturally relevant and culturally responsive. Each initiative mentions equity as a compelling factor and; some use inclusive excellence as a foundational principle, yet diversity as a cultural value and attention to the organizational culture of the colleges is a minor consideration.

Statement of the Problem

A national movement is underway to create student-centered institutions where policy and practice are aligned in a culture that is inclusive and empowering for all stakeholders (Arum & Roksa, 2011; Kuh et al., 2005; Museus, 2014). Community colleges are challenged to ensure that their “mission of open access results in full equity and inclusion for all learners, including those of diverse cultural backgrounds” (Smith & Ayers, 2006, p. 401). This effort to create student-centered institutions is particularly important given the persistent achievement gap for racially and ethnically diverse community college students.

Persistent achievement gaps for Black and Hispanic students are a reality for community colleges (AACC, 2018; Bailey et al., 2015). Community colleges enrolled 41% of all U.S. college students, 40% of all first-time freshmen, 56% of all Native American

students, 52% of all Hispanic students, 43% of all Black students, and 40% of all Asian/Pacific Islander students (AACC, 2018). At two-year public community colleges, White (45.1%) and Asian (43.8%) students who started at these colleges had higher completion rates than their Hispanic (33%) and Black (25.8%) peers (Shapiro et al., 2017). Furthermore, Black (11%), Hispanic (16%), Pacific Islander (16%), American Indian/Alaska Native (15%), and multiracial (17%) students lag behind White (22%) and Asian (28%) students in associate degree attainment within three years at public community colleges (Musu-Gillette et al., 2016). It is important to note, according to Museus and Griffin (2011), that when analyzing Asian student data, the lack of disaggregation of “ethnic subgroups within the Asian American population (e.g., Southeast Asian American and Pacific Islander subpopulations)” (p.11) masks the disparities in educational outcomes for this group, and instead provides a one-dimensional view of their educational attainments.

Extensive research has confirmed the educational benefits of diversity. Having students from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds in the same course positively enhances student learning outcomes, such as enhanced critical thinking, academic motivation, civic engagement, intellectual engagement, retention, and degree aspirations (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Chang, 2001; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Hurtado, 2001; Hurtado et al., 1999; Johnson & Lollar, 2002; Milem, 2003; Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, & Terenzini, 1996; Pascarella, Palmer, Moye, & Pierson, 2001; Rendón, 1994; Tam & Bassett, 2004; Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Terenzini, Cabrera, Colbeck, Bjorklund, & Parente, 2001). Yet having a diverse student body does not automatically translate into

student success for historically underrepresented students, specifically students of color (Bauman et al., 2005) as indicated by the persistent achievement gap.

Typically, institutional level responses to racial and ethnic diversity include both structural and strategic approaches. The structural approach is often viewed through the representation and composition of groups (Cox, 1994; Hurtado et al., 1999; Milem, 2003; Milem et al., 2005). In community colleges, structural diversity is reflected in student enrollment patterns based on race and ethnicity, and the percentages of faculty and staff who are people of color. Institutions also respond to diversity strategically through top-down college-wide plans; yet these plans and related initiatives often fail to produce broad, deep institutional change (Cox, 1994, 2001; Hurtado et al., 1999; Iverson, 2007; Kuh et al., 2005). The strategic approach also falls short due to its superficial and ad hoc nature, often lacking the college-wide support needed to deeply impact classrooms, faculty practices, and instruction. Neither structural nor strategic approaches to diversity have had substantial impact on the achievement gap, because neither approach deeply affects the ideology and culture of the institution, leaving students of color to lag behind White students in terms of retention and graduation rates (Bauman et al., 2005; Bensimón, 2005; Rutschow et al., 2011).

Furthermore, evidence suggests that some administrators, staff, and faculty view racial and ethnic diversity from a deficit lens. A deficit lens fails to examine the systems and structures that privilege dominant racial groups (Gorski, 2011). This lens minimizes or excludes the perspectives and norms of people of color, and instead focuses on their alleged deficiencies as a means to resist challenges to the status quo (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013; Yosso, 2005). When diversity is viewed from a deficit perspective, according to Bensimón

(2005), the result is to “imply that the academic difficulties of minority students are either self-inflicted or a natural outcome of socioeconomic and educational background” (p. 102). At institutions where diversity is viewed from this deficit perspective, diversity initiatives may lack a purposeful connection to academic excellence (Clayton-Pedersen & Musil, 2005).

Organizational culture plays a significant role in success for students of color. Tierney (1992, 1999) suggests that institutions must shift from expecting diverse students to assimilate to the campus culture, to promoting “cultural integrity” which affirms and honors the cultural backgrounds of all students. According to Museus and Quaye (2009), educators must make better efforts to understand how students’ racial and cultural identity uniquely shapes the meanings that they attribute to their campus experience, as well as to the expectations that others have of them. Arum and Roksa (2011) also push higher education institutions to acknowledge how organizational culture plays a mediating role in perpetuating inequality.

The manner in which organizational culture influences student success practices may be problematic for racially and ethnically diverse students. Organizational culture shapes the habits, skills, and learning styles that key institutional agents – faculty, staff, and administrators – expect students to follow. Racially and ethnically diverse students often do not successfully engage on campuses with cultures that fail to value diversity in their operations (Cuellar & Johnson-Ahorlu, 2016; Gonzalez, 2002; Jenkins, 2007; Kuh, 2008; Museus & Maramba, 2011; Museus & Quaye, 2009; Treviño & Ewing, 2004; Wood & Newman, 2017). When high impact practices, for example, are implemented as part of an institutional student success strategy, it is important to align related programs and services to

a value for diversity (Finley & McNair, 2013; Jenkins, 2007; Kuh, 2008; Museus, Ravello, & Vega, 2012; Wood & Newman, 2017).

What adds to the complexity of organizational culture is the role power and privilege play to shape the experiences of institutional members. Students from historically marginalized groups do not experience higher education institutions in the same ways as those from dominant groups (Bush & Bush, 2010; Carnevale & Strohl, 2013; González, 2002; Harper, 2012a; Hurtado et al., 1999; Museus & Maramba, 2011; Museus & Quaye, 2009; Wood & Newman, 2017). Students of color often are left feeling as guests on campus when the organizational culture privileges the values of dominant groups and marginalizes diverse students' cultural histories and perspectives (González, 2002; Harper et al., 2011; Museus, & Maramba, 2011). Research shows that students of color often feel as though they do not belong and are not important members of the campus at predominately White institutions (González, 2003; Harper, 2012a; Harper, Davis, & Smith, 2018; Museus & Maramba, 2011). Furthermore, racially and ethnically diverse students are disadvantaged, compared to White students when they attend institutions that are “less effective at facilitating students' development of critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing skills” (Arum & Roksa, 2011, p. 113).

Institutional rhetoric regarding diversity may oversimplify the complexity of diversity on campus, resulting in superficial interpretations of diversity that do not fully engage multiple perspectives, and instead privilege those in the majority and in power (Martin, 1992). To make diversity an institutional commitment, tied to student success, Hurtado et al. (1999) propose that institutions need to critically examine their historical legacy, structural

diversity, psychological climate, and behavioral patterns. Furthermore, when diversity is examined through an equity lens, leaders can address ideologies, structures, and practices that contribute to achievement gaps based on race and ethnicity. Specifically, being equity-minded involves:

being conscious of the ways that higher education -- through its practices, policies, expectations and unspoken rules -- places responsibility for student success on the very groups that have experienced marginalization, rather than on the individuals and institutions whose responsibility it is to remedy that marginalization (Witham, Malcolm-Piqueux, Dowd, & Bensimón, 2015, p. 2).

Witham et al. (2015) suggest that leveraging an equity perspective strives to ensure that an analysis of student success is not blame-focused, respects the cultural identities and histories of students of color, and serves as a critical lens to deconstruct assumptions of neutrality or colorblindness.

Campus cultures contribute to differences in student success outcomes by informing how high impact practices are enacted, and how students experience and engage with the institution (Arum & Roksa, 2011; Bailey et al., 2015; Jenkins, 2007). Culture as dynamic, complex, and multilayered (Kuh & Whitt, 1988, Martin, 1992) is represented in organizations through beliefs and assumptions, norms and values, and artifacts and symbols observed and experienced by its members (Geertz, 1973; Ouchi & Wilkins, 1985; Schein, 2004; Tierney, 1988). Kuh and Whitt (1988) found that institutional leaders tend not to examine the way things are done, leaving cultural practices and practitioners to foster the status quo. “Standing in the way of significant reform efforts are, of course, a set of

entrenched organizational interests and deeply engrained institutional practices” (Arum & Roksa, 2011, p. 144).

The relationship between organizational culture and high impact practices suggests that HIPs have the capacity to either reinforce the organizational culture that often reflects only the values of dominant groups or to include diverse perspectives as valuable contributions. Organizational culture informs the HIPs from both an enactment and engagement perspective which may result in negatively affecting students of color, or having the capacity to provide alternative spaces for students of color to thrive in. When high impact practices are embedded in an organizational culture that lacks a diversity and equity mindset, the impact of these practices on success for all students may be limited (Bensimón, 2005; Finley & McNair, 2013; Hurtado et al., 1999). Institutions may espouse a commitment to diversity and equity through structural (admissions and enrollment patterns) or strategic (mission statements and strategic plans) approaches. Yet the reality of the enacted culture may result in maintaining the status quo. Differences between the espoused culture versus the enacted culture of an institution can be challenging for its members, causing tension between the way things are stated and the way things are done and experienced (Museus, 2014; Schein, 2004).

In order for high impact practices to be effective for all students, institutions may need an organizational culture that supports the educational benefits of diversity, promotes equitable outcomes, and empowers historically underrepresented student groups. This type of organizational culture may support engaging in “courageous conversations” to address the “uncomfortable truths – facts that are difficult to acknowledge or long-held beliefs that aren’t

supported by the facts” (CCCSE, 2010, p. 20). Such campus cultures may include broad involvement of faculty and staff in these conversations and then empower them to implement practices to address success barriers (Bailey et al. 2015; Baldwin, Bensimón, Dowd, & Kleiman, 2011; Finley & McNair, 2013). However, previous studies suggest that these “courageous conversations” often do not occur, leaving unchecked the assumptions about student success that relate to stereotypes or myths about student groups (Bensimón, 2005; Baldwin et al., 2011; Bush & Bush, 2010). For example, myths about student success could be fully examined and challenged when a campus chooses to disaggregate student success data by race and ethnicity and broadly shares those data with the college community to start an open discourse about excellence and diversity (Bensimón, 2005; Center for Urban Education, 2017; Finley & McNair, 2013).

Researchers have examined organizational culture’s role in student success predominately in universities in order to understand how culture may perpetuate the status quo for historically underrepresented student groups (González, 2002; Hurtado et al., 1999; Kuh, 2001; Kuh & Love, 2000; Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Museus, 2007; Museus & Quayle, 2009; Museus & Maramba, 2011; Tinto, 1987, 1993). However, the research is sparse on the organizational culture of community colleges. The connection between organizational culture, in which high impact practices are situated, and racially and ethnically diverse student students’ success has not been extensively studied in community colleges, exposing a gap in community college research and the possibility that campus practices may be incongruent with supporting success for students of color. High impact practices are often prescribed as effective by institutional agents and implemented at institutions, regardless of

whether the organizational culture supports the success of students of color (Zilvinskis, 2017). As national demographics continue to change and community colleges continue to be highly diverse, it is imperative to understand how organizational culture can be more supportive of the success of diverse community college students.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The central assumption that guides this research is that in order for high impact practices to be effective for racially and ethnically diverse students, institutions may need an organizational culture that values diversity. This study identifies and explains the complexity of organizational culture at the institutional level from racially and ethnically diverse students' perspectives on organizational culture and its impact on their success. The purpose of this study is to examine how organizational culture can be more supportive of the success of racially and ethnically diverse community college students. One overarching research question guided this study: What role does organizational culture play in fostering success for racially and ethnically diverse community college students? In addition, the following subsidiary questions were used to deepen an understanding of the main question:

- How do racially and ethnically diverse students perceive the organizational cultures of community colleges that have diversity as a central organizing principle?
- How are “high impact practices” implemented at community colleges that have diversity as a central organizing principle, as perceived by racially and ethnically diverse students?
- At community colleges that have diversity as a central organizing principle, how do “high impact practices” influence success for racially and ethnically diverse students?

In this study, diversity as a central organizing principle means that an institution broadly and visibly values and includes diversity as an institutional priority and a core assumption. Diversity informs and shapes institutional decision-making via its infusion throughout a college's leadership, teaching, learning, and operations. This qualitative study examines the organizational culture of community colleges to contribute to an understanding of how a supportive organizational culture may be necessary for high impact practices to be effective for racially and ethnically diverse students. Community colleges were chosen for this study because they enroll a higher percentage of students from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds than other institutional types (Aud et al., 2011) coupled with their longstanding mission of accessibility and struggle to promote equitable outcomes (Bailey & Morest, 2006a), as well as their recent emphasis on student success via high impact practices (Arum & Roksa, 2011; CCCSE, 2010, 2012; Kuh et al., 2005).

Examining high impact practices in this study provides an understanding about how espoused values of diversity and related institutional practices may or may not be connected to student success (CCCSE, 2010; Kuh et al., 2005). The choices an institution makes about programs and practices are informed by their ideologies and values. High impact practices are designed in multiple ways that have the ability to influence the success of racially and ethnically diverse students (Finley & McNair, 2013). It is, therefore, important to understand the ways in which these practices are designed and implemented and to understand their impact on students of color.

In this study, the term *diversity* is defined to include differences in age, gender, gender expression, race, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation and expression,

socioeconomic class, religion, veteran status, and physical and learning abilities, including the diverse people and perspectives that have been underrepresented and historically marginalized. Exploring the ways that diversity is expressed in an institution's culture, and how that culture shapes the learning environment for racially and ethnically diverse students is a goal of this study.

The terms *racially and ethnically diverse* students and *students of color* are used interchangeably in this study. Students of color in this study include those who identified to their colleges as one or more of the following: Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latina/o, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, or two or more races of which one could be White.

Furthermore, in this study, the term *organizational culture* refers to the deeply held values, assumptions, beliefs, behaviors, norms, and traditions enacted in an institution (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Martin, 1992; Schein, 2004). Often in the discourse about organizational culture, the terms culture and climate are presented. It is important to clarify the distinction between organizational climate and organizational culture. To differentiate, climate refers to the current atmosphere, attitude, and style of an institution based on an individual's perceptions (Bess & Dee, 2008; Dumas-Hines, Cochran, & Williams, 2001). Schein (2004) describes climate as an artifact of organizational culture that reflects how an institutional member may feel about the culture. In contrast, culture is deeply embedded, informing and shaping an institution via values, assumptions, and behaviors.

This study presses the concept of diversity as a cultural construct and seeks to examine it within community college campuses from racially and ethnically diverse students'

perspectives. When diversity is a core institutional value, it comprehensively shapes organizational practices and ideology. For example, an inclusive curriculum reflects perspectives of the diverse identities of students and gives voice to their histories and contributions (Bossman, 1991; Clark, 2002; Musil et al., 1999). Additionally, an institution that bases resource allocation decisions on student success outcomes data disaggregated by race/ethnicity reflects a deep commitment to diversity (Bensimón, 2005; Baldwin et al., 2011).

Conceptual Framework

This section of the chapter outlines the conceptual framework that guided this study. The discussion begins with an examination of how critical theory serves as a lens for understanding diversity and the experiences of students of color in relation to the organizational culture of their college. Next is an overview of organizational culture and Museus' (2014) CECE model. This is followed by a brief overview of student success and high impact practices that support student success. The section concludes with an explanation of the conceptual framework as it pertains to connections among racial/ethnic diversity, organizational culture, and student success. Table 1 lists the concepts that this study used to inform the research.

Table 1 Conceptual Framework

Critical Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examines issues of power, privilege, and oppression (Freire, 1979; Ibarra, 2001).
Organizational Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beliefs, values, and norms (Schein, 2004) Culturally relevant and culturally responsive (Museus, 2014)
Student Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students of color and their own definitions of success• Sense of belonging, academic dispositions including self-efficacy and academic self-confidence, academic performance (Museus, 2014)
High Impact Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High impact practices intended to increase student engagement and thereby increase student success (CCCSE, 2012; Kuh, 2008)

Critical Theory. Critical theory, when applied to organizational culture, provides a means to examine how power, privilege, and resistance are exercised among institutional members in response to deeply held values, assumptions, beliefs, behaviors, norms, and traditions enacted in an institution (Ibarra, 2001). Critical theory provides a frame of reference to examine underlying values and assumptions that exist for practitioners and researchers through reflection, discourse, and discovery (Agger, 1991). Power, privilege, resistance to oppression, and liberation are key concepts in critical theory (Agger, 1991; Bess & Dee, 2008; Freire, 1979). Davies, Safarik, and Banning (2003) state that “In order to ask emancipatory questions, design emancipatory research, and use understandings generated by such research to transform institutions, we need to start with frameworks that de-center the dominant culture, question it, and reinvent it” (p. 856).

Through his critical analysis of pedagogy, Freire (1970), for example, challenges the meaning of power and the tension that results from acts that either humanize or dehumanize individuals. Similarly, Ibarra (2001) argues that institutional leaders tend to attribute diversity-related discord to a lack of racial harmony, thus ignoring deeply rooted issues of

power. Institutions must “reframe the dialogue about culture and context by raising the discourse beyond racism to ethnocentrism as central to addressing issues of imbalance and inequality” (p. 67). Such discourse requires exploring values and ultimately changing them as the means to achieve transformational change.

Ibarra (2001) proposes a critical strategy for reading texts, through which “we always look at the words on a page when we read, and some of us are adept at reading between the lines, but what about examining the white spaces, the gaps between words and letters?” (pp. 44-45). Following Ibarra’s suggestion to “examine the gaps...to see what is there or whether anything is missing” (2001, p. 45), researchers can explore how organizational culture may perpetuate exclusion and oppression via dominant ideologies, as well as how it may support inclusive practices that give voice to all members of the academy. Thus, critical theory is an examination of how power is exercised in ways that privilege members of dominant groups and oppress and silence members of non-dominant groups within the shared social context.

Organizational Culture. The study of organizational culture is linked to the work of cultural anthropologists and sociologists, as well as researchers in the field of management who seek to understand culture to improve organizational performance. Organizational culture is examined in higher education research from the perspectives of various stakeholders such as faculty, students, administrators, and government policymakers. The organizational culture theories that emerge in the literature differ in context, perspective, and

purpose, yet they are similar in their quest to understand human relationships and underlying meanings.

The anthropological perspective situates organizational culture in society, defining it as human relationships within “webs of significance” that are created and interpreted by the participants themselves (Geertz, 1973). The sociological perspective (Ouchi & Wilkins, 1985) builds on the anthropological lens, to study whole organizations, focusing on how people live and work together and the establishment of norms within the social context of an organization. The management perspective describes culture as shared understanding in a quest for consensus, where shared assumptions, norms, and beliefs become pervasive in an organization’s operations (Deal & Kennedy, 2000; Schein, 2004).

Much of the contemporary organizational culture literature focuses on shared meaning as the primary objective of organizational culture (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Deal & Kennedy, 2000; Schein, 2004; Tierney, 1988). In these cultural models, leaders or managers work to facilitate organizational goals and performance by teaching the culture to members of the organization. For example, Schein (2004) proposes that as shared assumptions, norms, and beliefs develop, they become both deeply and broadly pervasive in the capacity they have to influence an organization’s operations. Schein’s perspective suggests that a shared understanding of the culture is something to be taught to all institutional members in order for the organization to be successful. This process of sharing the organizational culture with others can occur overtly through “visible organizational structures and processes” and “strategies, goals, philosophies,” as well as via “unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts and feelings” (p. 26). In this framework, culture is understood to

inform the behaviors of groups as a result of problems they face externally; and the resultant manner in which they need to adapt and then internally integrate these notions into the organization.

Schein (2004) identified three levels of culture: 1) artifacts, 2) espoused beliefs and values, and 3) underlying assumptions. Artifacts are at the surface level and are visible products (structures and processes) that can be seen, heard, and felt when engaging with the organization. Espoused beliefs and values are the sense of what should be, not necessarily what is (strategies, goals, and philosophies). What is espoused, however, may be incongruent with underlying assumptions. Underlying assumptions (unconscious, taken-for-granted thoughts and feelings) shape the ways in which things are actually done. Underlying assumptions inform values and actions and are often seen as unchangeable or very difficult to change. Hence, according to Schein (2004), culture formation is informed by patterns and assumptions. Schein posits that culture is a group's "pattern of shared, basic taken-for-granted assumptions" and to understand an organization's culture one must seek to understand how the assumptions emerged (p. 36). These shared assumptions are taught to organizational members and "form a paradigm, with more or less central or governing assumptions driving the system" (p. 22).

Similarly, Deal and Kennedy (2000) examine what drives an organization and the role of culture in leadership and management. They describe a strong corporate culture as "a system of informal rules that spells out exactly how people are to behave most of the time...and enables people to feel better about what they do, so they are more likely to work harder" (pp. 15-16). In this model, culture is enacted through shared traditions, values, and

beliefs. Deal and Kennedy extend their model by acknowledging the existence of subcultures and the impact they have on organizational cultural consensus. The role of the manager in their framework is to support the overarching culture in spite of the existence of subcultural groups that may emerge. Subcultures are perceived as detrimental to organizational success; something that managers should work to prevent from forming.

Martin's (1992) organizational culture theory presents three perspectives as a means to include different points of view on organizational culture. Martin shifts thinking away from the rational, hierarchical models of organizational culture such as those of Deal and Kennedy (2000). Rational, hierarchical models include the assumption of an informal system of shared traditions, values, and beliefs held by all, guiding how members are to behave and how leaders are to lead as a result of a shared understanding. In contrast, an interpretive model of organizational culture seeks to acknowledge the existence of subcultural groups and to recognize that perspectives differ based on notions of "harmony (integration), conflict between groups (differentiation), and webs of ambiguity, paradox, and contradiction (fragmentation)" (Martin, 2002, p. 120). When viewed together, the integration, differentiation, and fragmentation perspectives offer different lenses for understanding the culture of an organization (Martin, 1992).

While some theories of organizational culture emphasize shared values, other theories emphasize differences and uncertainties. Martin (1992), for example, describes organizational culture as both visible and hidden, as well as complex and fragmented. Similarly, Ibarra (2001) describes culture as diverse and not uniform, not mutually understood, and not shared by all organizational members. The holistic, changing, evolving,

and overlapping layers and depth of organizational culture impact institutional members in varying ways based on historical and current experiences and by perspectives of group membership (Martin, 1992).

In the higher education context, Kuh and Whitt (1988) emphasize the value of culture's holistic, changing, evolving, and overlapping layers and depth. In their analysis, Kuh and Whitt propose a framework that is multilayered and impacted by the unique constituent groups found in higher education, including subcultural groups. Kuh and Whitt (1988) define institutional culture:

as the collective, mutually shaping patterns of norms, values, practices, beliefs, and assumptions that guide the behavior of individuals and groups in an institute of higher education and provide a frame of reference within which to interpret the meaning of events and actions on and off campus. This definition emphasizes normative influences on behavior as well as the underlying system of assumptions and beliefs shared by culture bearers (pp. 12-13).

Kuh and Whitt also recognize that the dominant culture of an organization has the potential to marginalize women and people of color through its enactment of values, beliefs, norms, and assumptions that may be in contradiction with the historical and current perspectives of these groups. Organizational culture thus is a critical element in understanding how institutions can create conditions that support or impede the success of students from traditionally underrepresented groups.

The Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) model suggests that organizational culture affects all members, but not all members relate to the dominant

organizational culture in the same way. The distinctions of CECE are useful to explain how organizational culture is related to student success and diversity. The CECE model suggests that culturally engaging campus cultures are more likely to promote diverse student success. A culturally engaging campus culture is one that acknowledges racially and ethnically diverse students' cultural identities and their histories in ways that are personal and that transform the organizational culture to create leaning environments where students of color will thrive and succeed. According to the CECE model, when colleges enact cultures that intentionally engage diverse students with learning experiences that are connected to their backgrounds and identities, diverse students are more likely to achieve success in college. "Specifically, the culturally engaging campus environments construct focuses on the extent to which campus environments engage the cultural identities of racially diverse student populations and reflect the needs of these students" (Museus, 2014, p. 209).

The central purpose of the CECE model is to "outline a set of quantifiable elements of campus environments that research suggests are associated with success among diverse populations" (Museus, Zhang, & Kim, 2016, p. 772). In its totality, the CECE model takes into account a student's external influences such as financial resources, employment, and family resources that impact student success, while also acknowledging that students come to a campus as individuals with unique characteristics such as academic traits and preparation (Museus, 2014). Museus et al. (2016) suggests that campuses that enact the nine CECE indicators are more likely to positively influence a student's sense of belonging, academic dispositions, and academic performance.

Five of the nine CECE indicators relate to *cultural relevance* which refers to the ways in which campus culture provides opportunities for students to connect and share with people who have similar backgrounds or understand their lived experiences (Museus et al., 2015). First, *cultural familiarity* explores the existence of opportunities for students “to physically connect with faculty, staff, and peers who share and understand their cultural backgrounds and experiences” (Museus, 2014, p. 210). When students connect with people with whom they share a common background or understand their backgrounds, these students have a greater chance of success. Second, *culturally relevant knowledge* explores “the degree to which students have opportunities to learn about their own cultural communities via culturally relevant curricular and cocurricular activities” (Museus, 2014, p. 210). Third, *cultural community service* suggests that access to opportunities for diverse students to engage with and impact their cultural communities positively impacts their success. Fourth, *opportunities for meaningful cross-cultural engagement* serves as an indicator of the availability of intentional and meaningful programs and practices that facilitate “positive and purposeful interactions with peers from disparate cultural origins” (Museus, 2014, p. 211). Fifth, *culturally validating environments* are “the extent to which postsecondary institutions and educators convey that they value the cultural backgrounds and identities of their diverse college student populations” (Museus, 2014, p. 212). These five indicators are grouped under the *cultural relevance* dimension of the CECE model, and can be used to establish the extent to which a campus culture may be relevant to the backgrounds and identities of the diverse students they serve.

The second strand of CECE indicators relates to *cultural responsiveness*. The four indicators in this strand reveal the ways in which campus cultures can respond to the norms and needs of diverse students (Museus, 2014; Museus et al., 2016; Museus et al., 2015). First, *collectivist cultural orientations* examine the extent to which campuses are collectivist and collaborative as opposed to individualistic and competitive. This indicator emphasizes teamwork and a sense of mutual success. A collectivist cultural orientation is more likely to foster success for students who come from communities with more collectivist versus individualist orientations. Second, *humanized educational environments* emphasize opportunities for students to connect with faculty and staff in order to develop meaningful relationships with people who care about their success. Such caring connections foster student success. Third, *proactive philosophies* is an indicator of instances when faculty and staff proactively share information with students and do not wait for students to seek them out first. This may be evidenced by faculty and staff making extra effort to share information with students. Fourth, *holistic support* refers to students feeling confident that at least one faculty or staff member will provide them with support, accurate information, and direction toward important resources. Salient to this indicator is that the support is given without regard to the student's individual issue or concern. These four *cultural responsiveness* indicators together illuminate how an institution may or may not set up environments and practices that support diverse students. Together the nine CECE indicators provide a methodology for a researcher to understand a campus environment in terms of characteristics that may positively influence diverse student success.

In summary, organizational culture plays a critical role in understanding complicated institutional problems by examining how the beliefs, values, and assumptions of a college represent the institution's mission, purpose, and ideology. According to Schein (2004), organizational culture is expressed and enacted through structures and processes (artifacts), strategies and goals (values), and commonly accepted perceptions and feelings (assumptions). The achievement gap, a complicated problem, brings to light the notion of unequal outcomes and experiences of community college students, and illustrates how organizational culture can provide a compelling perspective to address such a complex problem. Furthermore, promoting cultural integrity, defined as the affirmation and honor of cultural diversity, may be an essential contributor to success for racially and ethnically diverse students (Tierney, 1992, 1999).

Student Success. In this study, student success is examined in two ways: in the CECE model, and through students' own definitions of success. The CECE model defines student success in terms of a sense of belonging, academic dispositions that include self-efficacy and academic self-confidence, and academic performance (Museus, 2014; Museus & Maramba, 2011; Museus et al., 2017). In the CECE model, sense of belonging is understood as a student's sense of being accepted and connected to their institutional environment. Self-efficacy is defined as an individual's belief in their ability to succeed in a situation (Bandura, 1995). Academic self-confidence is defined as "confidence in one's own intellectual abilities to succeed" (Museus, 2014, p. 27). Academic performance is the intent to persist and complete a degree (Museus, 2014).

High Impact Practices. Student engagement is the foundation of HIPs, which are designed to address a national concern over student success and learning. Student engagement is defined as “the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other activities that lead to the experiences and outcomes that constitute student success” coupled with “the way the institution allocates resources and organizes learning opportunities and services to induce students to participate in and benefit from such activities” (Kuh et al., 2005, p. 9). When students from historically underserved populations participate in HIPs that have clearly designed purposes and experiences, use inclusive pedagogy, and provide feedback from all involved, then the HIPs have been found to have a compensatory effect for those students, as well as a cumulative effect when they participate in multiple HIPs (Kuh et al., 2017). However, African-American and Latina/o students participate in fewer HIPs and therefore receive less of the compensatory and cumulative effects of them (McNair & Finley, 2013).

The shift from an emphasis on institutional effectiveness based on student enrollment growth to one of student success outcomes is a means for institutions to become equity-minded, according to the Center for Urban Studies (2017). This refocus brings to light the lack of equity for students of color in success outcomes and highlights the need for new goals, conversations, and assessment strategies (Center for Urban Studies, 2017). Community college leaders, practitioners, and researchers have developed an array of institutional responses to address the needs of students including HIPs. Yet in spite of these efforts, the achievement gap continues. In order for these institutional responses, including HIPs, to be effective, community colleges may also need to create inclusive campus cultures

(Hurtado et al., 1999; Museus & Maramba, 2011). The organizational culture of a college informs its ideologies (values) and how it operates, and will influence how high impact practices are implemented and experienced by students. Understanding where organizational culture appears incongruent with institutional espoused values and student experiences may be important for community college leaders to address the achievement gap and respond to pressures to increase success for all students.

Examining organizational culture in relation to institutional practices and student experiences can reveal tensions between espoused versus enacted values (CCCSE, 2010; Kuh et al., 2005). High impact practices, for example, may represent an incomplete approach to student success if there is a misalignment between a community college's espoused cultural values regarding diversity and how students of color experience the campus. Thus, it is important to generate a rich description of how organizational culture is enacted on community college campuses and to understand the extent to which a supportive organizational culture that values diversity may be necessary for high impact practices to be effective for all learners.

Overview of the Conceptual Framework. The conceptual framework for this study draws concepts from critical theory (Freire, 1979; Ibarra, 2001), organizational culture (Schein, 2004), and the Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) model (Museus, 2014). The framework critically examines organizational culture, particularly in relation to how community colleges implement high impact practices.

Critical theory contributes to the conceptual framework in several ways. First, the cultural theme of diversity is deeply connected to power and privilege and draws attention to

issues of oppression and voice (Freire, 1979; Ibarra, 2001). Second, critical theory provides a frame of reference to examine underlying values and assumptions in organizational culture by centering on student voice (Freire, 1978; Ibarra, 2001). Students of color bring with them a wealth of knowledge and experiences that have been historically excluded or minimized in education (Gorski, 2011; Yosso, 2005), and critical theory intentionally includes them in the discourse about their success. Third, critical theory examines the gaps in practices that may be the result of a dominant ideology that perpetuates structures of power and privilege (Ibarra, 2001). Ibarra argues that leaders tend to ignore issues of racial imbalance and inequality, and do not address deeply rooted issues of power. Using a critical theory perspective allows for an examination of how power is exercised in ways that may privilege some groups over others within the shared social context.

The literature suggests that college culture serves both a functional role that guides how the institution operates organizationally and an interpretative role that reflects institutional ideology through its behaviors and values (Levin, 1997; Martin, 1992; Museus, 2014; Schein, 2004). The organizational culture of a college informs how diversity is valued and enacted. The human relationships that result are impacted by the way organizational members experience and construct meanings about their roles and experiences. Through a deep understanding of organizational culture and a model of inclusive and equitable campus practices (in this study, the CECE model), an examination of institutional organization culture can unfold. The CECE model suggests a definition of student success that includes a sense of belonging, academic dispositions including self-efficacy and academic self-confidence, and academic performance (Museus, 2014; Museus & Maramba, 2011; Museus

et al., 2017). The students' own definitions of student success are another salient feature of the conceptual framework.

High impact practices, which are intended to positively impact student success, are shaped by and enacted within an organization's culture (CCSSE, 2010; Kuh et al., 2006). How the culture is enacted and experienced by its members can reinforce the values of the status quo, thereby maintaining achievement disparities for students of color despite efforts to launch strategies to address student success (Rutschow et al., 2011). Organizational culture provides the operational prompts and the ideological cues for institutional stakeholders to develop and deliver organizational practices designed to foster student success and address the achievement gap; and for diverse students to engage with the student success practices at the college (CCSSE, 2010; Clayton-Pedersen & Musil, 2005; Kuh et al., 2005; Museus, 2014; Schein, 2004).

When diversity and excellence are conceptualized as deeply connected and valued by an institution, the organizational culture and related practices focus on intellectual development, the creation of environments that promote learning and inclusion, the acknowledgment of cultural differences among learners, and college-wide participation of multiple stakeholders who hold a variety of viewpoints (Clayton-Pederson & Musil, 2005). At the institutional level, an institution with diversity as an authentic value in the organizational culture will express it in the arenas of leadership, curriculum, pedagogy, and program practices (CCCSE, 2010; Kuh et al., 2005; Museus, 2014, 2016). The conceptual framework for this study provides a method to examine how organizational culture can support or impede the success of racially and ethnically diverse community college students.

Museus' (2014) Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) model provides understanding of the ways an institution may or may not enact an organizational culture that fosters diverse student success. Finally, the components of the conceptual framework create a perspective to understand the extent to which organizational culture informs racially and ethnically diverse student success through interconnections among institutional characteristics, values, and practices when diversity is an espoused institutional value.

In summary, the conceptual framework uses critical theory to invite broad perspectives that challenge current representations of power and privilege within leadership, curriculum, pedagogy, and programs. The CECE model provides a framework to allow deep understanding of the organizational culture within a community college, as well as how students experience that culture (Museus, 2014). Finally, this study focuses on further understanding how organizational culture has the capacity to promote and advance the educational benefits of diversity, as well as facilitate equitable outcomes and empower historically underrepresented groups in higher education.

Significance of the Study

Diversity efforts have been described as ad hoc in nature, lacking impact due to isolated and fragmented approaches that have not shown significant impact on narrowing achievement gaps (Bauman et al., 2005; Clayton-Pedersen & Musil, 2005). The research suggests that campus diversity efforts have tended to focus on two dominant approaches, structural and strategic. A structural approach addresses the representation and composition of diverse groups by looking at enrollment numbers and staffing patterns of underrepresented groups including race, ethnicity, and gender (Cox, 1994; Hurtado et al., 1999; Milem, 2003;

Milem et al., 2005). The strategic approach occurs through planning and resources allocated by administrators to include diversity as an institutional priority (Cox, 1994, 2001; Hurtado et al., 1999), enacted through mission statements, goals, resource allocations, curriculum modifications, pedagogical practices, and programming (Hurtado et al., 1999; Milem, 2003).

However, research shows that there are limitations to examining diversity from predominantly structural and/or strategic approaches, as the achievement gap continues to be problematic for community colleges. A “boutique” approach (Bailey & Morest, 2006b) or a “cafeteria-style, self-service model” (Bailey et al., 2017) for student support programs typically fails to make a significant impact on student success and does not yield institutional cultures that support equitable outcomes. An unwelcoming environment may be created for diverse students, faculty, and staff, when diversity is valued only structurally, as representation, or when a surface level strategic perspective of diversity is the primary focus for an institution. When diversity is primarily viewed as structural representation at the institutional level, it limits understanding simply to tolerance of diversity (Cox, 1994, 2001; Milem, 2003; Rendón, 2004). Such an approach focuses on access and enrollment, but does not include student success and the educational benefits of diversity. Tolerance of diversity does not address the power imbalances that occur or the privileges available to dominant groups; it does not liberate less powerful groups to engage fully in democratic processes (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013; Freire, 1970).

In an era of increasing diversity and pressure to address achievement gaps, there is a need to examine more fully the organizational culture of community colleges, where high impact practices are situated. Studies pertaining to community college student success

mention organizational culture as a key element in addressing the achievement gap (CCCSE, 2010; Rutschow et al., 2011), yet organizational culture often remains a mere comment without further empirical investigation. Furthermore, the rising emphasis on high impact practices as an effective means to address the achievement gap remains aspirational and incomplete, with limited empirical evidence to support their impact on racially and ethnically diverse student success (Bailey et al., 2015; Finley & McNair, 2013; Johnson & Stage, 2018; Kuh et al., 2017).

This study differs from other cultural studies as it specifically examines the complexity of community college organizational cultures from diverse students' perspectives. Furthermore, the study uses students' own definitions of success as an intentional means to include student voice in the data. Furthermore, an institutional level study that examines relationships among diversity, organizational culture, and high impact practices has not yet been conducted in community college settings. The research is relatively silent on community college organizational culture and diverse student success. A cultural approach to diversity using an institutional level analysis adds to the empirical body of research on community colleges and student success. Reframing the discourse of diversity at the institutional level of analysis may allow deeper understanding of power and privilege within institutions, providing an alternative perspective for understanding diversity and student success.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review examines three areas that frame the study. First, a discussion of the community college teaching and learning environment provides the context for understanding how organizational culture might impact the student experience. The second area of the literature examines high impact practices. This section reviews the literature on student success theory and high-impact practices, particularly for underrepresented student groups. The third area of literature explores research on racially and ethnically diverse student experiences in higher education with a particular focus on community college students. The chapter closes with a synthesis of the literature review.

The Community College Teaching and Learning Environment

This section highlights the unique dimensions of the community college teaching and learning context. How faculty teach is impacted by their students, available and accessible resources, their own education, their preparation specific to teaching, the networks of peers they create (or fail to create), and the culture and incentives of their colleges (Grubb et al., 1999). The literature highlights five factors that differentiate teaching and learning at community colleges from other sectors in higher education: open admissions policies, the faculty role, developmental education, professional development, and assessment.

Open Admission. American community colleges provide local and open access to a highly diverse student body. They are unique and distinct from other institutional types due to their proximity to local neighborhoods and open and non-competitive admissions policies (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Grubb et al., 1999). “The concept of a system of higher education that has open, fluid boundaries between the community and the college is both the community college’s strength and its greatest challenge” (Mellow & Heelan, 2008, p. 4).

Since the first public community college was established in 1901, these colleges have struggled with the breadth and complexity of their missions that include facilitating transfer to baccalaureate institutions, providing a vocational career path, and being a relevant partner with state governments and local business and industry to address ever changing workforce needs (Bailey & Morest, 2004; Baime & Baum, 2016; Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Grubb et al., 1999; Mellow & Heelan, 2008; Morest, 2006). Couple this multi-faceted mission with an insecure funding stream, where tuition rates are set by external governing bodies that are enmeshed with national and state level politics (Bailey & Morest, 2004, 2006a, 2006b; Cejda & Leist, 2006; Gumport & Zemsky, 2003), and the result is that institutions ebb and flow in response to changing economic, political, and educational needs.

Access to a community college education is championed as “virtually within the reach – financially, geographically, practically - of virtually every American” (Cohen & Brawer, 2003, p. 30). According to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), there are 1,103 community colleges comprised of 980 public colleges, 88 independent colleges, and 35 tribal colleges (AACC, 2018). They enroll 41% of all undergraduate students and 40% of all first-time freshmen. Overall 42% of community

college students are the first generation in their families to attend college, 13% are single parents, and 12% are students with disabilities. Some racial and ethnic groups are overrepresented in the community college sector. “Immigrant Asian and Hispanic students enrolled in community colleges at higher rates (54% and 51% respectively) than did all undergraduates (44%)” (Staklis & Horn, 2012, p. 4). In 2018, community colleges enrolled over seven million students in credit courses and five million in non-credit courses (AACC, 2018). Yet, the reality of equitable access and opportunities for success for racial/ethnic minority and low-income students is still not fully realized (Boggs, 2011).

Leaders at the state and institutional levels are challenged to be “equity-minded” to raise awareness of continued achievement disparities based on race and ethnicity and of systems that impede equitable outcomes for underrepresented and underserved students (Center for Urban Education, 2017). Many community colleges have undertaken a review of their structures and practices, in light of public and economic pressure to efficiently yield graduates and reduce achievement gaps. The movement from a “cafeteria-style” of programs and services to a more structured system of guided pathways and services is emerging as the strategy of choice for many community colleges to promote student success (Bailey et al., 2015; Baime & Baum, 2016; Scott-Clayton, 2011; Tinto, 2012).

The Community College Faculty Role. The primary work for community college faculty is teaching and related service such as advising, curriculum development, and shared governance, and to a lesser degree research and scholarship (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Mellow & Heelan, 2003; Townsend & Twombly, 2007). Community colleges rely heavily on part-time or adjunct faculty who comprise over 65% of their faculty (AAUP, 2018; Bickerstaff &

Chavarín, 2018). The majority of community college faculty are White, making up 74% of part-time faculty and 77% of full-time faculty (AACC, 2018).

The full-time community college faculty work load has increased (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Specifically, according to a national study, community college faculty increased the hours they worked per week from 46.66 hours in 1993 to 49.17 hours in 2004; which resulted in decreased office hours and increased credit hours taught (Townsend & Rosser, 2009). Generally, the role of community college faculty can be isolating and part-time faculty are even more isolated due to their work schedules and lack of time spent on campus (Bickerstaff & Chavarin, 2018; Grubb et al., 1999; Outcalt, 2002).

At question is whether the reliance on adjunct faculty hampers student success and graduation rates in community colleges (Calcagno, Bailey, Jenkins, Kienzl, & Leinbah, 2008; Jacoby, 2006; Eagan & Jaeger, 2009; Jaeger & Eagan, 2009; Stenerson, Blanchard, Fassiotto, Hernandez, & Muth, 2010). Jacoby's (2006) study on the impact of adjuncts on graduation rates at community colleges found that the "increases in the ratio of part-time faculty at community colleges have a highly significant and negative impact upon graduation rates" (p. 1092). Jaeger and Eagan (2009) studied how community college students' associate degree attainment was impacted by their exposure to part-time faculty versus full-time faculty. The study found that an average of 50% of the students were taught by part-time faculty; and their exposure to part-time faculty had a small (5%) but significant negative impact on their likelihood to complete an associate degree compared to students who were only exposed to full-time faculty. Another study examined the impact of community college students' exposure to part-time faculty on their likelihood to transfer to a four-year university (Eagan

& Jaeger, 2009). This study found a significant and negative effect on a student's likelihood to transfer from their exposure to part-time faculty. In this study, approximately 40% of a student's courses were taught by part-time faculty and this translated to these students becoming 8% less likely to transfer compared to students with only full-time faculty.

These studies point to the impact of adjunct faculty on several student success measures as community colleges continue to rely on part-time faculty. A high proportion of adjuncts can make it difficult to create an engaged campus culture, though Calcagno et al. (2008) add that in career or technical programs adjuncts are effective because they bring current knowledge and workplace skills. Additional strengths that adjuncts bring are their discipline knowledge and flexibility to work as needed (Charlier & Williams, 2011; Stenerson et al., 2010,). The Achieving the Dream (ATD) project focused on adjunct faculty engagement and professional development as a key component in their student success strategies (Finley & McNair, 2013). It is imperative to include them in the discourse, planning and professional development opportunities related to community college student success initiatives (ATD, 2019; Bickerstaff & Chavarin, 2018; Bailey et al., 2015; Outcalt, 2002).

Developmental Education. The open access policies of community colleges, according to Grubb et al. (1999), compel faculty to find new ways to teach and to embrace the “entrepreneurial spirit” unique to community colleges. Community college faculty will likely encounter students who are enrolled or have been enrolled in some form of developmental coursework (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Grubb et al., 1999; Kozeracki & Brooks, 2006; Mellow & Heelan, 2008). Developmental studies programs serve

underprepared students and prepare them for college-level work. Using a talent development approach, developmental education assumes that each student possesses talent to be developed and then bridges academic gaps and course expectations (Arendale, 2010).

The community college open access mission does not ensure direct entry into college level courses. Upon admission, a placement testing system assesses students' academic skills and needs (Grubb et al., 1999). The U.S Department of Education reported in 2007-08, approximately 42% of students at two-year public institutions took a remedial course at some point in their studies (Aud et al., 2011). Furthermore, "at public 2-year institutions, 75 percent of beginning students with weak academic preparation took remedial courses, compared with 48 percent of those with strong academic preparation" (Chen, 2016, p. 16) indicating that remedial education is broadly impacting students at community colleges.

Research shows that students enrolled in developmental education ultimately take more time, up to three years longer, and thus pay more for their bachelor's degree (Melguizo, Hagedorn, & Cypers, 2009). Furthermore more than half of the students referred to developmental courses do not complete the developmental sequence (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010). Additional research has shown that any benefits of developmental education sequences in math and English do not outweigh the negative effect of being tracked in developmental education and progressing much more slowly academically (Scott-Clayton & Rodriguez, 2012). Given the need for developmental education programs at the colleges, the successful completion of a developmental reading, writing, and/or math courses was thought to be a strong predictors of student retention (Fike & Fike, 2008). More recent studies indicate that the benefits of developmental education are mixed (Scott-Clayton & Rodriguez,

2012), and that it “does not sufficiently develop students’ skills in order to improve their chances of college-level success” (p. 27). A study that looked at the impact of developmental education on community college students’ intent to transfer found that student participation in developmental education decreases their odds of transferring to a four-year institution (Crisp & Delgado, 2014). This is troubling as Crisp and Delgado described women and students of color as over-represented among the developmental students group in their study.

Another study looked at the impact of accelerating developmental education by shortening the time frames. Acceleration resulted in positive impacts in completing college-level English courses and earning credits and attaining a degree, while the shorter math sequence did not yield the same success indicators (Hodara & Jaggars, 2014). Grubb et al. found that “the best forms of developmental education engaged faculty with a collectivist approach that involved learning community courses that address the target content area, provide a coherent philosophy about developmental education, and include professional development to show faculty new ways to teach” (Grubb et al., 1999, p. 199).

Recently, colleges have begun to use a multiple measures approach to college course placement (Rutschow & Mayer, 2018). The multiple measures approach moves from a high stakes placement exam to using high school grades as a more accurate representation of college readiness (Scott-Clayton, 2012). According to Scott-Clayton:

Given that students ultimately succeed or fail in college-level courses for many reasons beyond just their performance on placement exams, it is questionable whether

their use as the sole determinant of college access can be justified on the basis of anything other than consistency and efficiency (p. 37).

The notion that accuracy of placement is only part of the student success formula is evident in a recent report of the impact of multiple measures on students at seven community colleges (Barnett et al., 2018). Barnett et al. found using multiple measures instead of the placement exam resulted in an increase of 14% in the number of students placed into college level math, while 7% placed lower into remedial math using multiple measures; 41.5% of the students placed higher in English, while 6.5% placed lower into remedial English using multiple measures. Women benefitted more than men in college level math placement, enrollment, and course completion with a C or better. Of importance is that Black and Latina/o students benefitted more than White students in being placed in college level English courses and enrollment in these courses, but they did not benefit on course completion with a C or better grade. This reflects the concern suggested by Scott-Clayton (2011, 2012) that access is insufficient when envisioning student success, as external factors and campus factors including the college and classroom environment impact student success. Furthermore, while multiple measures may provide more accurate course placement for students of color and an allegedly more efficient path to completion, the success of students of color requires a holistic approach that engages faculty as well.

A report by the American Association of Developmental Education (Boylan, Calderwood, & Bonham, 2017) suggests that faculty professional development needs to: focus on innovation and engaging today's college students, particularly those from minority, low income, or first-generation backgrounds. Institutions cannot continue to

expose the weakest students to the poorest instruction and expect to improve college completion rates. Students who are most at risk are also most in need of the highest quality of teaching. Ultimately, the success of students in any course depends upon what happens in individual classrooms between individual instructors and their students (pp. 15-16).

However less than 20% of these community colleges required full-time or part-time faculty to have prior training in remediation before teaching a developmental course (Shults, 2000).

Professional Development. Two main challenges that community college faculty face are assessment of student learning and working with underprepared students (Eddy, 2007, 2010). “Clearly the role of community college faculty is evolving with our understanding of how learning occurs, and the evolution is both challenging and exhausting...faculty will require significant changes in orientation and support to develop new pedagogies” (Mellow & Heelan, 2008, p. 127). Community colleges have long offered professional development for their faculty albeit in varied forms. New faculty are content experts, but often lack the skills needed for good teaching and need institutional support so that they can learn how to work with diverse learners, using active and cooperative learning to support their teaching (Eddy, 2010). While most community colleges require a master’s degree for full-time faculty, this may not be enforced for part-time faculty (Grubb et al., 1999). Community college students are taught by a faculty workforce that is mainly part-time, thus maintaining consistency and quality is challenging (Bickerstaff & Chavarrín, 2016; Jacoby, 2006; Wallin, 2004).

Oftentimes professional development in community colleges is ad hoc, lacks leadership, and is not linked to the college mission (Grubb et al., 1999). Murray (2001) found in a study of 130 community colleges that while college leaders valued good teaching, there was little evidence of organized faculty development programs that clearly aligned to the college mission and were adequately resourced. Murray found inconsistency between actual campus practices and leaders' beliefs about support of faculty development.

The outcomes (degree completion) movement in community colleges includes an emphasis on engaging faculty and staff via professional development as salient to student success (Bailey et al., 2015; Boylan et al., 2017). The professional development link to organizational culture is also reinforced in the research (Eddy, 2007, 2010; Sprouse, Ebers, & King, 2008). Specifically, institutional culture influences professional development programming and structure (Eddy, 2007, 2010; Sprouse, Ebers & King, 2008). Administrators are central in establishing the tone and culture of their institutions. In order to meet the goals of today's faculty and to offer relevant programming, it is important for leaders to have broad knowledge about critical contemporary issues facing faculty (Eddy, 2007).

Assessment. Community colleges are reminded by legislators, educational advocacy organizations, accrediting agencies, and philanthropic organizations that assessment is essential to fostering student success (Dowd, Sawatzky, Rall, & Bensimón, 2012; Ewell, 2011; Obama, 2009). The institutional transformation needed to support student success may require a culture that intentionally pursues assessment. Such assessment requires decision making by stakeholders who are willing to ask compelling questions that challenge current

power structures and policies as to their purpose and impact on the success of people of color and other marginalized groups. Bensimón (2004) argues that “what gets measured gets noticed” (p. 46). Leaders can look at data critically to inform institutional priorities and choices for future assessment strategies and professional development (Bensimón, 2004; Dowd, 2005; Morest & Jenkins, 2007). Data can be powerful tools in institutional change efforts to support diversity and equity.

Community colleges operate in an accountability context and are often criticized for their inability to assess their own performance (Ewell, 2011). Evidence-based decision making may be critical for community colleges facing multiple challenges in student success outcomes (AACC, 2012; Dowd, 2005; Ewell, 2011). The challenge to examining institutional effectiveness overall, according to Ewell, is based in the complexity of community colleges themselves due to their multiple missions, distinct and diverse patterns of student attendance, and a broad range of student characteristics. Ewell (2011) suggests that in response to the emerging emphasis of accountability for community colleges, there are several promising practices. For example, a shift away from a graduation and retention framework as the key institutional measures of student success allows institutions to use a more holistic approach. Examining progress through a student pipeline perspective that entails high school, college, and entry into the workforce can help to develop more useful student progression measures (Ewell, 2011).

A “culture of inquiry” is proposed by Dowd (2005) as a way for campuses to assess their performance in promoting student success and fostering innovation towards that goal. Such a culture asks both administrators and faculty to address student success problems by

analyzing and using data related to student learning (Hutchings, 2011). Of key importance is institutional “capacity for insightful questioning of the evidence and informed interpretation of the results” (Dowd, 2005, p. 2). Professional development, according to Dowd, must be linked to the identified problems and be sustained such that open discussion about barriers to student success occur.

Three types of assessment activities are typically used in community colleges (Dowd, 2005). First, performance or metric benchmarking uses a comparison of accountability goals to performance data. This activity is limiting due to its lack of depth and limited consideration of resources. Second, diagnostic benchmarking is designed to describe the organization’s performance and then identify areas that need improvement. The interrelationship between the student and college is key; here, students are seen as contributors to their own outcomes. Third, process benchmarking is an in-depth comparison of a specific practice at two or more institutions. As community colleges move away from a focus on enrollments as a measure of success to a student success model, new methods of assessment may be required to measure institutional progress in student learning.

Kuh and Ikenberry (2009) found that institutions mainly use assessment data to respond to institutional or program self-study expectations for accreditation. The need for greater faculty engagement was identified as essential to improving the assessment of student learning outcomes deemed important to institutional improvement. They found that community colleges also used the data for “aligning curricula across sectors, determining

student readiness for college course work, improving instructional performance, and allocating resources to academic units” (p. 16).

There are many tools available to assess institutional effectiveness focusing on key areas of interest. For example, the Equity Scorecard is a stakeholder-driven data analysis project in which evidence is collected that sheds light on institutional educational inequities (Bensimón, 2004, Harris & Bensimón, 2007). The Equity Scorecard is a “data-driven tool” used to guide the assessment process, and at the institutional level, provides opportunities for dialogue and collaboration. The resulting evidence, when presented to institutional leaders and constituent groups, serves as the basis for cross-departmental and cross-functional change efforts in curricular and co-curricular programming.

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) is a tool designed allow a campus to compare their results to peer institutions and to leverage the results for strategic planning to improve in the area of student engagement (CCCSE, 2010; Dowd, 2005). CCSSE has a direct link to decisions made about resources, pedagogy, and professional development. Moreover, CCSSE highlights the “student-college relationship as interactive” (Dowd, 2005, p. 15) and measures the student role in student success in terms of engagement. The engagement framework encompasses student effort, active and collaborative learning, level of academic challenge, student-faculty interaction, and support for learners (CCCSE, 2010). Student engagement thus is a shared responsibility of the college and the student (Dowd, 2005; Kuh et al., 2005). A criticism of CCSSE is that it does not address the “cultural effort” of students from non-dominant cultural groups; specifically, it does not acknowledge the effort they exert to maintain connections and supportive

relationships with their own cultural groups (Dowd, 2005; Dowd et al., 2011). What may be missing is “explicit attention to the possibility that campuses are imposing constraints on minoritized students through racially biased practices and an assessment instrument to measure those minoritizing practices” (Dowd et al., 2011, p. 20). The basis of this critique is that there is an implicit assumption in CCSSE that institutional racism or racial bias does not exist on the participating campus and therefore not investigated via the instrument. Additionally, Nora et al. (2011) suggest that the lack items on the CCSSE to address beliefs, attitudes and perceptions also misses the contextual elements that inform one’s experiences at college.

The current emphasis on student outcomes has forced community college leaders to think deeply about how to best align their resources in ways that directly impact the student outcomes for which they are held accountable. Bailey et al. (2015) suggest that the “difficulty in measuring the effects of whole-institutional reform may be one of the reasons why colleges have been so reluctant to rethink the basic design of their programs and support services and have instead focused on small, discrete, more easily measured reforms” (p. 19). Assessment may be a necessary ingredient for stimulating changes needed to create “inclusive excellence” (Bauman et al., 2005), especially equitable educational outcomes (Bensimón, 2004). When historically underrepresented students achieve equitable educational outcomes, especially in measures of high academic achievement, inclusive excellence for the institution as a whole is achieved (Bauman et al., 2005).

High Impact Practices

This section of the literature review focuses on high impact practices and their connections to student success, curriculum, and pedagogy. It begins with an overview of student success research and theory. Next is a discussion that examines high impact practices that have been linked to student success. Finally, curriculum and pedagogy that are associated with student success and that influence high impact practices are explored.

Student Success Theory and Research. A great deal of research exists about student success and which practices may foster success. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) assert that since “individual effort or engagement is the critical determinant of the impact of college, then it is important to focus on the ways in which an institution can shape its academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular offerings to encourage student engagement” (p. 602). A quest to measure the effects of higher education on students drew Astin (1972) to examine student success via interrelationships among student inputs (what students bring with them to college), the college environment (institutional variables and policies that impact students), and student outputs (what colleges hope to influence or change within a student). Regarding inputs, new students bring with them talents, skills, aspirations, and other potential for growth and learning. The college environment includes variables that are experienced by all students such as its size and policies. Yet within the institution, some variables will only be experienced by particular sub-groups of students such as whether they are living at home or in a residence hall, and whether they are receiving financial aid or self-paying. Finally, colleges attempt to influence and measure student outputs through operationalized variables such as cognitive measures including knowledge and critical thinking that support areas such

as reasoning and logic. Colleges may also collect data on affective measures such as self-concepts, interests, values and beliefs that connect to behavior and that relate to a student's attitudes, feelings and personality.

Motivated to further understand why students drop out of higher education, Tinto (1975) developed a theoretical model to understand and explain what occurred between a student and their institution. Essentially Tinto sought to explain the process of adaptation of students to the culture of their institution, and how students socially and academically integrate. Tinto's theory of social and academic integration acknowledged the role of the institution's resources, structural arrangements, and demographic composition of its members as key ingredients in the college with which a student must adapt in order to persist.

In 1991, Astin proposed a paradigm shift away from measuring excellence on institutional reputation (based on national rankings) or on resources (based on endowments, SAT scores, faculty salaries) to measuring excellence based on how an institution develops the talent and abilities of students. "Basically, the talent development approach argues that true excellence resides in the ability of an institution to have a positive influence on its students' intellectual and personal development" (p. 133). Essentially Astin challenged educators at all types of institutions to consider how the implicit curriculum fosters or impedes student development in the areas of cooperation, trust, social responsibility, and good citizenship; and whether it teaches the value of teamwork and shows students how to cooperate. According to Astin, the curriculum is values-laden, encompassing what is taught, how it is taught, how students are graded and tested, as well as the manner in which an institution is operationalized including interpersonal relationships.

Kuh et al. (2006) expanded on the notion of talent development to center the discourse on student success squarely on what students need, requiring institutions to deeply know their students. Kuh et al. began to weave into their research the importance of student identities and how students come to college with varying expectations of themselves and the institution, as well as differing abilities and aspirations. A student-centered approach makes it critical for educators to clearly and frequently articulate expectations to students coupled with regular feedback. “Students who find something or someone worthwhile to connect to in the postsecondary environment are more likely to engage in educationally purposeful activities, persist, and achieve their educational objectives” (Kuh et al., 2006, p. 94). The notion of student engagement is a foundational concept for student success and is defined as “the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other activities that lead to the experiences and outcomes that constitute student success” coupled with “the way the institution allocates resources and organizes learning opportunities and services to induce students to participate in and benefit from such activities” (Kuh et al., 2005, p. 9).

In a review of three decades of research on how college affects students, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) confirm that “the greatest impact appears to stem from students’ *total* level of campus engagement, particularly when academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular involvements are mutually reinforcing and relevant to a particular educational outcome” (p. 647). Furthermore, they found that the research supported suggestions that “critical thinking, analytic competencies, and general intellectual development thrive in college environments that emphasize close relationships and frequent interaction between

faculty and students as well as faculty concern about student growth and development” (p. 600).

Essential to any discussion of student success is that race and ethnicity are generally absent in the discourse especially in light of achievement inequities. In considering these theories and practices, a deficit perspective on racial and ethnic diversity has been a means to explain differences in success and achievement. Gorski (2011) suggests that it is a pervasive strategy in education to explain that students of color bring deficiencies with them, and these deficiencies are used to explain the achievement gap. Framing the achievement gap in terms of student deficiencies then removes the need for educators to question their systems, policies, and practices that perpetuate the status quo, including racist systems and stereotypes. Yosso (2005) suggests that while the deficit perspective is pervasive, shifting the lens to valuing “community cultural wealth involves a commitment to conduct research, teach and develop schools that serve a larger purpose of struggling toward social and racial justice” (p. 82). Positively validating the identities of students of color is an essential element in their success through the inclusion and acknowledgment of their contributions to knowledge production (Rendón, 1994, 2000; Rendón Linares & Muñoz, 2011).

Another student success definition was offered by Kuh et al. (2017) as:

...we mean an undergraduate experience marked by academic achievement, engagement in educationally purposeful activities, satisfaction, persistence, attainment of educational objectives, and acquisition of desired learning outcomes

that prepare one to live an economically self-sufficient, civically responsible, and rewarding life (p. 9).

This definition informs their national work on student engagement and high impact practices. They further explain that student success for “students of *all* backgrounds” is imperative to insure that the country and its citizens can “thrive in the global future” (p. 9). Thus a global and broad lens appears to underpin this definition.

High Impact Practices. Educational programs and practices that are deemed “high impact” are designed to strategically and positively impact student success (CCCSE, 2012, 2014; Kuh et al., 2017). Examples of promising high impact practices (HIPs) include first-year seminars and experiences; common intellectual experiences such as a core curriculum; learning communities that link big questions across courses; writing intensive courses across the curriculum; collaborative assignments and projects that require seriously listening to and working with others; undergraduate research experiences to involve students in systematic research and investigation; diversity/global learning that help students explore perspectives different from one’s own; service learning to provide direct opportunities to both apply what is being studied and to reflect upon the service; internships that provide direct work experience related to career interests; and capstone courses and projects as culminating experiences where student integrate and apply their learning (AAC&U, 2007; CCCSE, 2014; Finley & McNair, 2013; Kuh, 2008; Kuh et al., 2017).

Kuh (2008) found that HIPs have specific characteristics that contribute to student success. They require students to commit time to tasks and make decisions that deepen their investment in the activity, and in doing so, they receive frequent feedback from the faculty or

other individuals involved in their learning. The design of HIPs puts students in situations where they must interact with faculty and peers about important topics over time. When students participate in one or more high impact educational activities, they are more likely to interact with diverse people in situations that foster new ways of thinking about topics. While participating in HIPs can benefit all students, first generation and African American students were found to benefit more, but they had lower participation rates (Finley & McNair, 2013).

The Center for Community College Student Engagement (2012) grouped HIPs into three strands. The first strand, *planning for success*, includes assessment and placement, orientation, advising to set academic goals and planning, and registration before classes begin. Creating comprehensive policies and practices that help students make intentional connections with the college at the onset of a student's educational journey have been shown to be effective strategies for success and retention. For example, providing and requiring preparatory classes or online sessions for students prior to taking the placement test can help students be placed in the correct course.

The second strand of HIPs is referred to as *initiating success* (CCCSE, 2012). This strand includes accelerated developmental education, first year experience courses, student success courses, and learning communities. For example, by allowing students to move through developmental education at their own pace and with robust tutoring services, they are more likely to complete the developmental requirements and move into college level work. First year experiences, student success courses, and learning communities incorporate

a sense of community within the classroom and build in experiences with college support services, academic resources, and information about time management and study skills.

The third strand of HIPs is *sustaining success* and involves class attendance, early alert and intervention, experiential learning beyond the classroom, tutoring, and supplemental instruction (CCCSE, 2012). Attendance in class is linked to student success; likewise, early alert and intervention systems are designed to address a problem quickly and support the student as needed. Learning outside of the classroom through internships, field experiences, and community-based projects “...steeps students in content, and ...encourages students to make connections and forge relationships that can support them throughout college and beyond” (p. 22).

The American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) project focuses on the adoption of HIPs and calls on higher education institutions to make excellence inclusive so that all students receive the best and most powerful preparation for work, life, and citizenship (AAC&U, 2011). LEAP focuses on transforming institutions to support student success through high impact practices in addition to identifying essential learning outcomes and authentic assessments. Briefly, essential learning outcomes are designed to provide both vision and benchmarks for education and include knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world; intellectual and practical skills; personal and social responsibility; and integrative and applied learning. Authentic assessment of student work shifts away from standardized tests and embraces the concept that learning occurs over time; new methods such as e-portfolios and rubrics are offered as more effective assessment tools for student learning. LEAP outcomes are also

designed to align with employers' needs for workers who can function in a global market place.

In addition to using new assessment tools, community colleges are adopting guided pathways as a strategy and practice to move away from an ad hoc approach to student success to one that is faculty designed (Bailey et al., 2015). The strategy suggests that “in guided pathways colleges, faculty clearly map out academic programs to create educationally coherent pathways, each with clearly defined learning outcomes that build across the curriculum and are aligned with requirements for further education and career advancement” (p. 16). Such an approach entails that institutions will rethink how and what they do. However, doing so entails asking institutional stakeholders to “be open to learning and changing their practices. They also must be particularly attentive to racial equity and not assume that guided pathways will magically eliminate racial gaps” (Center of Urban Education, 2017, p. 3).

A key tenet of guided pathways is to simplify the pathway to educational attainment, which involves limiting or narrowing choices for students, which itself is a value laden proposition (Bailey et al., 2015; CCCSE, 2014; Jenkins & Cho, 2013; Scott-Clayton, 2011). Proponents of guided pathways suggest that by providing a default choice for students with outcomes and costs clearly articulated, this guidance will help students complete their goals more efficiently (Bailey et al., 2015; CCCSE, 2014; Jenkins & Cho, 2013, Scott-Clayton, 2011).

Academic advisors benefit as well from guided pathways, as they are able to focus efficiently and effectively on advising versus untangling the maze of available academic choices (Bailey et al., 2015; CCCSE, 2018; Karp, 2011; Scott-Clayton, 2011). Advising itself is a valuable contributor to student success as it engages with students to set academic goals, develop academic plans, and help students stay on course (CCCSE, 2018). The ways that advising is delivered and accessed is emerging to change the type of conversations advisors have with students from course and major selection to a goal and career setting focus. In the CCCSE report *Show Me the Way: The Power of Advising in Community Colleges* (2018), the authors offer colleges 12 questions to consider about advising of which number 11 asks, “Are some students receiving more comprehensive advising services than others?” (p. 20). Embedded in this question is the call to disaggregate advising and enrollment data to ensure equity and to reveal biases that should be addressed through training, as failure to do so will impede institutional capacity to transform advising for students.

If providing pathways is intended to ease and clarify the educational journey for students, then such a strategy should foster a sense of independence for students. However, there may be a misalignment between the emphasis on independence and the collectivist orientations of some groups of students. Museus (2014) suggests that a collectivist perspective in the campus culture fosters success for students of color. Furthermore, a study of academic performance of more than 1,400 first generation students found that when universities focus on independence as a cultural norm, students experience a cultural misalignment between the value for independence and being part of a community (Stephens,

Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, & Covarrubias, 2012). Stephens et al. suggest that universities “expand the culture to include more interdependent cultural norms that will benefit first-generation college students without significantly hindering the performance of continuing-generation students” (p. 1194). For example, Andrade (2019) studied the impact of Adelante (Moving Forward), a Latina/o focused student support program that includes orientation and academic, career, and transfer counseling, on 72 students from four cohorts of Adelante at one community college. This community college program, according to the current and past participants, validated their identities as Latina/o students by fostering a college going and transfer-oriented culture, and by providing knowledgeable staff who believed in their abilities and were culturally validating. The program also provided spaces to connect with peers from similar backgrounds, and engaged their parents and communities (Andrade, 2019). These studies highlight the importance of creating programs and learning environments that validate the identities of students of color.

Early outreach programs such as federally funded TRIO programs that reach into the K-12 sector, bridge programs that provide high school students with the information needed to prepare for college, orientation programs that provide advance knowledge about academic programs and resources, and learning communities that link or pair students in courses as a way to foster academic and social connections, are examples of college-wide programs that support and include students of color as they transition into higher education (Jalomo & Rendón, 2004; Kuh et al., 2006). The literature suggests that transforming first-year student programs to respond to students of color can help facilitate successful transitions to college (Jalomo & Rendón, 2004; Kuh et al, 2006). Using a comprehensive approach that engages

the whole institution, Rendón, Garcia, and Person (2004) suggest that all faculty and staff need to become “transformative educators who actively engage in empowering students and challenging academic and student affairs structures that work against democratic participation and respect for cultural differences” (p. 5). Rendón et al. (2004) suggest that including cultural learning in first year programming provides students and faculty with opportunities to share cultural knowledge as a means to reveal and expose oppressive structures, as well as to create an environment of respect and validation.

Student success courses or first year experience (FYE) programs are HIPs that have common curricular elements such as “to foster students’ college knowledge, psychosocial and self-regulatory skills, personal networks, and utilization of support resources related to successful college-going” (Hatch, Mardock-Uman, Garcia, & Johnson, 2018, p. 117). Hatch et al. (2018) found that student success courses have blurred goals that are both utilitarian, focusing on college skills, and social, serving as a space to develop a student’s college going identity. Faculty may enact the social process of learning by having the courses “functioning as rehearsal places for college, a place to learn form and get a preview of the substance” (p. 139). The classes serve as a dress rehearsal space for students to acquire the form of how to be a successful college student and what to expect as a college student.

Acevedo and Zerquera (2016) found in their study that included 110 students at three community colleges, that student experiences in success programs were best understood as a sum of the parts. An FYE provided space for students to form personal connections and a community with peers and college agents from whom the students accessed support, tutoring, and advising. The cohort element was important to low-income students of color, which

fostered institutional trust and opportunities to engage with faculty. However, the boutique nature of the FYE programs, according to Acevedo and Zerquera, had limited impact across the three colleges, as they enrolled small numbers of students.

Learning communities provide opportunities for faculty to engage in collaborative pedagogy and for students to reap the benefits of being more academically and socially engaged (Bonet & Walters, 2016; Engstrom & Tinto, 2008). Often a learning community is formed to connect a student success course with a developmental or college-level course (Bonet & Walters, 2016). Bonet and Walters conducted a study at one community college of 267 students who were enrolled in either a learning community FYE course that was paired with another course, or enrolled in a non-learning community course. They found that learning community experience positively impacted the students as measured by their grades, course completion, higher levels of engagement, and lower absence rates. Their study demonstrated the short-term positive results after one semester.

A multi-institution longitudinal study sought to understand how the collaborative pedagogies used in learning communities impacted student success for academically underprepared, low income students. Engstrom and Tinto (2008) looked at 19 colleges including two and four-year institutions and compared students enrolled in learning communities to those not enrolled in them. Students in learning community programs were more apt to persist the next academic year than students who were not. They also found students felt more supported as a result of the infused support services and intentional connections made to services. The integration of student support services into learning experiences cannot be understated as it is of concern that many students are not aware,

particularly in their critical first year, of the availability of advising, career counseling, and tutoring (Bonet & Walter, 2016; CCCSE, 2010; Engstrom & Tinto, 2008).

As a high impact practice, service learning has a broad scope of “outcomes related to students, faculty, institutions, community, and society” (Giles & Eyler, 1998, p. 65).

Service-learning impacts how students envision their roles in the community and how they are able to incorporate a systems perspective into their understanding of social problems (Eyler, Giles, Stenson, & Gray, 2001). This teaching and learning practice helps to clarify and define student identities, improve self-esteem, enhance internal locus of control, and build interpersonal skills (Eyler et al., 2001; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The scope of the positive impact of service learning was supported in a meta-analysis of 62 studies that found students gained benefits in attitudes towards themselves, school, and learning; as well as in outcomes associated with civic engagement, social skills, and academic performance (Celio, Durlak, & Dymnicki, 2011).

Engagement and persistence are found to be positively correlated to HIPs. Yet, Kuh (2008) found that when Hispanic students engage in high-impact practices, their GPAs were more positively impacted by their participation compared to White student participants. Similarly, Kuh (2008) found that “engagement has a compensatory effect for African American students relative to White students in that as the African American students become more engaged, they also become more likely to surpass White students in the likelihood they will persist” and return for the second year of college (p. 19). Kuh’s early research highlights the connection of high-impact educational practices to success for historically underrepresented students. However, while HIPs are impacting student success,

not all students are benefiting from them equally. In fact, Kuh et al. (2017) found that first generation, transfer students, and Black/African American and Latina/o students were the least likely to engage in HIPs. Therefore, in spite of the potential positive impact of HIPs, students of color are less likely to participate.

Questions about the impact of HIPs on student success are at the forefront for policy makers, funders, and practitioners, particularly given the resources allocated to HIPs via national projects, state governments, and local institutions. Nationally there is a desire to move beyond practices deemed “promising” to focus on those deemed effective (Bailey et al., 2015; Finley & McNair, 2013; Tinto, 2012; Waiwaiole, Bohlig, & Massey, 2016).

Participation by underserved university students in high impact practices was examined in a mixed-methods study about how their participation impacts success and learning (Finley & McNair, 2013). The study measured students’ perceptions of their own learning through analysis of NSSE results from 38 institutions and over 25,000 students plus focus groups at nine institutions with 91 students. The study focused on six high impact practices that included learning communities, service learning, study abroad, internships, student/faculty research, and senior capstone. Overall, transfer students had the highest participation rate (1.53), while first generation students participated less (1.24). White students participated in more high impact practices (1.38) than African American (1.29), Hispanic (1.27), or Asian American (1.22) students; however all racial and ethnic groups benefitted from participating in high impact practices. Furthermore, the more that students participated in high impact practices, the greater the benefit. The benefits from participation in HIPs included students’ perceptions about increases in their learning in general education,

practical competence, and personal and social development which they perceived could be applied to in class and outside of class settings. However, because students of color participated in fewer practices, their benefit was less than for White students. The students in the Finley and McNair study also shared that their reasons for low participation were due to not getting timely or accurate information about high impact practices and their importance, as well as the time commitment associated with engaging in the practice. The researchers suggest that institutions pursue a similar inquiry at their own colleges to assess who is actually engaging with high impact practices and who is not, and to have high impact practices deeply engrained so that underserved students are aware of them, understand why they are important, and can participate in them.

Similarly, Johnson and Stage (2018) questioned whether HIPs foster greater student engagement and higher graduation rates. The researchers looked at 101 large, public institutions with varying admissions selectivity that enrolled over 10,000 undergraduate students and varied by Carnegie classification such as two-year, four-year, master's granting, and doctoral level. The institutions also had to have implemented ten commonly used high-impact practices that included first-year seminars, common core curriculum, learning communities, writing intensives, group work, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning, service learning, internships, and capstone course/projects. They found freshman seminars, learning communities, and group work negatively impacted graduation rates in the most selective colleges. However, this was not found in the moderately and least selective colleges. Undergraduate research experiences were a predictor of six year graduation rates at the least selective colleges. Overall, however, these practices had limited impact on four

year and six year graduation rates. Undergraduate research experiences had a slightly positive impact on graduation rates making them a point of interest for practitioners. The authors suggest that while their study did not measure student engagement specifically, moving forward, decision-makers should consider “which practices fit well on their campus and would be most beneficial to their students instead of focusing on the quantity of offerings” (p. 776).

Finley and McNair (2013) sought to assess the impact of HIPs on underserved student groups. They suggest that:

students are not oblivious to the types of experiences that engage them with their learning environments. They value group work (when designed well), interaction with their peers, real-life connections to classroom content, and the opportunity to apply their knowledge. They do not require elaborate or expensive high-impact practices, and instead highlight the relatively low-cost dimensions of high-impact practices as significant means of promoting student engagement (pp. 30-31).

Furthermore, HIPs can foster student success when they are culturally validating (Andrade, 2019; Rendón, 1994, 2000; Rendón Linares & Muñoz, 2011), provide spaces for students to learn and develop their college going identity (Acevedo & Zerquera, 2016; Hatch et al., 2018), and connect students to resources and support (Bonet & Walters, 2016; Engstrom & Tinto, 2008). A challenge remains to foster conditions where students of color are supported and engaged with HIPs.

HIPs reflect and express the curriculum of a college. A comprehensive curricular approach to diversity at the institutional level has been found to help institutions resist

approaches that simply “add-on” diversity and multiculturalism to the teaching and learning agenda, an approach which has been shown to leave faculty of color feeling marginalized and without voice (Salazar, Herring, Cameron, & Nihlen, 2004). The curriculum can be conceptualized as the essence of an institution and the heart of what it is. It is the complete educational program at an institution (Toombs & Tierney, 1995). The curriculum reflects the dominant ideology of an institution by representing what is valued as knowledge and what students are expected to learn (Giroux, 1995; Platt, 1993; Rhoads, 1995; Tierney, 1995). Pedagogy informs how students experience the learning process and represents what an institution values, including whether it acknowledges the diverse voices of underrepresented groups, and addresses the multicultural perspectives that they bring to institutions (Clark, 2002; Platt, 1993; Rendón et al., 2004; Tierney, 1997; Ybarra, 2004a, 2004b).

The curriculum is predominately a faculty domain and has been viewed as “a site where oppositional discourses take place about the nature and content of academic knowledge” (Tierney, 1995, p. 35). Tierney argues that the curriculum is entwined in the cultural network of an institution, woven between the ideologies that dominate the organizational culture. By naming and understanding the ideological assumptions operating within an institution, institutional leaders can work within the cultural differences that exist at the institution to promote opportunities for all perspectives and subcultural groups to participate in the development of “common and communal goals” to be “investigated from the perspective of whose knowledge, history, language, and culture is under examination” (Tierney, 1995, p. 45).

American higher education has had a fairly rigid curricular framework. Often referred to as the traditional canon or a classical education, current curricula are now challenged to represent perspectives and voices that may not have been heard from in previous frameworks (Clark, 2002). The concept of the canon is used broadly in curriculum literature about efforts to preserve it, reconceptualize it, or transform it. Rhoads (1995) provides a comprehensive description of the canon in the academy:

The canon separates that which is deemed important from that which is not. The canon elevates certain aspects of a society's culture over others. It both centers and marginalizes types, ways, and sources of understanding. It tells us that art situated in a museum is superior to street art; classical music is superior to rap; and the writings of Shakespeare and Chaucer are superior to the work of Zora Neal Hurston and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. The canon tells us that scientific knowledge is superior to spiritual or emotional understanding, and that knowledge produced by White European males is superior to the knowledge of women and people of color. In short, the hierarchical nature of the canon silences cultural diversity (p. 7).

In contrast, the notion of "border knowledge" describes the "knowledge that resides outside of the canon, outside of the cultural mainstream" (Rhoads, 1995, p. 8). Border knowledge consists of the knowledge and perspectives that are valued by marginalized groups, those outside the dominant majority in terms of race, class, gender, sexual orientation and age, but not valued in mainstream higher education settings.

Alongside changes in curriculum, critical pedagogy shifts the relationship of teacher and student; in doing so, the notions of learning, inquiry, dialogue, power, and authority are

reinvented. Freire (1970) critically deconstructs pedagogy, explaining its role in protecting the dominant elite's grip on knowledge, creativity, and inquiry. When faculty apply the "banking" concept of education, for example, students are passive recipients of knowledge that is deposited by teachers. In this model, students are passive and powerless, unable to "develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of the world" (p. 60). Freire rejects the banking model in favor of "problem-posing education which breaks with the vertical pattern characteristic of banking education" (p. 67). In the problem-posing model, the relationship between student and teacher is two-way, where students both teach and learn with teachers, who both learn and teach with students. Freire's critical analysis seeks to expose the potential of education to manipulate, conquer, divide, and organize educational content, pedagogy, and power structures as a means to oppress. He proposes that an ideology of oppression seeks to divide as a means to prevent unity, communication, and cooperation. Freire argues that "cultural synthesis" is the means that can allow students to learn with and about one another; thus, he rejects the typical approaches of "cultural invasion" which seek to suppress differences and dominate one cultural perspective over another.

"Cultural dissonance" occurs when pedagogy emphasizes cultural differences, but the curriculum seeks to promote and impose sameness on students (Ybarra, 2004a, 2004b). In a study of teaching writing to Latina/o students, Ybarra found that mainstream writing pedagogy, coupled with communication patterns that are in conflict with the historical and cultural contexts of Latina/o students, limits access to learning for Latina/o students. Ybarra argues that this approach embraces assimilation rather than diversity, thereby maintaining the

dominant group's privilege. As an alternative, Ybarra (2004b) proposes a "pedagogy of inclusion" that connects cultural differences and examines classroom culture dynamics as strategies to achieve equity and inclusion. Critical pedagogy proposes to realign the relationship between teacher and student to one that fosters mutual engagement in teaching and learning, and resists assimilation as an outcome. Providing opportunities for faculty and students to explore notions of power and privilege by sharing learning is an important component of inclusive pedagogy.

Sleeter (1996) argues that multicultural curricula have been diluted over time to reflect cross-cultural awareness. Sleeter uses three metaphors to describe multicultural education. First, it has been likened to "therapy" used to heal "sick" attitudes. Second, it has been seen as "teaching techniques" used to teach "them", the students of color, the correct attitudes. Third, it has been described as a type of "academic discourse" focusing on discussions about multicultural issues. Sleeter critiques these three concepts based on their avoidance of discourse about power and struggle, and their disconnection from political efforts. In response, she proposes "social movement" as a fourth metaphor that moves the discourse to one that examines redistributing power and resources.

According to Sleeter (2003), the concept of globalization has emerged as a subset of multicultural education. Sleeter cautions educators to be mindful that globalization contains strands of colonialism and Western dominance that has the potential to oppress alternative viewpoints. In contrast, the curriculum can be conceptualized as the enactment of the values of a pluralistic society that includes many subcultures, thus resulting in multiple values informing it and allowing students multiple routes to become critical and responsible

individuals (Bossman, 1991). Therefore, to rethink the canon requires more than changing reading lists or adding a diversity module to existing courses. Platt (1993) instead refers to the need for a paradigm shift that critically explores race/ethnicity, diversity, and power relationships.

Eurocentric perspectives in contemporary curricula are being challenged and leaders are exploring methods to present alternative perspectives in a new multicultural curriculum (Clark, 2002; Rhoads, 1995). “Multicultural education is an education for functioning effectively in a pluralistic, democratic society,” according to Banks (1995, p. 272). For the curriculum to achieve this goal, Banks (1995) proposes that it must be “transformative and action-oriented so that both faculty and students are free to examine their perspectives and moral commitments” (p. 272). This requires, according to Clark (2002), efforts to critically review the Eurocentric perspectives of the Western canon that dominate current content and develop new curriculum frameworks that include alternative perspectives of traditionally underrepresented groups.

Culturally relevant pedagogy, according to Ladson-Billings (1995, 2014), emerged as a way to improve teacher education and identify practices that connected teachers to their students and their respective communities to foster success for African American students. By studying eight highly effective teachers, three areas of focus emerged as informing their practice: academic success (intellectual growth from classroom instruction and learning experiences), cultural competence (helping students appreciate and celebrate their cultures), and sociopolitical consciousness (expand learning beyond the classroom by examining real world problems). Culturally relevant pedagogical theory opens the curriculum to

perspectives that are relevant to the students in the classroom. However, Ladson-Billings recognized that culture is fluid and varied within groups, and moved towards a different conceptualization of culturally sustaining pedagogy as a means to meet the needs of all students. Paris (2012) defined culturally sustaining pedagogy in terms of practices that:

seek to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling. In the face of current policies and practices that have the explicit goal of creating a monocultural and monolingual society, research and practice need equally explicit resistances that embrace cultural pluralism and cultural equality (p. 93).

In a survey of more than 20,000 full-time undergraduate faculty at four-year institutions, 84% agreed that the faculty role should include enhancing students' knowledge and appreciation for racial and ethnic diversity; yet more than 50% agreed that “faculty are not prepared to deal with conflict over diversity issues in the classroom” (Stolzenberg et al., 2019, p. 11). Faculty reluctance and assumptions that an unmanageable conflict could arise when engaging with diversity content resulted in only approximately 30% of faculty including racial or ethnic diversity content in their readings. This illustrates not only a faculty skills and knowledge gap that is pervasive in the classroom, but also the absence of diversity content that the faculty believe is important to their students.

Also tension persists between notions of endorsing a colorblind ideology (minimizes differences of gender or color) versus a multicultural ideology (values differences) for faculty. Aragón, Dovidio, and Graham (2017) conducted a survey of more than 600 faculty to explore this tension and the likelihood that faculty would adopt inclusive pedagogies. The

researchers found when faculty endorse a colorblind ideology, they were less likely to adopt inclusive teaching practices than faculty who adopted a multicultural ideology. In this context, faculty need tools, resources, and mentoring in order to develop more culturally responsive curricula.

Diverse Student Experiences

To this point, this literature review has examined the community college teaching and learning context, as well as institutional practices and curricula that shape students' educational experiences and outcomes. This section contributes an additional perspective by examining the experiences and outcomes of diverse students. This discussion begins with an overview of the educational benefits of diversity by examining the impact of structural diversity on students and the ways that students benefit from diversity. Next the analysis explores the unique and inequitable ways diverse students experience their campuses, including their understandings of the campus culture.

Educational Benefits of Diversity. Efforts to eliminate affirmative action programs, that is the ability to use race and ethnicity in college admissions and hiring processes, has prompted educational researchers to study the effects of diversity on education (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Chun & Evans, 2015; Gurin et al., 2000). Structural diversity in community college campuses is evident in the racial and ethnic composition of the student body. A study of 287 community colleges' CCSSE data found that structural diversity at community colleges does have a positive impact on cross-race and cross-beliefs conversations, as well as understanding differences (Jones, 2016). When students have meaningful cross-racial interactions, these experiences can foster improved intergroup relations and understanding

that results from interaction with people of diverse beliefs and identities. Structural diversity may be an essential (though not sufficient) component of creating institutions that value diversity (Chun & Evans, 2015; Gurin et al., 2002). Garces and Jayakumar (2014) suggested the term “dynamic diversity” as the “interactions among students within a particular context and under appropriate environmental conditions needed to realize the educational benefits of diversity” (p. 116). Garces and Jayakumar suggest that while dynamic diversity cannot ignore the numbers of diverse people:

...paying attention to the numbers of students of color is necessary, but not sufficient, to meet all of the conditions needed for dynamic diversity to emerge so that institutions can attain the educational benefits of diversity. Institutions still require meaningful representation of students of color in a range of institutional and educational settings to signal that diversity is valued, to ensure students of color feel welcomed, to prevent tokenism and racial isolation, to incite positive learning experiences, and to sustain participation and engagement. The synergy of these factors – a function of numbers and contextual factors – contributes to dynamic diversity and garners desired educational outcomes (p. 116).

Using dynamic diversity in lieu of simply critical mass, institutions can create conditions that foster the educational benefits of diversity and prevent diverse students from experiencing discrimination and oppression on campuses.

Students who experience campuses with diverse populations have been shown to become more engaged in civic life and are able to apply the knowledge they have gained via their experiences (Chang, 1999; Hurtado, 2001; Hurtado et al., 1999; Johnson & Lollar,

2002; Pascarella et al., 1996; Pascarella et al., 2001; Tam & Bassett, 2004; Terenzini et al., 2001). For example, in a longitudinal study by Bowen and Bok (1998), race-based admission policies were examined and the results challenged criticisms of these policies by demonstrating both short-term and long-term benefits of diversity for students of all races. They found the degree of interaction between White and Black students was directly associated with the proportion of Black student enrollment on campus. The high degree of interaction was not found to be attributed to previous experiences with diversity in racially diverse high schools, instead “the higher level of interaction at the most selective schools is mainly attributable to attributes of campus life at these institutions” (Bowen & Bok, 1998, p. 238). Furthermore, both Black and White students felt that diversity was an important part of their education. “A large number of both white and black respondents felt that their undergraduate experience made a significant contribution to their ability to work with and get along well with members of other races” (p. 267).

Pascarella et al. (1996) studied first year student openness to racial, cultural, and value diversity in a national, longitudinal study at four-year institutions. They found that the more opportunities students have to interact with students from diverse backgrounds and engage in dialogues that focus on racial or value centered topics, the greater was their “development of openness to diversity and challenge” (p. 187) at the end of their first year. They also found that participation in racial or cultural awareness workshops had a significant positive effect, with the greatest effect being on White students’ openness to diversity and challenge. Furthermore, Pascarella et al. found that when students perceive the institutional environment to be racially nondiscriminatory, student openness to diversity is increased.

Pascarella et al. (2001) studied the long term effects of diversity on students' critical thinking skills. Using student "scores on an objective standardized measure of critical thinking" (p. 257), they confirmed that student experiences with diversity through racial or cultural awareness workshops; making friends with someone from a different race; and engaging in discussions about major social problems and differences in lifestyles, customs, and values benefits students' critical thinking. The benefits of campus diversity were most significant for White students. Pascarella et al. suggest that the first year of college is the best time to expose students to diversity programs and experiences as it impacts first year cognitive growth as well as later growth within the students' educational experience.

Chang's (1999) longitudinal study of structural diversity found that the educational experiences of all students are positively impacted. The study found that structural diversity increases opportunities for students to socialize with students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Racial diversity has a direct positive effect on discussion of racial issues: the more students of color, the more likely a discussion of racial issues will occur. When students have opportunities to socialize across racial lines and discuss issues of race, both direct and indirect positive educational outcomes are achieved such as retention, satisfaction with college, intellectual self-concept, and social self-concept (Chang, 1999, 2001).

Gurin et al. (2002) conducted a longitudinal study using both national data and an institutional case to explore students' experiences with racial diversity and educational outcomes. Student experiences with diversity, such as personal interactions and participation in multicultural events and intergroup dialogues, positively impacted critical thinking and intellectual engagement. Democracy outcomes, such as citizenship engagement and

racial/cultural engagement, were also positively impacted as a result of classroom structural diversity. Gurin et al. (2002) argue that “to foster citizenship for a diverse democracy, educators must intentionally structure opportunities for students to leave the comfort of their homogenous peer group and build relationships across racially/ethnically diverse student communities on campus” (p. 363). These studies all support the short-term and long-term student learning outcomes of structural diversity.

Hurtado’s (2001) longitudinal study on the impact of diversity on student educational outcomes examined how diverse curricula, faculty, and student populations contribute to student development through opportunities for interaction with individuals from diverse backgrounds. Hurtado found that women faculty, more than male faculty, were more likely to use instructional techniques other than lecture, such as peer learning, experiential learning, group projects, and readings on racial/ethnic or gender issues. Faculty race/ethnicity was also related to use of instructional techniques. African American and Latina/o faculty members were more likely to use cooperative learning, while Asian faculty were least apt to do so. Diversifying the curriculum through readings was more likely to be reported by women and African American faculty, while Asian American faculty were least likely to do so.

Hurtado’s (2001) results support the notion that when diverse faculty and students are in the classroom together, classroom environments and student learning are positively impacted. Women and faculty members from non-majority backgrounds utilize different instructional techniques that shape curricula and pedagogical practices. Furthermore, the study found that female African American and Latina/o faculty are more likely to use active

learning techniques and are mindful of student differences. Academic outcomes were positively impacted by structural diversity that can be linked to critical-thinking, problem-solving skills, and the ability to work cooperatively with diverse individuals.

A cross-sectional study by Terenzini et al. (2001) examined the impact of structural diversity in the classroom on students' academic and intellectual skills and the role that pedagogical practices may play at four-year institutions. The results show that the level of diversity in the classroom was related to small, yet significant student reported gains in problem-solving and group skills. Low classroom diversity was negatively related to student development of problem solving and group skills. Pedagogical activities inside the classroom were a more significant predictor of student outcomes than structural diversity. Group work was found to provide opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds to explore stereotypes and racial and ethnic identities (Terenzini et al., 2001). Therefore, the relationship between structural diversity and student learning is complex with pedagogy impacting student learning.

Additional evidence of the educational benefits of diversity is provided by Chang, Denson, Sáenz, and Misa (2006), who conducted a study that included more than 19,000 students at 227 institutions. Their findings confirmed the positive benefits of cross-race interactions on students' openness to diversity; and at the institutional level, colleges with higher levels of cross race-interactions resulted in students reporting higher levels of openness to diversity. Openness to diversity was measured by students' perceived growth in "acceptance of other races and knowledge of people of different races" (p. 436). These findings point to opportunities at the institutional level to foster the educational benefits of

diversity with intentional cross-race interactions as a means to promote student success (Chang, 2011).

In a subsequent study of over 14,000 students in 92 institutions, Denson and Chang (2015) found that when students engaged in cross-race interactions that were high quality and when the students perceived that their institutions supported diversity, these conditions positively influenced their academic self-confidence. However, when students were unsatisfied with their campus' support of diversity, and the students had negative cross-race interactions, these conditions negatively impacted their academic self-confidence. This study used academic self-confidence (belief in abilities and confidence in academic environments) and social agency (valuing political and social involvement) to understand the effects of structural diversity on students. When an institution was perceived by students to actively support diversity through quality programmatic choices that fostered high quality cross-race interactions, the institution fostered conditions where students' academic self-confidence was positively impacted by the structural diversity in the student body.

As Denson and Chang (2015) point out, institutional culture plays a role in creating conditions where diversity is valued and where students of color can thrive and succeed. Umbach and Kuh (2006) conducted a large scale study of the organizational elements that inform the diversity experiences of students and their learning outcomes. Opportunity to interact across diversity lines was a critical factor for students to develop skills and dispositions to engage in a multicultural environment. The amount of structural diversity was not found to be the driver of this outcome, more so was the institutional display of a commitment to diversity and the provision of opportunities for cross-race interactions.

Institutional commitment to diversity can vary, thus impacting how students experience campus climate or culture. Museus et al. (2008) studied the impact of campus racial climate on students from different racial and ethnic groups in terms of their degree completion at four-year institutions. They studied more than 8,000 students and found a student's racial or ethnic identity yielded different perceptions of the campus racial climate that were associated with their levels of academic performance and degree completion. A perceived positive racial climate impacted positive social involvement (co-curricular involvement), institutional commitment (attachment), and goal attainment for students of color. This study highlights the salient role of campus racial climate on students of color and the need for colleges to create environments that foster their involvement and attainment of their goals.

Creating and sustaining campus cultures that value and validate diversity is challenging. According to Jayakumar (2008), institutions “provide lasting benefits to white students by promoting a positive racial climate for a racially diverse student body” (abstract, p. 615). Jayakumar found in a study of more than 7,500 White students at predominantly White institutions that structural diversity positively impacted the White students' pluralistic orientation beyond their time at college; and that structural diversity is a necessary element in the creation of a positive racial climate as it provides opportunities for positive cross-race interactions. When White students attend structurally diverse institutions, their leadership skills and cross cultural workforce skills are positively enhanced, preparing them for the workforce according to Jayakumar (2008). The notion of diversity benefitting White students more than other groups, however, is not missed by researchers. On the one-hand,

race-conscious policies are suggested to promote equity and access to higher education for students of color. On the other hand, structural diversity is a critical ingredient for White students, as leadership and workforce skills can shape their future career opportunities. As predominantly White colleges seek to increase their structural racial and ethnic diversity, the benefit to White students is contingent on the colleges cultivating positive racial climates and fostering meaningful cross-race interactions among students.

Experiences of Students of Color. According to Kuh et al. (2006), strategies that foster student success include opportunities for students to establish meaningful connections with faculty and peers. A point of tension, however, is brought to light by Treviño and Ewing (2004) who argue that institutions, via faculty, staff, and students, often send contradictory messages to students of color about what is the “right” kind of involvement. A tension exists about the “right” mix of intergroup (between groups) and intragroup (within group) involvement. Treviño and Ewing propose structured intergroup interaction and involvement programs as a strategy to overcome the assumption that structural diversity alone will naturally create “positive intergroup interaction, cultural sharing, and intergroup harmony” (p. 71). Structured initiatives where student participants “receive academic credit for what is essentially a course in the form of intergroup dialogues” (p.71) may include dialogues between White and Latina/o students or between heterosexuals and members of the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) community, for example. Beyond dialogues, courses, and clubs, Treviño and Ewing recommend the creation of intergroup dialogue centers that are funded and staffed to create and promote intergroup activities with

faculty, staff, and students. Such centers would reflect an institutional investment that acknowledges the value of promoting diversity as a means to improve student learning.

Frequently the commitment of resources to establish a multicultural office is proposed as a strategy to “manage” multiculturalism and diversity (Lau, 2003). Developing policies and programs that promote understanding, awareness, and appreciation of diversity; collaborating with the internal and external community on diversity-related activities; and ensuring that academic, support, and co-curricular services meet the needs of students of color can be focal areas of a multicultural office. This approach, however, illustrates Sleeter’s (1996) critique of multicultural educational programs as “therapy”, “teaching techniques”, or “diversity dialogues” that are not enacted as comprehensive institutional programs that challenge power and privilege.

The importance of creating a campus culture that is inclusive, where students feel they both belong and are valued by their teachers and fellow students is key to student success (CCCSE, 2010; Clayton-Pederson & Musil, 2005; Hurtado & Ruiz, 2012; Kuh et al., 2005; Kuh et al., 2006; McClenney & Green, 2005; Museus, 2014; Rutschow et al., 2011). The elements of campus culture that support or hinder diverse student success are important to explore as institutions move towards becoming student-centered organizations. Green (2006), for example, challenges educators to “scrutinize their over-reliance on a *deficit model*, in which minority, low-income, and first-generation college students are characterized as lacking the skills and abilities necessary to succeed in higher education” (p. 24). The Diverse Learning Environments (DLE) survey instrument measures student perception of institutional climate; student learning outcomes (e.g., sense of belonging); and campus

practices as experienced with faculty, staff, and peers (McLennan & Jacobo, 2018). The 2017 DLE was administered to 17,550 students of which 3,991 were enrolled at two-year colleges. The survey asked if students had personally experienced discrimination due to their identities or group membership, and 25.4% reported discrimination due to their race or ethnicity. They also reported hearing racial slurs and remarks made by students (51.3%), faculty (19.6%), or staff (15.5%). The prevalence of discrimination was also found in a study of students at an HSI community college where even though the students positively perceived their campus, both Asian and Latina/o students perceived discrimination and bias (Cuellar & Johnson-Ahorlu, 2016). Regardless of having a critical mass of structural diversity, student experiences with discrimination and bias persist.

The cultural context in which teaching and learning occurs is critical to achieving equitable outcomes. Some researchers argue that campuses must move beyond an access and program framework and instead look at institutional transformation as the best way to achieve equitable outcomes (Jayakumar & Museus, 2012). This is best done, according to Jayakumar and Museus, by examining the campus culture which “leads to more holistic understandings of the deeply embedded and complex elements of institutions and their diverse student bodies” (p. 5). They propose that such research should examine the institution’s identity through its history, rituals, traditions, and symbols plus the values and assumptions that guide its operations, decision-making, and how education is delivered. This type of analysis “...can help institutional leaders better comprehend how values and taken-for-granted assumptions that shape behavior and the delivery of education on campus can inhibit positive institutional transformation” (p. 6).

Also relevant to campus culture, when historically underrepresented student groups lack a sense of belonging, their level of engagement, persistence, and success in college may diminish (Museus & Maramba, 2011). González (2002) found that Chicano students were “culturally starved” at a predominately White university when the campus culture ignored Chicano culture in the curriculum and failed to provide role models, symbols, and engagement opportunities. The message received was that their presence on campus is neither valued nor welcomed. The curriculum was predominately from the White point of view, and the building architecture, art, and other symbols did not include Chicano representation. However, they were “culturally nourished” when the institution provided them with some cultural role models, as well as Chicano studies courses, and when they had access to their network of family and friends.

Museus and Maramba (2011) found that Filipino college students on predominately White campuses felt they needed to “commit cultural suicide” in order to fit in and adjust to the college. Feelings of cultural suicide can include feeling the need to change in order to fit in, yet one’s language and appearance make it difficult to truly fit in. The study supported the notion that when students are able to connect to their cultural heritage, their sense of belonging is greater, which in turn, impacts student success.

Wood and Turner (2011), in a study of Black community college student perspectives on faculty, identified four elements of faculty-student engagement that foster their success. When faculty are friendly from the very beginning, regularly check in with students about their progress, listen to student concerns, and encourage them to succeed, these behaviors foster positive faculty-student relations and promote student engagement. The importance of

positive faculty-student relationships to nourish a diverse student's sense of belonging and engagement are critical to their success. This notion is echoed in a study by Bauer (2014) of nearly 300 Black male community college students. When they perceived higher levels of validation from faculty about belonging and being successful in college, they had higher levels of faculty student engagement. Furthermore, a study by Tovar (2015) that surveyed 397 Latina/o students at one community college, found that the more times a student met with a faculty member or counselor outside of class, their grade point average (GPA) was positively impacted, as well as their plans to transfer to a university. Overall these studies support the critical role that faculty-student interaction plays in supporting the success of students of color and fostering cultural conditions that validate their identities.

Furthermore, Masta's (2018) study of six Native American graduate students found that they reported feeling exhausted as they had to defend, explain, or include their identities in the graduate school space.

The students feel pressure to serve as a cultural authority or cultural representative, it often serves a function of White supremacy, which delegitimizes Native identity. Not to mention that in an academic setting, it focuses attention away from the student if they are always answering questions about their identity from others (p. 832).

The fact that the Native American students frequently felt compelled to defend their identities reflects a greater concern about institutional culture. In a study that included 52 Black male resident assistants at six large predominantly White universities, Harper et al. (2011) found that regardless of their leadership roles on campus, the students experienced racism, more scrutiny of their work by supervisors, and the nuances of "onlyness" in the role.

As was also evidenced by the Native American students in Masta's study, the notion of "onlyness" reflects the burden students of color carry as they navigate racialized environments that perpetuate discrimination and continue to marginalize students of color. It is important to situate the responsibility for racially and ethnically diverse student success as a college responsibility, not solely the responsibility of the student.

Synthesis of the Literature

The literature exposes a tension for community colleges that espouse valuing the educational benefits of diversity, while at the same time they have persistent achievement gaps based on race and ethnicity. Their role is salient in providing access, but persistent achievement gaps remain between White students and students of color. Simply being accessible is insufficient; and it is taking external pressure and calls for equity to push institutional leaders to address these inequities.

The colleges have responded with a proliferation of high impact practices (HIPs) designed and implemented to promote success for all students (CCCSE, 2012; Kuh et al., 2017). Yet, achievement gaps persist. In spite of endless calls of varying intensity to be inclusive and to consider diversity in the design and delivery of HIPs, students of color are found to participate in fewer HIPs, and thus are less likely to receive the benefits of their effects (Finley & McNair, 2013). Higher education institutions, therefore, are challenged to redesign their practices (Bailey et al., 2015) or the rethink their delivery strategies (Tinto, 2012). But merely redesigning or rethinking the delivery of programs and services is unlikely to be a sufficient means to narrow achievement gaps for students of color and to foster their success (Center for Urban Education, 2017). Without questioning how a program

or service is relevant and effective for students of color by disaggregating outcomes data by race and ethnicity, the root causes of educational inequities cannot be addressed and the institutions will continue to sustain inequities via practices that may be ineffective for some students (Witham et al., 2015).

The faculty who teach at community colleges are critical to the success of students of color. The classroom is the most salient environment for students (Tinto, 2012). Once in a classroom, the student's experience varies by the skills and knowledge of the faculty (Stolzenberg et al., 2019). Research shows that faculty-student interactions positively impact the success of students of color (Bauer, 2014; Tovar, 2015; Wood & Turner, 2011). Though what compels students to engage or not with faculty depends on how the faculty perceive the student and how the students perceive the faculty.

Johnson and Stage (2018) suggested that there should be an emphasis on the quality of HIPs versus the quantity of HIPs as a means to better align them to student success outcomes. Consideration of what comprises success and who is engaged in this discussion reflects decades of success theory that ignores the cultural wealth that students of color bring to college (Gorski, 2011; Yosso, 2005). The default understanding is a deficit perspective as a means to explain academic deficiencies that students of color may have or are being perceived to bring (Gorski, 2011; Yosso, 2005).

New student success theories are emerging to validate the voices and identities of students of color (Rendón, 1994, 2000; Rendón Linares & Muñoz, 2011). Museus suggests a definition of success that validates the identities of students of color and their perceptions of

their own abilities to succeed (Museus, 2014; Museus & Maramba, 2011; Museus et al., 2017). Definitions that validate racial and ethnic identities distinguish themselves from the generalized contemporary definitions that extol success for students of all backgrounds to succeed in a global world (Kuh et al., 2017).

Moving higher education institutions to truly value diversity by creating conditions where the educational benefits of diversity benefit all students remains a daunting undertaking (Chun & Evans, 2015). Research shows that all students benefit from structural diversity on campus in enhanced cross-race interactions (Chang, 1999; Chang et al., 2006; Denson & Chang, 2015; Gurin et al., 2002; Hurtado, 2001, Museus et al., 2008); and White students benefit more than students of color (Jayakumar, 2008; Pascarella et al., 2001). At the same time, students of color experience discrimination and isolation on campus (Cuellar & Johnson-Ahorlu, 2016; Harper et al., 2011; McLennan & Jacobo, 2018), and consistently have their racial and ethnic identities ignored or marginalized (González, 2002; Masta, 2018; Museus & Maramba, 2011).

If the curriculum reflects the dominant institutional ideology (Sleeter, 2003), then choices made about content, programs, and pedagogy are essential in fostering racially and ethnically diverse student success (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Paris, 2012). Evidence of resistance to change in the curriculum is illustrated in Freire's (1970) analysis of the curriculum as culturally invading to manipulate and oppress learners with the dominant group's values. In practice, this plays out in teaching when students experience cultural dissonance when they are expected to assimilate (Ybarra, 2004a). An alternative pedagogical

approach is one that is culturally sustaining and values cultural equity and cultural pluralism (Paris, 2012). Thus, if HIPs were developed using culturally sustaining pedagogy, then students of color might be more likely to participate and derive the educational benefits of these practices.

Organizational culture informs the ways things are done and what is valued at an institution. Research shows how organizational members make meaning of their roles within an institution, and how those meanings are influenced by leadership decisions, policies, and symbols, such as mission statements, assessment activities, and resource allocations. Campus cultures do not change willingly or easily, as faculty leaders and administrators may be deeply committed to the cultures they have helped establish and maintain (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). However, organizational cultures that are culturally relevant and culturally responsive (Museus, 2014) could represent a paradigm shift in the practices and values of an institution such that diverse perspectives could be included beyond token efforts. There is limited empirical research, however, on the connections among community college organizational culture, high impact practices, and success for students of color. This study intends to contribute to the literature by exploring the extent to which organizational culture plays a role in the success of racially and ethnically diverse community college students.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes a discussion of the purpose of the study, the research design, site selection procedures, selection criteria for study participants, and data collection and analysis techniques. This chapter is organized in the following way: 1) restatement of the purpose of the study and the research questions; 2) description of the methodology; 3) research design; 4) role of the researcher; 5) limitations of the study; and 6) trustworthiness of the data.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine how community college organizational cultures can support or impede the success of students of color. Thus, the overarching question that motivated this study was: What role does organizational culture play in fostering success for racially and ethnically diverse community college students? In addition, the following subsidiary questions were used to deepen an understanding of the main question:

- How do racially and ethnically diverse students perceive the organizational cultures of community colleges that have diversity as a central organizing principle?

- How are “high impact practices” implemented at community colleges that have diversity as a central organizing principle, as perceived by racially and ethnically diverse students?
- At community colleges that have diversity as a central organizing principle, how do “high impact practices” influence success for racially and ethnically diverse students?

A typical institutional response to diversity includes a structural and/or strategic approach. A structural approach views diversity as the racial and ethnic enrollment patterns of students and the composition of faculty and staff of color (Cox, 1994; Hurtado et al., 1999; Milem, 2003; Milem et al., 2005); and a strategic approach to diversity is enacted through top-down college-wide plans that are often superficial and ad hoc (Cox, 1994, 2001; Hurtado et al., 1999; Iverson, 2007; Kuh et al., 2005). The central assumptions that guided the research design were that institutions with organizational cultures that value diversity will implement high impact practices through culturally-engaging methods, and then these practices will foster success for racially and ethnically diverse students. The unit of analysis for this study was the higher education organization. The focus on the organization provided the context for analyzing the organizational culture associated with high impact practices and the students’ experiences associated with high impact practices. By examining organizational culture through a student lens, this study sought to understand how the organizational cultures of community colleges that had diversity as an espoused organizing

principle and that had implemented high impact practices fostered success for racially and ethnically diverse students.

This study focused on racially and ethnically diverse students. The racial and ethnic groups included in the study are Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, or White when more than one race is indicated by the student. The study uses the terms “racially and ethnically diverse students” and “students of color” interchangeably. While race and ethnicity were the focus of this analysis, the construct of diversity was central to understanding the organizational cultures as conveyed by these colleges and as experienced by these students. For this study, the term “diversity” extended beyond race and ethnicity to include differences in age, gender, race, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation and expression, socioeconomic class, religion, veteran status, and physical and learning abilities, including the diverse people and perspectives that have been underrepresented, underserved, and historically marginalized.

Use of Qualitative Research

A qualitative research approach was chosen to examine the role of organizational culture and high impact practices on racially and ethnically diverse students’ success. Qualitative research is well suited for studies that seek to understand the meanings people construct about their worlds and to explore the meaning of social phenomena with minimal disruption of the natural setting (Lee, 1999; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). Museus (2007) proposes qualitative research methods facilitate discovery and deep

understanding, making them useful for understanding how organizational cultures shape the experiences of their members. Thus exploratory research with a “focus on contemporary phenomena within some real-life context” is best suited to qualitative research, particularly the case study as a research strategy (Yin, 2003, p. 1).

Case study research, over other types of qualitative research strategies, is clearly aligned with this study’s focus on organizational culture (Lee, 1999; Merriam, 1998; Museum, 2007). As an empirical research strategy, case studies are appropriate when phenomena, such as organizational culture, are to be examined within a specific context, “especially when the boundaries between the phenomena and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2003, p. 13). Furthermore, the research questions for this study are congruent with the purposes of qualitative case study research. Exploratory research questions asking “how” and “why” about contemporary phenomena in settings where the researcher has little or no control over the study conditions are often best suited to be examined through case study methods (Yin, 2003, p. 9). Qualitative research facilitates complex and deep understanding and views social phenomena holistically, “preserving the multiple realities, the different and even contradictory views of what is happening” (Stake, 1995, p. 12). Merriam (1998) proposes that case study methods are an appealing strategy for advancing knowledge in education research, given the ability of these methods to investigate complex social units, in real-life contexts, and facilitate rich and holistic accounts of phenomenon. Case study lends itself to the examination of why and how phenomena occur in real-life social settings.

Case study, as a qualitative design, provides the researcher with strategies to understand phenomena by gathering data, describing data, and making interpretations of the

data that are meaningful first to the researcher and then for the reader (Stake, 1995). Stake (1995) described a case as a specific, complex, functioning entity and the researcher strives “to understand the complex interrelationships among all that exists” (p. 37). Community colleges are complex, deep organizations; organizational culture is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon. Stake (1995) proposed that a qualitative case study looks for “patterns of unanticipated as well as expected relationships” (p. 41). Thus, case study methods provide the means for a deep, holistic description and analysis of a single bounded system (Merriam, 1998).

A collective case study involves collecting and analyzing data from more than one site as a means to provide more compelling description and interpretation (Merriam, 1998). Furthermore, researchers who use case study methods recommend using more than one data gathering technique in the research plan and being open to the possibility that emerging issues may arise that warrant a shift in direction (Stake, 1995). Interviews, focus groups, observation, documents, and physical artifacts are key data sources for case study researchers (Kvale, 1996; Yin, 2003).

Research Design

This study was informed by theories of organizational culture (Bess & Dee, 2008; Museus, 2014; Schein, 2004), critical theory (Freire, 1979; Ibarra, 2001), student success frameworks (Bandura, 1995; Museus, 2014, Museus & Maramba, 2011; Museus et al., 2017), and high impact practices (Bailey et al., 2015; CCCSE, 2010, 2012; Hatch et al., 2016; Kuh et al., 2005; Rutschow et al., 2011). Rather than using these theories to develop

testable hypotheses, this study, consistent with a qualitative lens, used the concepts in these theories to guide data collection and analysis. Specifically, these theories informed the development of the study's interview protocol, guided the data coding procedures, and shaped the analysis of the data collected.

Understanding the organizational culture of community colleges through the voices of students of color best aligned with critical theory as a means to understand how the students experienced the culture. A critical perspective intentionally includes their voices and examines the possibility of exclusion, marginalization, and oppression of students of color by the organizational culture. Davies et al. (2003), for example, state that "In order to ask emancipatory questions, design emancipatory research, and use understandings generated by such research to transform institutions, we need to start with frameworks that de-center the dominant culture, question it, and reinvent it" (p. 856). Critical theory interrogates values, assumptions, beliefs, behaviors, norms, and traditions enacted by an institution and helps to understand how students of color experience the organizational culture of the college. For example, a college may overtly convey that it values all students, but analysis may reveal underlying values that continue to marginalize students of color. It is important to consider how cultural practices may be designed to perpetuate systems that align and support dominant groups, and therefore ignore or fail to acknowledge the needs of others as doing so challenges the prevailing or established culture's privilege.

In order to understand organizational culture, the researcher used two main constructs. First, the beliefs, values, behaviors, and norms that comprise organizational culture have the capacity to empower or marginalize diverse students (Ibarra, 2001). Second,

the Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) model provides a means to analyze how organizational cultures may foster diverse student success. The CECE model (Museus, 2014) posits that when colleges create conditions that are both culturally relevant and culturally responsive, the colleges will be better able to foster diverse student success. Colleges that create conditions that validate students' cultural identities and backgrounds, as well as provide curricular and co-curricular learning experiences that allow diverse students to learn about and engage with their communities and peers, are more likely to support success for diverse students (Museus, 2014; Rendón, 1994, 2009). Several CECE questions were included in the participant selection survey and the interview guide, with permission, to illuminate how students may engage in culturally relevant and responsive activities at their institutions, and as a means to understand students' perceptions of organizational culture (Museus et al., 2014).

Rather than define student success as a standardized outcome measure, such as degree completion or persistence, this study sought to understand the concept of success in ways that were relevant to the students' own ways of knowing. This study used a student success definition that was self-defined by the students themselves, while acknowledging that the students' experiences were informed by their external environments and pre-college characteristics, as well as individual influences including sense of belonging, academic dispositions, and academic performance (Bandura, 1997; Museus, 2014; Museus & Maramba, 2011; Museus et al., 2017).

High impact practices are designed to foster student success in college (Kuh, 2008; Kuh et al., 2005), and they are enacted within the organizational cultures of their campuses

(Alfred et al., 1992; CCCSE, 2010; Kuh, 2008; Kuh et al., 2005; McClenney & Greene, 2005). High impact practices have been linked to student success through specific pedagogies and curriculum experiences that increase levels of student engagement (CCCSE, 2012; Kuh, 2008). However, high impact practices are under question regarding whether they actually have a positive impact on degree completion rates. Researchers suggest that while high impact practices are effective, they are neither uniformly so nor reaching most students (Bailey et al., 2015; Finley, 2011). There is a need to develop methods to assess their efficacy and to better understand their impact on student success beyond enthusiastic rhetoric (Finley & McNair, 2013). A study by Johnson and Stage (2018), for example, found that overall high-impact practices have limited to negative impact on four-year and six-year graduation rates for students at large public institutions. Researchers and practitioners are being challenged either to rethink institutional action (Tinto, 2012) or redesign community colleges (Bailey et al., 2015) in order to create high impact practices and pathways that foster conditions for student success.

The work of critical theorists informed the data analysis for this study. Following Ibarra's (2001) suggestion to "examine the gaps...to see what is there or whether anything is missing" (p. 45), this study explored how organizational culture may perpetuate exclusion and oppression via dominant ideologies, as well as how it may support inclusive practices that give voice to all members of the academy.

Site Selection. In this inquiry, the unit of analysis was the institution and the organizational culture of an institution was the phenomenon to be studied. The researcher selected three community colleges as cases in order to maximize understanding about the

phenomenon being studied (Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995). A purposeful sample for this study included three community colleges from which sufficient data were collected to triangulate and further enhance insights. Site selection was limited to community colleges in the Northeast (Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York and Rhode Island) and Maryland. Final site selection took into account feasible travel times and costs for the researcher.

The overarching objective for site selection was to identify community colleges that demonstrated a commitment to diversity as a central organizing principle. Specifically, the study assumed that colleges have diversity as a central organizing principle when formal documents, such as strategic plans and mission statements, as well as curricular and student support structures, espouse a commitment to diversity. The study also assumed that documents and structures serve as artifacts of organizational culture, and if documents and structures espouse a value for diversity, then the organizational culture of the college may also convey a value for diversity. Furthermore, in order to address the research questions for this study, the selected colleges demonstrated extensive implementation of high impact practices. Evidence of high impact practices was gathered from college websites and from institutional inquiries with college leaders. Fifteen HIPs were considered in the selection process; and the goal was to select colleges with the most HIPs that represented the planning, initiating, and sustaining success phases (CCCSE, 2012). The selected colleges each had enrollments with at least 25% students of color, thus ensuring at least a moderate degree of structural diversity at the institution. The site selection process entailed four phases. Table 2 outlines the four phases and the associated selection criteria.

Table 2 Institutional Selection Criteria

Phase	Process	Source	Criteria
Phase 1	Informal reputational survey	Experts and researchers who are knowledgeable about community colleges (AAC&U, CCRC, CCCSE, NERCHE) and websites	Institutions that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and use high impact practices • have diversity as a central organizing principle
Phase 2	Structural diversity analysis	IPEDS analysis of institutions' structural diversity	Institutions with an enrolled student body made up of at least 25% students of historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, White when more than one race is indicated.
Phase 3	Document analysis	Institutional websites and documents	Institutions with evidence of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diversity as a central organizing principle as evidenced in mission statements, strategic plans, student learning outcomes, campus programming • campus activity promoting and using high impact practices • rank order campuses with the most evidence
Phase 4	Institutional inquiry	Diversity Officers, Vice Presidents of Student Affairs, Provosts/ Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs	More detailed evidence of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • institutional diversity activity in campus programming • operationalized student success activities as evidenced by high impact practices • Rank order campuses with the most evidence

Phase 1 assisted in the identification of a population of colleges to study. An informal reputational survey was conducted by the researcher who spoke with two experts who were knowledgeable about community colleges, high impact practices, and student

success. These experts recommended colleges in the Northeast that had diversity as a central organizing principle and had operationalized a large number of high impact practices. These conversations were with agents from the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) and the New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE). Also, the researcher reviewed key national websites such as AAC&U, Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE), Community College Research Center (CCRC), and Achieving the Dream (ATD) to identify community colleges with evidence of diversity as a central organizing principle and operationalized high impact practices.

During Phase 1, it was important to clarify what was meant by “diversity as a central organizing principle” in the study. Diversity as a central organizing principle was evidenced by a core assumption and value that informed and shaped institutional decision making and choices; was broadly visible; and was infused throughout the college’s teaching, learning, and operations. Evidence of diversity as a central organizing principle included diversity mentioned prominently in the vision statement, mission statement, and/or institution-wide strategic plan. Additional evidence included diversity as a student learning outcome or value in the curriculum; was evident in campus programming; and was represented in the organizational structure via relationships, positions, or departments. Examples of structure included diversity councils, diversity officers, multicultural centers, and racially or ethnically focused student organizations or student support programs.

Table 3 lists the institutional indicators of diversity as a central organizing principle. During phase 1 of site selection, conversations with experts and reviews of national association websites were informed by the indicators listed in Table 3.

Table 3 Campus Evidence of Diversity as a Central Organizing Principle

1. Diversity is mentioned prominently in the vision statement.
2. Diversity is mentioned prominently in the mission statement.
3. Diversity is in the institutional strategic plan.
4. There is a Diversity Strategic Plan.
5. Diversity is reflected in the curriculum as a key learning outcome or value.
6. Diversity is represented in campus programming.
7. Diversity is represented in the organizational structure.

Also, it is important to clarify how the term “high impact practice” was used in this study. High impact practices arise from choices made about curriculum content and pedagogy, co-curricular programs, and professional development (CCCSE, 2010; Kuh, 2008; Kuh et al., 2005). Educational programs or practices that are deemed “high impact” are designed to strategically and positively impact student success (CCCSE, 2012). Examples of high-impact educational practices include first-year seminars and experiences; common intellectual experiences such as a core curriculum; learning communities that link big questions across courses; writing intensive courses across the curriculum; collaborative assignments and projects that require seriously listening to and working with others; undergraduate research experiences to involve students in systematic research and investigation; diversity/global learning that help explore perspectives different from one’s own; service learning to provide direct opportunities to both apply what is being studied and to reflect upon the service in the class; internships that provide direct work experience related to career interests; and capstone courses and projects as culminating experiences where students integrate and apply their learning (AAC&U, 2007; CCCSE, 2012; Kuh, 2008). As a result of Phase 1, twenty-one colleges were identified as possible study sites. The next

step was to review the structural diversity of each site as a criterion for inclusion in the study in Phase 2.

Phase 2 consisted of an analysis of structural diversity of community colleges to be considered as possible cases. In order to ensure that there was a critical mass of racially and ethnically diverse students enrolled at the colleges, the researcher established a minimum threshold that at least 25 percent of the college's enrolled students were racially and/or ethnically diverse students. Specifically, this study used the U.S. Department of Education's definition of minority serving post-secondary institutions as those that enrolled at least 25 % of one particular racial or ethnic minority group – Black, Hispanic, Asian, or American Indian (Li, 2007) to establish 25% as the overall structural diversity threshold. The U.S. Department of Education states that a minority serving institution that does not fit the 25% single race or ethnicity threshold is still deemed minority serving when “minority students as a whole constitute at least 50% of the total undergraduate enrollment” (Li, 2007, p. v). However for this study, community colleges that enrolled at least 25% students of color demonstrated a critical mass related to structural diversity in the student body. By studying colleges with 25% racial and ethnic structural diversity, this criterion can provide sufficient opportunity for the “interactions among students within a particular context and under appropriate environmental conditions needed to realize the educational benefits of diversity” (Garces & Jayakumar, 2014, p.116), also known as dynamic diversity. Students of color were defined as being in one or more of the following racial and/or ethnic identity groups: Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and White when more than one race was indicated.

IPEDS data were used to identify the structural diversity of each of the 21 community colleges in the possible site list. The 25% criterion provided a critical mass (one out of every four students) of racially and ethnically diverse students on campus. Seventeen of the 21 colleges met the 25% structural diversity criterion. The next step of the site selection process was to search for and verify evidence of diversity as a central organizing principle and operationalized high impact practices at each site during Phase 3.

Before starting Phase 3, the researcher reviewed the geographic locations of the 17 colleges and eliminated those deemed too far to drive and too costly because multiple trips were anticipated to each site. These logistical considerations reduced the list of colleges down to 14 possible sites. Phase 3 was comprised of an institutional inquiry that included a preliminary review of websites and documents from the 14 possible sites. The goal of this inquiry was to explore further the colleges' emphasis on diversity as a central organizing principle and enactment of high impact practices.

The website and document reviews explored the role of diversity as a central organizing principle at each campus. First, evidence was gathered from each of the 14 possible sites using the criteria outlined in Table 3 for evidence of diversity as a central organizing principle. For each college, the amount of evidence in each category was counted and tallied, giving each college a total score ranging between 0 and 7. Among the 14 colleges under consideration, the totals scores were between 3 and 7.

Next as part of Phase 3, CCCSE's (2012) groupings of three strands of student success practices were used to identify campus activity that promoted and used high impact practices. The three strands were planning for success, initiating success, and

sustaining success (CCCSE, 2012). Evidence of high impact practices that supported diversity included not only those focused on race and ethnicity, but also other forms of diversity. A preliminary review of campus websites was done to determine if each college had demonstrated evidence of high impact practices (CCCSE, 2012) outlined in Table 4. A total number of high impact practices was recorded for each campus, resulting in campuses demonstrating evidence of between 8 and 14 high impact practices per campus.

Table 4 Campus Evidence of the Three Strands of High Impact Practices (CCCSE, 2012)

Planning for Success Strand	Available preparatory sessions for students prior to taking the placement tests
	Orientation programs for new or transfer students
	Advising to set academic goals and planning
	Restrictive late registration policies
Initiating Success Strand	First-year experiences
	Student success courses
	Accelerated developmental education
	Robust tutoring services and supplemental instruction
	Learning communities that link big questions across courses
Sustaining Success Strand	Undergraduate research experiences to involve students in systematic research and investigation
	Diversity/global learning that help explore perspectives different from one's own
	Service learning program to provide direct opportunities to both apply what's being studied and to reflect upon the service in class
	Internships that provide direct work experience related to career interest
	Early alert and intervention systems designed to address problems quickly
	Formal mentoring programs

Data collected on the 14 possible community college sites was compiled on a site selection worksheet (see Appendix A) to capture evidence of the selection criteria of each

campus, and to record their structural diversity, evidence of diversity as a central organizing principle, and evidence of high impact practices. At the conclusion of Phases 1, 2, and 3, a composite score was created by adding the evidence of diversity as a central organizing principle score to the high impact practices score to get a total score for the remaining sites. The list of possible campuses was reduced again from 14 to 10 sites that had structural diversity ranges from the minimum of 25% to 67% and had composite scores (diversity as central organizing principle plus high impact practices) ranging from 11 to 21. Again, the site list was further reviewed, and the colleges were ranked by structural diversity, evidence of diversity as a central organizing principle, and evidence of high impact practices. The researcher selected those that had the most evidence of the selection criteria. This analysis resulted in 7 possible colleges that the researcher planned to move into Phase 4 of the site selection.

Phase 4 included a planned informal telephone survey of senior administrators at the remaining 7 colleges that met the selection criteria. The researcher was able to successfully contact 5 colleges and conduct a telephone survey with an administrator such as a Vice President of Student Affairs and/or Vice President of Academic Affairs to identify information about campus diversity activity and programming, as well as high impact practices. At one site, the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs was joined by the Dean of Students in the telephone survey. Overall, the discussions provided more information about the extent to which institutions had diversity requirements in their curriculum, student affairs programs that included diversity, and professional development activities that included diversity. The telephone calls were made to the selected colleges to

gather more information as well as to confirm or update evidence of diversity as a central organizing principle and evidence of high impact practices.

While the four-phase procedure was intended to be the determining factor in site selection, institutional willingness to participate in the study was also a factor. The timing of the calls was staggered between sites, as the researcher also inquired about institutional interest in participating in the study at the conclusion of the call. If the response was positive, then additional questions were asked about how to proceed and engage with the local Institutional Review Boards (IRB). In one case, while a senior administrator was supportive of the study, the college's IRB prohibited studies of their students by outside researchers. At another college, even after receiving IRB approval from the college, the registrar refused to share pertinent student information such as email addresses, rendering that site no longer viable. The researcher persisted and engaged other colleges on the seven-college list. Overall, the researcher successfully contacted 5 colleges, but 2 colleges did not progress to obtain the necessary student list for the study to proceed. The remaining 3 colleges were the result of the four phases of site selection, their proximity to the researcher to enable multiple visits, their willingness to participate, and a delivered list of students from which the researcher could launch the study.

Participant Selection. Each of the three selected colleges provided a list of currently enrolled students who were: 1) students of color, 2) currently enrolled in at least nine credit hours, and 3) had earned at least 12 but no more than 45 total credit hours (see Table 5).

Table 5 Student Characteristics

1. Race and/or Ethnicity	Identify as one or more of the following: Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, or White when more than one race is indicated
2. Enrollment status	Currently enrolled in at least 9 credit hours or more
3. Length of time on campus	Earned at least 12 credit hours and no more than 45 credit hours
4. High Impact Practices	Have participated or are participating in high impact practices listed in Table 3.
5. Campus Environment	Perceptions of the campus environment in relation to participation in high impact practices

Full-time enrollment is tied to the number of credits in which a student is enrolled per semester and typically defined as 12 credits. This study sought to engage with students who had experience with their college by completing the equivalent of one full-time semester, were still actively enrolled at least three-quarter time, and were working toward their educational goals. The requested list output included name, gender/gender identity, race, ethnicity, current credit hours, total credit hours, telephone number, email address, and mailing address.

For each selected site, the researcher emailed the eligible students, describing the study and inviting them to complete a short participant selection survey (see Appendix B). The survey informed the students about the incentive to participate, specifically, a gift card for \$10 to a national office supply store. Ten questions in the survey asked students to indicate which high impact practices they had participated in or were currently participating in, as well as indicate their level of participation (intensity) in them. Also an additional 12 CECE survey questions asked students about their perceptions of the campus environment (Museus et al., 2016).

An online version of the survey was developed (Appendix C), and the survey invitation was sent via email. Students were invited to respond, and they received reminders by email several times if they had not already responded. Reminders were sent no fewer than 3 times and up to 6 times per site, varying based on the response rate to the survey. For each site, the responses were collected and uploaded into a database to assist in data management and to determine which students to invite to participate in a focus group.

To reiterate, the participant selection survey was sent to all students of color who were currently enrolled in at least nine credit hours and had earned at least 12 but no more than 45 credit hours. The survey results provided additional data on the number and extent of student participation in high impact practices. Based on the survey data, students were to be rank ordered based on the number of high impact practices that they had participated in or in which they currently were participating, as well as their level of participation (intensity) in high impact practices. Participants' level of participation was to be used to identify participants who were most deeply engaged in high impact practices, rather than those who participated in only one practice one time. Those who participated or were currently participating in the largest number of high impact practices with the most intensity were to be selected. Students who met the previous criteria were to be contacted by email or called to invite them to participate in a focus group. The students who indicated that they were available to participate in a focus group were to be emailed and called to confirm

participation, and contacted again by telephone and email to remind them as the focus group date neared.

Initially the plan was to collect student data through focus groups. Focus groups are useful for examining student perceptions about their experiences regarding a topic in an environment that is open and non-threatening (Krueger & Casey, 2000; Lee, 1999). Lee (1999) suggests that researchers must consider several matters before conducting a focus group. These include establishing ethical procedures for data collection (recording, retention and disposal of the information), financial costs associated with focus groups (providing incentives for participation and researcher travel), and the number of focus groups to conduct (three focus groups yield theoretical saturation). Furthermore, the selection of participants, according to Lee, should minimize bias and provide participants who are similar enough to be able to speak to the topic but different enough to provide variability for comparison and analysis. Focus groups are typically structured with the opportunity for unstructured responses, much like the semi-structured interview, according to Lee. According to Kvale (1996), focus groups can lead to spontaneous responses from the interactions among participants. This context can foster discussion and participation, a necessary step in exploratory qualitative research (Creswell, 2003).

The reality of selecting participants for focus groups resulted in methodological changes. The participant selection survey yielded low response rates (see Table 6) which

Table 6 Participant Selection Survey Yield

Site	Total Survey Invitations	% responded	Total Responses	Complete Responses % of Total Responses	Partial Responses % of Total Responses
South Community College	638	8.93%	57	64.9% (n=37)	35.1% (n=20)
West Community College	496	6.25%	60	53.3% (n=35)	41.7% (n=25)
East Community College	222	18.50%	41	53.7% (n=22)	46.3% (n=19)
Total	1356	11.90%	158	58.4% (n=94)	41.6% (n=67)

resulted in having a smaller number of eligible students from which to select focus group participants. Moreover, the students who completed the survey did not demonstrate high degrees of participation in high impact practices at their colleges. Also, getting students to commit to meet with the researcher was challenging, as there was not always a valid telephone number to reach them, and email communication was not always reliable or timely. As a result, rather than selecting focus group participants based on frequency and intensity of involvement in high impact practices, the researcher eventually contacted every student who had completed or partially completed the participant selection survey, and for whom there was a valid telephone number or email address, to invite them to participate in a focus group. Table 6 depicts the participant selection outreach and participation results.

Interview Protocol. Occasionally, when focus groups were scheduled, some students who agreed to participate did not attend the scheduled meeting. Thus, some focus groups became one-on-one interviews (see Table 7).

Table 7 Focus Group and 1:1 Interview Yield

Focus Group (FG) or Interview	South Community College	West Community College	East Community College
FG 1	N=3	N=2	N=2
FG 2	N=6	N=2	
FG 3	N=4	N=2	
Interview 1		N=1	N=1
Interview 2		N=1	N=1
Total Participants	13	8	4

The focus groups and interviews conducted at each of the three community college sites were open-ended and semi-structured. Semi-structured interviews have “an outline of topics to be covered, with suggested questions” (Kvale, 1996, p. 129). Open-ended questions were used to explore individual perspectives, experiences, and impressions about organizational culture, diversity, and student success. The 26 question interview guide included 7 CECE Survey questions (Museus et al., 2016).

Data Collection

In order to explore the organizational culture of the institutions through case study inquiry, data were collected through a participant selection survey, focus groups and interviews, observations on campus, and document and artifact analysis. The researcher also kept a research journal (Creswell, 2003) of reflective notes to supplement the data that were collected.

Observations of the physical venues for the study were recorded and included symbols of institutional ideology, diversity, power, and privilege found in the campus environment. Observing and describing physical space, behaviors, and symbols can create

the “sense of being there” for readers, thereby adding a contextual dimension to the inquiry (Stake, 1995, p. 63). The site visits for this study provided opportunities for casual observations of physical spaces where people congregated and provided another source of evidence in each case (Yin, 2003). Places where observations took place were where students congregated, such as building lobbies, libraries, cafeterias, lounges, and designated student spaces.

Additionally, document and artifact analysis was used to understand organizational culture, high impact practices, and diversity. Mission statements, catalogs, websites, recruitment materials, other promotional materials, photos, and pictures were analyzed as a means to understand the organizational culture of each college. Interpretations of documents, according to Lee (1999), challenge researchers to “delve into the deeper meanings” of texts (p. 109).

Consent to participate in the study was obtained from each participant (Appendix D). Each focus group and interview was recorded and a verbatim transcript prepared (Appendix E). The interview guide ensured that the researcher consistently inquired about the research questions and the themes identified. Appendix F outlines the interview protocol and questions for the focus groups and interviews. The multiple sources of data were grouped thematically to create a chain of evidence in data tables. Yin (2003) suggests “three principles of data collection” (p. 97), including using multiple sources of evidence, creating a case database, and maintaining a chain of evidence. These steps were used in this study to promote trustworthiness of the findings.

Data Analysis

Analyzing case study evidence was an ongoing process, and findings emerged from continual reflection, asking analytic questions and writing memos (Creswell, 2003). The analysis of data included pattern matching (Lee, 1999) and constant comparative analysis (Merriam, 1998). The researcher identified emergent themes via meaning condensation and then sorted the themes into categories via meaning categorization that reflected the dimensions or phenomena of organizational culture. Likewise, Stake (1995) proposes that "...researchers reach new meanings about cases...through direct interpretation of the individual instance and through aggregation of instances until something can be said about them as a class" (p. 74).

The first phase of data analysis was to scan the data for cultural references that explained how students defined student success, how the students engaged with high impact practices, and how the organizational culture manifested itself in terms of cultural forms, formal practices, informal practices, and content themes (Martin, 2002). The data analysis identified and coded emergent themes regarding student success, organizational culture, and high impact practices. A detailed description of each case was developed based on the emergent themes and the conceptual framework.

The second phase of data analysis used the conceptual framework, taking the individual case themes from the previous coding process to generate descriptions of the culture in terms of emergent categories and themes within and across cases. Emergent cross case student success themes were identified and coded. High impact practices that the participants discussed across the cases were identified and coded. The emergent themes were

analyzed through the conceptual framework to better understand the organizational culture and to respond to the research questions.

The third phase of data analysis analyzed the emergent cultural descriptions including analysis for alignment or misalignment with the Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) model (Museus, 2014) that identified nine elements that foster a culturally engaging campus environment. The CECE framework was used to make meaning of the emergent themes and to understand the notion of diversity as a cultural theme. This analysis included an effort to identify whether any of the high impact practices were implemented in ways that aligned with the CECE model (see Table 8).

Table 8 Culturally Engaging Campus Environment Model (Museus, 2014)

Cultural Relevance Indicators - Focus on how campus cultures are relevant to the cultural backgrounds, communities, and identities of diverse students	
Cultural Familiarity	There are campus spaces for students to connect with institutional agents who have similar backgrounds and identities
Culturally Relevant Knowledge	There are opportunities for students to learn about their own cultural communities via culturally relevant curricular and co-curricular opportunities.
Cultural Community Service	Students are given opportunities to give back to and positively influence their communities of origin via activities to spread awareness about issues in their communities, engage in community activism, participate in service learning or problem-based learning.
Opportunities for Meaningful Cross-Cultural Engagement	There are programs and practices that facilitate educationally meaningful cross-cultural interactions among students that focus on solving real social and political problems.
Culturally Validating Environments	Campus cultures validate the cultural backgrounds, knowledge, and identities of diverse students
Cultural Responsiveness Indicators – Focus on how campus learning and support systems engage with and respond to the cultural norms and needs of diverse students	
Collectivist Cultural Orientations	Institutions create campus cultures with more collectivist cultural orientations versus more individualistic ones; campus culture is characterized by teamwork and pursuit of mutual success.
Humanized Educational Environments	Opportunities are available to develop meaningful relationships with faculty and staff who care about and are committed to those students' success.
Proactive Philosophies	Institutional agents go beyond making information and support available to instead making extra efforts to bring that information and support to students rather than waiting for students to seek them out.
Availability of Holistic Support	The extent to which students have access to at least one institutional agent (faculty or staff) who they are confident will provide the information they need, offer the help they seek, or connect them with the information or support they require regardless of the issue.

In summary, the data analysis identified the students' own definitions of student success, revealed the relevant themes of organizational culture for each site, and highlighted

the high impact practices in which the students participated at their colleges. The study included a cross-case analysis of the student success definitions, organizational cultures, and high impact practices to find common themes and understanding, and to look for generalizations about the role of organizational culture in fostering or hindering success for racially and ethnically diverse students. Finally, an analysis of the themes and practices through the Culturally Engaging Campus Environment (CECE) model, provided a means to understand how organizational culture, via high impact practices, fostered success for students of color.

Pilot Study. A pilot study was conducted as part of the research design for this study. Kvale (1996) suggests that in interviews, the interviewer is the research instrument of the study, and they should be well informed about human behavior as they engage in interviewing. By practicing, an interviewer gains skills and confidence, and “pilot interviews before the actual project will increase...ability to create safe and stimulating interactions” (Kvale, 1996, p. 147).

The researcher conducted the pilot study at their own institution as a matter of convenience, and the institution met the site selection criteria. The pilot involved setting up the participant selection survey in an online format using a web-based survey tool. The project was approved by the IRB and the researcher obtained the student data list as requested. Via email, students received the consent form and participant selection survey. The students received one email reminder about completing the survey.

After launching the participant selection survey, 23 students fully completed the survey. Four students were invited to participate in a focus group. The focus group yielded only two students (See Table 9).

Table 9 Participant Selection Survey and Focus Group Yield

Site	Total Survey Invitations	% responded	Total Responses	Complete Responses % of Total Responses	Partial Responses % of Total Responses	Total Number of Focus Groups and Interviews	Total Number of Participants
Pilot Community College	1609	5.80%	93	24.7% (n=23)	75.3% (n=70)	1	2

This pilot provided the researcher with a sense of the actual time commitment for interview participants. The pilot group interview was nearly 45 minutes long with two participants. Several questions were reordered to improve the flow of the discussion for participants. After listening to the interview recording, the value of transcribing the interview verbatim was confirmed.

The Researcher's Role

Promoting Trustworthiness. In qualitative research, validation strategies strive to establish the accuracy or trustworthiness of the findings (Creswell, 2003; Lee, 1999; Stake, 1995). Triangulation of the data is needed to present a “substantial body of uncontested description” according to Stake (1995, p. 110). Several strategies were used in this study to check for accuracy of the findings and to promote trustworthiness. Accuracy was validated by triangulation of multiple sources of evidence, including institutional document analysis, survey results, focus groups and interviews, and observation of campus settings. Additional strategies to support trustworthiness were transcribing verbatim all interviews and focus

groups, identifying researcher bias, and conducting the study consistently across cases (Creswell, 2003; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). Identifying themes that did not align with the identified cross-case common themes or the conceptual framework is important and an ethical requirement in order to generate a realistic description that addresses nonconforming themes that add to deep understanding of the cases and the phenomena being studied (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). Trustworthiness was also addressed through the use of three cases as a means to justify conclusions drawn from the findings. Multiple case sites allowed for identifying patterns across cases ultimately promoting internal validity. Internal validity asks the researcher to consider how congruent the findings are in relation to reality, in particular because of the notion that reality is not fixed and is multidimensional (Merriam, 1998). Internal validity is used in explanatory case studies, according to Yin (2003), and employs strategies presented above to explain how inferences were derived.

The Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) Survey was developed from the CECE model (Museus, 2014). The validity of the CECE Survey was confirmed in a study that involved 499 undergraduate students across three institutions (Museus et al., 2016). That study found that the CECE Survey is a “statistically valid tool for measuring the CECE indicators among both White students and students of color” (p. 788).

The Researcher’s Role. Creswell (2003) suggests that researcher bias must be clarified at the onset of the study. The role of researcher was influenced by my values and experiences. I brought certain biases to this inquiry due to my work in diversity and equity affairs from an institution-wide perspective as an administrator, chief diversity officer, part-

time faculty member, and my personal bicultural background. All of my higher education professional experience has been in one public community college. I have great respect for the role community colleges play in providing college access to their communities. As a practitioner in a community college, I pursued this inquiry as a means to understand how an institution can create an organizational culture that values both diversity and student success to move beyond what I had observed as well-intended approaches to diversity that veneer the culture but do not permeate it. The salience of student voice was intentional as their success is what we strive for every day at community colleges. My hope is that this research promotes open discourses about the relationships among organizational culture, racial and ethnic diversity, and student success.

Limitations and Delimitations. Creswell (2003) reminds researchers that all research strategies have limitations. To focus the scope of this study, the research design was bound to the use of three institutional cases. Furthermore, the study was limited to three cases located in one geographic region, which may not provide results that can be generalized. Limiting the study to community colleges also limits the generalizability of results to other institutional types. The site selection criteria were unique to this study and informed by the researcher's decisions and values.

A limitation of the institutional site selection criteria was the reliance on race and ethnicity in the student body to establish that there was a critical mass of structural diversity for the study; this focus on race and ethnicity did not provide a means to examine directly

other diversity indicators such as sexual orientation and expression or gender expression, for example.

The selection of only students who were currently enrolled in at least nine credits and had earned at least 12 credits and no more than 45 credits is a limitation to this study. This choice does not reflect the experiences of part-time community college students. The selected student population was in good academic standing as demonstrated by their earned credit hours. These criteria, however, neglect students who have left the institutions and who therefore may have different perceptions of the organizational culture and different engagement experiences.

The choices made in data collection methods including the use of focus groups and interviews, what to observe, and which documents and artifacts to analyze had limitations. A research design that relies on interview data may yield bias due to poorly worded interview questions or it may yield inaccurate data due to poor recall by the participants (Yin, 2003). Overall, interview data are indirect and filtered through the lenses of the study participants and their skills in articulating their thoughts (Creswell, 2003; Yin, 2003). Interview as a method is influenced by the interviewer's skills in listening, asking questions, and note taking (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). The choices made about what to observe and analyze were also influenced by the researcher's understanding and biases. The interviewer must stay alert to researcher bias by remaining open to contrary findings.

Protection of Human Subjects. This case study used human subjects as key informants and therefore it was imperative that human subjects be protected. Furthermore, as this inquiry intended to explore diversity as a cultural construct in higher education

institutions, some key informants may have come from culturally vulnerable communities or groups. To both respect the privacy of subjects and to adhere to federal and professional standards, the researcher addressed the subjects' right to privacy, ensured protection from harm, avoided deception, and obtained informed consent (Merriam, 1998).

All participants were given a form detailing their consent to participate in the study. The form described the study purposes and procedures, and provided a statement of confidentiality and detailed information regarding rights and procedures for participation. The names of study participants were not used in the research. Likewise, the case sites were given pseudonyms, and identifiable information that could directly reveal the sites was removed from the data.

CHAPTER 4

CASE ANALYSIS

Three community colleges were selected for this cross-case study, which seeks to understand how the organizational culture of community colleges can foster or impede the success of students of color. The unit of analysis for this study is the institution and the study is framed from the vantage point of the students and their perceptions of the role of organizational culture in shaping their success. The selected institutions met the criteria of having at least 25% students of color, evidence of diversity as a central organizing principle, and evidence of high impact practices. Indicators of evidence of diversity as a central organizing principle were located in institutional statements, strategic plans, curriculum, and structure. High impact practices are designed to positively impact student success through practices that require students to invest time, make decisions, and receive frequent feedback from faculty or staff members (CCCSE, 2012; Kuh, 2008). High impact practices are designed to foster student success and are implemented within an institution's organizational culture. Data were collected at each of the three community colleges that resulted in focus groups or interviews conducted with a total of 25 students.

The purpose of this study was to better understand the role of organizational culture in fostering success for racially and ethnically diverse community college students. This

study has framed student success as being self-defined by students themselves. The inclusion of the students' own definitions of success provides a means to empower students and to examine cultural assumptions and values at the institutional level through the perspectives of students of color. Student voice regarding their understanding of success is important for exploring linkages regarding how they perceive the role of organizational culture in shaping their success.

Typical institutional responses to racial and ethnic diversity are both structural and strategic (Cox, 1994; Hurtado et al., 1999; Iverson, 2007; Kuh et al., 2005; Milem et al., 2005). The structural approach views racial and ethnic diversity through the representation and composition of groups, looking at admissions and student enrollment patterns based on race and ethnicity (Cox, 1994; Hurtado et al., 1999; Milem, 2003; Milem et al., 2005). The strategic approach responds to racial and ethnic diversity through top-down college-wide plans that are often superficial and ad hoc in nature, and may receive varying degrees of support to deeply impact classrooms, faculty practices, and instruction (Cox, 1994, 2001; Hurtado et al., 1999; Iverson, 2007; Kuh et al., 2005). Additionally, diversity is often viewed through a deficit perspective that fails to examine systems and structures that privilege dominant groups, and instead focuses on the assumed deficiencies of groups (Bensimón, 2005; Carnevale & Strohl, 2013; Clayton-Pedersen & Musil, 2005; Gorski, 2011; Yosso, 2005). These three understandings of institutional responses to diversity – structural,

strategic, and deficit-oriented – may be useful to understand diversity as an institutional value.

This chapter provides an individual analysis of each community college in the study. First, for each college, the chapter provides brief background information, followed by an analysis that examines the students' definitions of success. Next, the chapter examines students' perceptions of the organizational culture, examining the values, beliefs, and assumptions that students perceive as important at their college. This part of the analysis includes an examination of the extent to which students think diversity serves as a cultural value at their college. Then, the focus moves to an examination of the student experience in the classroom and the students' experiences with high impact practices. A discussion of the organizational conditions that contributed to or interfered with student success concluding each case. A cross-case analysis follows in Chapter 5.

South Community College

Overview of South Community College. South Community College (SCC), a public community college located in the northeastern United States, enrolls approximately 7,000 students and more than 40% of the student body identify as racially and ethnically diverse students. Also, SCC is a Hispanic serving institution (HSI). There are two campuses. The suburban campus has nine buildings, athletic fields, and green space. The urban campus is embedded in a nearby mid-sized city and has five buildings. A shuttle bus runs between the campuses for students.

SCC demonstrates evidence of an institutional commitment to diversity through its statement of diversity, pluralism, and non-discrimination. The institutional vision statement

notes a commitment to cultural inclusion of all identities and does not elaborate on what this means specifically. The mission statement describes the campus community as diverse. The SCC strategic plan states that a culture of inclusion is a core institutional value. The college has a culture and inclusive learning group that partners with the office of professional development to support SCC's values of inclusion. There is ample evidence of diversity programming on campus such as festivals and student clubs. The curriculum includes global awareness as an area of focus that is required in most programs and is provided via courses that focus intensively on that learning outcome. As a Hispanic serving institution, SCC has targeted programming to support Latina/o students and has staffed programs with employees who represent that group. SCC is committed to increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of their faculty and staff, and has implemented a hiring policy that includes required training for search committee members intended to reduce bias and promote consistent practice in searches.

There is ample evidence of high impact practices at SCC. This institution successfully pursued participation in national programs and designations to address and reduce achievement gaps. SCC participates in the CCSSE to assess student engagement. They have a TRIO program designed to promote college completion and establish transfer pathways for low-income, first generation students, including those of historically underrepresented and/or underserved racial and ethnic groups. SCC offers STEM internships and a summer STEM bridge program targeting the Latina/o students. The college also offers learning communities, first year experience seminars, and honors courses and programs. There is a restrictive late registration policy intended to prevent students from registering

after classes begin as a strategy to increase student success. Every student has access to an advisor to develop their academic plan. Furthermore, the college uses an early alert system to communicate with students who are at risk. Tutoring is abundantly available. Student engagement and leadership opportunities exist through clubs and organizations. Mentoring opportunities, however, are limited, and internships are limited and more likely to occur in the health programs due to a designated internship coordinator position.

SCC enrolls a high percentage of students of color (42%), and has evidence of diversity as a central organizing principle in its vision, mission, and values statements; and has global awareness as a focus area in the curriculum. SCC has implemented and participated in a variety of high impact practices and programs designed to foster success for all students.

Students' Definitions of Success at SCC. Two key themes of student success emerged from students at SCC. First, the notion of achieving goals was key for the students. Second, the role of community as important to their success emerged. Defining success as achieving goals was expressed in multiple ways by the students at SCC. For the SCC students in this study, success in college was a lifelong goal held since childhood. "Actually learning" through their attendance at SCC was a primary goal. One student stated:

It's not only achieving your goals but in the process of it learning how to conduct yourself in whatever environment you're in. And also, learning to be literate, learning so many, all the little things. As a liberal arts major, not only focusing on your career but also being able to understand everything around you as well.

Finishing was another way students described student success. Their success would be measured by graduating with the degree or certificate they sought. If a student could finish at SCC, then they would achieve student success. For one student, transferring to a university, after studying at SCC, was considered to be success. Another described student success as “making the most out of the school experience, taking everything you can learn out of it, and involving yourself in a lot, like joining clubs and doing all that.” While the idea of success for these students was highly goal-centered, including learning and finishing, for most students the notion of achieving one’s goals was intertwined with an appreciation for the human relationships and interactions that are embedded in achieving their goals for graduating and finishing.

The second student success theme that emerged was community, which was expressed as serving as an example to others where “people look up to you.” For another, “working hard to better your own life and for your family” was student success. Teamwork was also used to define student success, underscoring the idea that the student’s journey at SCC included multiple partners. One student remarked, “having teachers, administrators, somebody there helping you, guiding you, supporting you to achieve in the goal you want” was student success for them. The interconnectedness of key individuals, whether family, faculty, or staff, illustrates how a student defines success within the context of their community.

At SCC the two student success themes that emerged were achieving goals and doing so within a community of partners. The students’ definitions of success illustrate that their beliefs about success are intertwined with their desire to learn the details and nuances of the

academic environment and the community in which they are engaged as learners. This student success definition provides the context for the following section that discusses how SCC's organizational culture fosters or impedes student success.

Organizational Culture at SCC. The main cultural values that emerged at SCC were student success and being welcoming. Evidence of student success as a cultural value was abundant. The students believe that the faculty and staff are committed to student success as “there is always someone to teach you.” This belief was evidenced by students who observed that helping one another is a common practice among students, faculty, and staff. One student noted that there is “a lot of encouragement...everyone’s willing to help you...You can just go up and talk freely” to faculty or students. Another described the faculty as accessible via email even at night. Faculty accessibility after or before class or via office hours was appreciated by students and linked to stories of faculty providing extra help and support when they were struggling. One student described how a faculty member told her she was doing well in her hospital placement and this made the student feel that “I want to do well because this woman, she is so happy with what I do...” Most students perceived that SCC valued their success.

There were examples, however, where students encountered individuals whom they did not perceive to be supportive of their success. Some students explained that they intentionally avoided some staff in the bookstore and in the financial aid office who “were rude and looked miserable.” Nevertheless, students overall perceived SCC to have caring, responsive faculty, deans, directors, coordinators, and staff who make themselves available to students. Faculty stay in touch and answer questions, solve problems, and give advice in

person and by email. Students described faculty as easy to talk to, very helpful, and a good influence on the students. “They see our potential and they want us to make it a reality,” said one student.

The second main cultural value or belief that students conveyed about SCC is that the college is a welcoming place. For example, a student observed that SCC is “heartwarming because teachers do connect with you, they do help you, they go out of their way to guide you if something is wrong.” Similarly, another student mentioned that “they’re doing their best to get everybody together as one. They’re trying not to leave somebody out of line, out of the group.” Another student described, “Definitely (I feel included), and I feel like from an outsider’s point of view, they would feel welcome. Like, Oh, there’s a lot of diversity there. I think I can fit in here and do well.”

Students frequently referred to SCC in terms of being welcoming and inclusive. “A perfect learning environment for anyone...especially if you are coming from a minority group...you feel... part of the community, in a very special way. To get to talk to people that actually come from the same background as you come from” is noted as a key ingredient to SCC’s welcoming value. For the Latina/o students, “There’s always like a welcome sign on, an invisible welcome sign that you see once you step on the (urban) campus.”

Conversely because SCC is a Hispanic serving institution, students who do not identify as Latina/o perceive that there is a dearth of programs for the other racially and ethnically diverse student groups. Also, while the students appreciate the structural diversity at SCC, they notice that the White students typically leave campus immediately after class, and they see a need for SCC to create more ways to connect across groups. Specifically, students of

color described the White students leaving after class as “it’s like they’re running away from us.” Yet, one student observed that they “didn’t find a lot of racism so it makes you comfortable to learn.”

The two SCC campuses are very different, and one student remarked, “I think they are completely different.” While the students of color perceive SCC as welcoming, they stated there are “hot spots on campus where you feel uncomfortable.” One hot spot was described on the suburban campus as an open area where students hang out regularly, but “you feel like you’re walking into a room instead of an open area and that room is specifically for a type of action” (i.e. video gaming). As a result, students agreed that this place was one that they would not visit or try to engage in. The lobby in the main urban campus building was another place where, in spite of available chairs, students avoided them, preferring to go to the Library. Some students reported that they do not relax at school, and they felt there were not enough opportunities for students to get to know each other. Overall at SCC, students indicated that the value placed on student success and the emphasis on being a welcoming institution characterized the organizational culture at SCC. In addition, the study asked students to consider the extent to which diversity was a cultural value at SCC.

Diversity as a Cultural Value at SCC. SCC students expressed appreciation for the structural diversity that they observed on campus. One student who was highly engaged in the Student Success Center said that they had heard the staff openly discuss trying to put pictures that represent every single community in their pamphlets or flyers. The emphasis on structural racial and ethnic diversity was apparent at SCC. The students appreciated the

representation of the racial and ethnic diversity in the student body, and they noted the racial and ethnic diversity among students in their classes. Several students singled out one diverse faculty member as “she’s always like the front woman, always trying to spread the culture and help people understand.” The presence of bilingual Spanish speaking advisors and tutors was also valued by those students whose languages were represented by these employees. They noted progress in SCC’s hiring diverse employees. However, they also noted that some groups were more represented (Hispanic and Asian) than others (African/African American or Middle Eastern) and commented that SCC could do better with its commitment to hiring racially and ethnically diverse employees, including faculty. The students observed that the leadership positions at SCC were held by White people and the lower level positions by people of color.

Students also mentioned that a value for diversity was included in the curriculum via the Global Awareness course requirement, but their experiences with courses were uneven. In particular, they observed White students feeling uncomfortable or feeling guilty when discussions in these courses were about diversity, oppression, or racism. Some classes were described as only providing “surface coverage” of diversity. For example, in a class discussing Medicare/Medicaid, a student noted that “they talked about serving underserved populations” but did not go beyond. Beyond the global awareness courses, the Student Leadership/Ambassador program and the Honors program required community service, and thus provided opportunities for students to engage with their communities. There was less evidence of diversity programming, including both academic programming and cultural celebrations, on the suburban campus according to the students. One student remarked that

“they did not have opportunities to positively impact their own communities – just talk about it but don’t go beyond that.”

Structural diversity at SCC served as a catalyst for institutional action. The college responded to the increasing diversity by an emphasis on enrolling racially and ethnically diverse students, addressing outcomes metrics (e.g. admission, retention, and graduation rates), and hiring diverse counselors and faculty. The critical mass of at least 25% Latina/o students influenced the choice of the college to become an HSI. Structural diversity informed the strategies SCC enacted.

Overall, the data suggest that SCC demonstrates a strategic commitment to diversity through its official statements, curriculum requirements, and engagement as a Hispanic serving institution. But this clear strategic commitment to diversity is predominately a surface commitment to diversity and less a cultural value. Diversity programming focused on the Latina/o community of the campus and included other diversity programs less deliberately. Diversity was emphasized predominately in the humanities and social sciences, but was not part of the full fabric of the curriculum. Students on the urban campus were engaged in a program that met monthly to discuss social justice topics, and some participated in clubs that hosted ethnic festivals and celebrations. SCC engaged predominately with diversity from an implicit deficit lens via a focus on assistance and support practices such as targeted outreach from the early alerts, the Student Success Center, and TRIO programs for students of color. These strategies and programs focused on the alleged deficiencies of students of color and were designed to help them adapt to SCC. The students were provided

with information and strategies to navigate SCC systems and structures to address the needs identified by the college for the students of color.

While the data suggest that diversity was not a deep cultural value at SCC, the college did engage with diversity through a success and retention lens. On the one hand, students noted that faculty and staff acknowledged and celebrated diversity and reached out very intentionally to students of color to provide information and support to foster their success. But on the other hand, the focus on supporting racially and ethnically diverse students had an underlying assumption of a deficit model. The programs and services emphasized “catching” students who may not be doing well academically, and focusing on assumed challenges of students of color. Furthermore, differences in programming and services between the urban and suburban campuses were evident to the students. The urban campus focused on the Latina/o student community and also appeared to have more multicultural programming than the suburban campus. The limited representation of racial and ethnic diversity in faculty and leadership positions was also noted by students as something that can interfere with their success. These indicators suggest that diversity was not yet a cultural value at SCC, and appeared to be engaged with structurally through enrollment, support, and completion strategies. Programs were implemented to strategically address student deficiencies more so than to fully incorporate the perspectives, histories, and values of the communities of color at SCC, resulting in an inconsistent deficit and surface level of engagement with diversity.

Student Experiences in the Classroom at SCC

An examination of the classroom experience reveals further how students of color at SCC experience the organizational culture. The data on classroom experiences was mixed.

On the one hand, students overwhelmingly described that they cannot be themselves in the classroom because they have to “please the teacher, you have to pay attention.” Conversely, they stated, “teachers are my favorite part” of SCC. Students noted that faculty and community were key components to their success. Coupled with the students’ commitment to success and academics was a tension with how diversity and their identity were engaged in their classroom experiences.

Students described feeling most like themselves when faculty “allow everybody to feel comfortable with their culture.” Some faculty did this by demonstrating that “they’re interested about our culture, so we had to do presentations, and most people picked their culture, and everyone would clap at the end and ask questions, so I felt comfortable with that.” Another student described in a public speaking class how their faculty “really emphasized to speak in your voice” regardless of accent. However, one student stated, “I feel like it’s harder when you’re in a White setting that isn’t Latino...sometimes you’re afraid you’re going to get judged...but it’s like sometimes you do feel discomfort.” When students stated that they “cannot be myself” in the classroom, they acknowledged that this experience deeply impacted their sense of belonging in the class, though they would not let it interfere their desire to succeed in the class or to achieve their goals.

Who is in the class, who is facilitating the class, and how the class is taught all impact how students of color experienced their courses. Some faculty were described as limiting discussions of diversity. For example, one student described a faculty member as “having a limit. So we didn’t go farther” when discussing Ebola in a health care class. A limit meant that the faculty member may respond to diversity discussion by cutting the discussion short,

ignoring opportunities to engage with it, or not even including a discussion about diversity where it was evident that there was opportunity to do so according to the students.

Students viewed discussion groups positively in instances where students who had different opinions were encouraged to express them. The dynamic in the classroom, however, varied by subject as some subjects were perceived by students to be without cultural influences such as math or physics, and others were informed by culture such as history or sociology. For students not originally from the United States, the ability to fully participate in discussion was at times challenging for them. For example, one student stated:

They don't see the social context of where you're coming from. It is hard. Like, it is completely different, like, if I tell my story as a Nigerian growing up in a Nigerian community. It is totally different from whatever you guys experience here in the US. So sitting down with 30 other people in class, they're telling stories about their experiences here in the US, growing up and other stuff. Even trying like to tell my own story, it is going to sound completely off for them, and there is no way they are going to understand what I am saying. So you kind of like sit back when you're in that kind of class, and enjoy their stories. But when you go to a class like physics, chemistry, classes that actually have something that you all share in common, then you be yourself.

In the previous example, the opportunity to share cultural information is provided, yet the student was not comfortable during the discussion.

Students described the various ways in which faculty facilitate class discussions that address diversity. One student described it as “Most conversations limit how far you can go

with it, especially when it comes to personal conversations that could offend someone. They control the environment technically not directly you know.” Another example was of a faculty member in a sociology class, where a student indicated that:

The teacher was always referencing racism in virtually all the topics, in poverty, social issues, racism in all the topics. You could see from the faces of some of the students...the majority [White] students, ‘Cut it out, let’s go on’. This class was majority White.

In another class:

Like it was majority Spanish and I was like the only Black person. The teacher, they didn’t mind at all because we were from different countries. They didn’t mind, so you could go as far as we wanted, because we were all diverse students.

Conversely, students indicated that some faculty took only a superficial approach to racial and ethnic diversity. A student, for example, explained that faculty “didn’t allow us to go further, (they) had a limit. So we didn’t go far.” Another SCC student reiterated that “most conversations limit how far you can go with it, especially when it comes to personal conversations that could offend someone.” Yet another student described a faculty member as going in depth regarding diversity related content as:

You know, it got to the point where like students, even students who were like White, really felt guilty of what happened in the past. Well at the end, I don’t know if they’d make a joke with you and everyone laughed and moved on, so that you don’t dwell on that. But their ultimate goal was to make people understand this actually

happened. Nothing happens in a vacuum. There are events that happened in the past that led to whatever event is happening right now.

The students of color who participated in this study indicated that the faculty sometimes use discussion groups in class to include new perspectives about a topic or concept beyond what the class may commonly know from previous schooling, stereotypes, and biases. This practice was described by a student as the faculty trying to "...enlighten them (students) on how it's done differently elsewhere and not just this way you know..." Some students remarked that faculty who use discussion "just want to learn about who you are, so they'll have you do a project or something, so they make us aware of each other's identities...So we all know who's who. We associate with each other, that's cool."

The varying levels of skill and comfort of the faculty to include diversity in their curriculum was noted by the students in this study. The students of color described how several faculty tried to create inclusive and informative class discussions. Some faculty used humor to deflect tension, while others set limits to avoid conflict in class. Overall, the students of color noted the variety of ways the faculty responded to diversity content, and they noticed when faculty were not able or willing to engage with diversity in the curriculum, and also when the faculty chose not to engage with diversity content when bias or an opportunity was presented in class. For some students, the race or ethnicity of the faculty member made a difference, and the students observed that most of the faculty are White. One student observed depending on the racial and ethnic composition of the class and the racial or ethnic identity of the faculty member, the end result is that there is going "to be guilt

or awkwardness” by the faculty and the class as a result of an open discussion about racial or ethnic diversity because “it’s like a touchy subject.”

The students indicated that the quality of their classroom experiences depended on the structural diversity of the class (that is, racial/ethnic diversity of enrolled students) and on how the faculty facilitated discussions of race and ethnicity. The SCC students of color in this study were aware of otherness (Harper, 2012a) and they noted when there was only one Black student in a class, or when a class was predominately White or predominately Hispanic, for example. The classroom is often the only place where students have an opportunity to share their identity. While structural diversity was a key factor in the students’ classroom experiences, faculty skill and comfort in facilitating classroom dialogue on race and ethnicity were powerful and appreciated when evident to the students of color in this study.

Students at SCC indicated that faculty often extended the classroom experience by providing out of class help. Students appreciated the small class sizes at SCC, and noted that “people get to understand the professor. If you don’t understand, they make you understand, they explain it in a way so that you will be able to grasp it.” Students indicated that faculty did this by being accessible through email or text to assist students with content questions, advising, and career planning. Several faculty were noted as being someone with whom they could build a relationship and have a faculty member “take an interest in them” or “believe in them.” Also faculty provided information about resources and programs available at SCC.

However, as the students in this study noted, many faculty engaged with diversity content on a superficial level. In contrast, when faculty were able to effectively facilitate

discussions by including diverse student voices in the classroom, students sensed that they could form a relationship with that faculty member, a key ingredient to student success. Furthermore, at SCC, classroom experiences were often coupled with a wide array of high impact practices that sought to foster student success but engaged students of color to varying degrees.

High Impact Practices. In terms of high impact practices, a few students referred to placement testing. Assessment and placement testing are intended to ensure that students take the right courses, and colleges are encouraged to provide refresher courses for students prior to taking a placement test (CCCSE, 2012). Placement testing, specifically the Accuplacer, is used at SCC to determine appropriate course placements for writing and math for new students. Some students noted that Accuplacer interferes with the success of students of color due to its test questions that are geared to the United States and the Northeast predominately. One student remarked that placement testing:

... not directly interferes with the success of diverse students, but sometimes it pulls you back a little bit. Like the Accuplacer test, I took the test a couple of months after I got to the U.S. When I did the English problems...they bring up questions about snow and all this other stuff that I've never experienced before, and they expect me to understand what the story is about and answer the questions. At the end of the day, I basically failed that part of the test and I have to go back and take Basic Writing and that as a waste of a semester for me. I was really, really pissed off all semester...

This student shines light on the cultural assumptions made about students who are planning to enroll at SCC. It appeared through the question on the Accuplacer that there was an

assumption that all students would have the knowledge and background to be able to respond well to a prompt about a cold, snowy climate. Such an assumption privileges the local cultural frame and does not include a broader, deeper, cultural perspective.

Regarding another high impact practice, orientation programs, students noted variability in content and design. Orientation programs were described by students as ways to get basic information about what to expect as a student at SCC. Students described participating in a new student orientation that focused on navigating the campus in terms of buildings, rooms, and offices. One student described their orientation as “When I went to the orientation, they showed us the new building and how nice it was and the new equipment, not really about all the advisor, financial, and all this stuff. More about the facilities.” Another student at SCC described attending a one day orientation offered by their TRIO program that focused on more than logistics and covered “...the classes, they give you the syllabus and tell you what you have to do and how to improve.” The third type of orientation at SCC focused on health programs and was described by a student as “so it’s basically, it’s someone that lectures you for about an hour and tells you what you need to do.” The orientation programs at SCC that were one day or less were generally perceived to offer mainly navigation information about the campuses and basic information about how to be a college student. These orientations were brief and lacked opportunities to connect with any key SCC stakeholders from whom a student could later request information or support.

In addition to placement testing and orientations, student success courses were a third high impact practice at SCC. Students described the required student success courses as being “all about what to expect in the future year.” The downside to the student success

course was that it did not always apply to graduation, as they were offered at the developmental level. The positive side was that it taught students about resources and available technology such as online resources for advising. Students reacted very positively when the student success course was taught by one of their major's faculty.

In addition to the student success course, some students had previously participated in a summer bridge program. For example, one student participated in a two-week Hispanic STEM summer bridge program as a new student and was assigned a peer mentor. This student explained the focus of this program as a way:

to get you prepared for college. So they give you the little inside-look of how college is going to feel, all the work you're going to get. They gave us homework. They gave us so much...So class really starts within a week. But it was a good-- it's a good program to get students that are really scared on how they're going to do in college.

Regarding advising as a high impact practice, students indicated that advising resources were plentiful at SCC. However, at SCC, there was an overarching observation that accessing an advisor at the college's advising center does not always yield the most accurate results for students. Some students rely on their assigned advisors, as one student explained, "I think people have a specific advisor assigned to you, according to your major." Yet another student countered that comment by saying, "I honestly don't even know who my advisor is." Finally, another student remarked, "I know who they are, but I mostly choose my classes online. I've talked to them twice, but I don't feel like I really need them." One student described using "on call advisers. You can just walk in. That's what I do, just walk

in. Whoever is there will help you.” Students described receiving and mostly ignoring the emails from their assigned advisor with messages such as, “I’m your advisor if you need help at any point during the semester, or if you need to register for next semester.” One student described their experience as “I think when you go see the advisor, if you go today and they say to come back tomorrow, then they give you a different advice. I get so confused.” Additionally, the students stated that they rely on informal networks of other students they have developed for advice on faculty, courses, and books. One student said, “We just talk among ourselves as far as our classmates, people have taken classes beforehand because they’re the best predictor of what you need to do and how to do it.”

The students noted that regarding advising there is “a lot of confusion between faculty, because they’re always changing classes, prerequisites, even the advisors don’t know what to advise the students – the outcome is wasting time, money and everything.” Also, a student described difficulty actually meeting with their assigned advisor, getting different answers to their advising questions depending on whom they spoke to. Another student described their advising experience as:

My classes were mixed up. I was like “what’s going on here? Am I wasting my time?” So I go to my advisor, the one that did my first schedule, and I am infuriated. I am angry, and I go and we sit down, and there was this big dude that was sitting right next to her. And I’m like, he just sat there quietly, observing, looking at me. And I’m wondering why is he there? You know he’s not an advisor. So is it for her safety or what about my safety? It was like these stereotypes. I really just wanted to

get to the bottom of this. I wasn't going to do anything violent, but, yea, I felt like there was a security person there.

The centralized advising center yielded varied experiences for students. The students described inconsistent services and information; therefore, they would seek information from peers, faculty, online resources, or the TRIO program staff if they were eligible.

Several students explained that they prefer to use the online system that allows them to run hypothetical schedules and plans to degree completion. Students explained that they frequently lack confidence in the in-person advisors and noted being misadvised. However, they do value the advising given by faculty or advisors with whom they have established relationships.

The tutoring centers, math and computer labs, and student success programs and centers were highly regarded as key to supporting student success at SCC. Some students stated that they go to these centers "for everything." They meet friends in the computer lab; they study in the math lab; they go to the Student Success Center for weekly workshops, advice about problems, and advice about how to access solutions to problems. The TRIO program at SCC was frequently mentioned by students as a place where they have an assigned advisor. In the TRIO program, according to a student:

They take time to go through all my work, and you know help us... Sometimes I need help on something and I don't know how to get the information. So I basically call someone in the TRIO program. Even if they don't have the information about it, they are going to dig it up and find something to give you. They do the research.

The tutoring centers and computer labs are resources that the students said they utilize regularly to learn what they need to do as students and for tutoring support. One student commented that “I believe the tutoring teachers honestly should be the actual teachers because they have a lot of passion and caring for the students.” Another student stated, “They (tutors) know more than what the teacher is teaching you. They (teachers) want you to do it this method and they can’t explain it to you. The tutors do it better.” Students appreciated the fact that many of the tutors and staff are bilingual which students viewed as a benefit for those who could be served in their preferred language. At SCC, a student added an observation about why they go to the tutoring center:

In Tutoring, they gossip a lot. They be like, ‘Oh, I can’t believe these new majors and advisors’, and they’ll talk about the politics of the school and I’ll listen in on what’s going on around them because they’re the faculty and I’m the student. So they’re like a really strong connection to the higher powers, and yet they’re a part of us, too. So I go for that, too.

According to this student, the tutoring center staff are a resource of academic knowledge and perceived political knowledge of the institution.

The presence of bilingual staff in the centers and programs for Latina/o students was apparent to the students. However, students also noted that not all languages were available to be tutored in, leaving some students feeling as though they were not represented at SCC. Some students noted differences in available hours for tutoring and stated that there were fewer tutoring hours available in the urban campus where the majority of the students of color attended, compared to the suburban campus.

SCC offered many success centers and programs, including the Center for Student Engagement, which included leadership programs, clubs, and organizations. This center provided a variety of cultural programming, predominately focused on Latina/o students. One student described coming to campus “and there was loud music and I was like, am I sure I am in school?” This is because of the cultural connection that program had to her own cultural identity and that of the target ethnicity of the Hispanic serving institution. Diversity is frequently talked about at SCC in terms of cultural celebrations focused on ethnicity. Students who do not identify as Latina/o, however, noted that they had not found anything to show their culture was valued via programming, clubs, sports, or activities.

Some students were involved in the leadership of clubs and organizations. Specifically, opportunities to be a part of student government leadership were noted. The student leadership programs required community service hours. Other clubs that focused on social justice, philosophy, or discussion groups that addressed contemporary issues were examples of what students opted to become involved in. These venues provided opportunities for students to engage in issues that related to their cultural identities. But students commented that through clubs and organizations they did not have many opportunities to positively impact their own communities; in these venues, students noted that they just talked and did not go beyond that. Some students did not believe that there was a place on campus where students could go to talk about race and have more complicated discussions. One student observed that there is nothing on campus that is culturally interactive. He went on to say that it was hard to tell if his culture was valued on campus

because he did not interact with students of other cultures. He said, “We do our own thing, you do your own. Just learn and do your stuff and go home.”

Students indicated that they receive a steady stream of email communication provided by SCC to inform students of activities, programs, resources, and deadlines. At SCC, students are “constantly receiving emails like to notify me of events going on.” Students remarked that to them this was evidence that SCC valued student success and specifically their success. The stream of email for some was part of being in StarFish. StarFish is an early alert program designed to connect to students regularly and send emails “to tell you that you need to pick it up, where you can get help, like tutoring centers.” However, due to the frequency that SCC send emails to students, the emails often go unread.

The data suggest that SCC implements a wide range of high impact practices, but the extent to which students of color are engaged with these practices is mixed. The effectiveness of these high impact practices is dependent on the people who enact them and their skills in establishing relationships with the students they serve. Frequently students at SCC created their own cultural networks of advice and community to support their academic navigation and goals independent from the college’s system of high impact practices. In fact, many students remarked that the library was the place where they would go to study and study in groups together. The importance of the library as a key campus space cannot be ignored. Student comments about the library included:

I just love the library because you go there and get to talk to the librarians...I go to the library...I like it because it’s quiet and you can see the people passing by...For me the library or a place of solitude is where I go...I like to study by myself, so the

library is the best place for me after class or before class...it's not like a lot of other libraries where you're supposed to be quiet, but people still talk; it's actually quiet.

People do their work.

The engagement and participation with high impact practices by racially and ethnically diverse students at SCC was linked to their definitions of student success, goals, and community. The choices they made to engage with high impact practices were informed by their academic goals and the communities they sought to be members of; and their perceptions of the accuracy, relevance, and sense of inclusion with the staff and the centers. Their involvement with orientation was a choice imposed on them; and based on their perceptions of their orientation experiences as predominately transactional, orientation did not align with their success definitions. Conversely, the summer bridge program provided a richer experience that included transactional information, but also an opportunity to engage with academic work and peers that mirrored the reality of joining the academic community at SCC. The student success course was also a valued experience because it provided an introduction into the SCC community and available academic support resources, and a connection to a faculty member who could become a source of future support for them.

Furthermore, advising that was perceived as personal and accurate was, in fact, aligned with their student success definitions, though advising was often experienced as impersonal, inaccurate, and even hostile, therefore misaligned with their success definition. Tutoring programs were widely perceived as valuable and aligned with the students' notions of community support. Within the tutoring spaces at SCC, students of color found a community of peers, faculty, and staff who supported their academic goals. Student clubs

and co-curricular programming were resources for many of the students. These opportunities provided cultural validation for Latina/o students, and for discussions on contemporary issues that may not have been well facilitated in their classrooms. Finally, while not a high-impact practice by definition, the libraries at SCC served as a community space for students of color to meet together and to study, illustrating the importance of community in their own success definitions.

Summary of SCC. The organizational culture at SCC can be characterized as one that values student success and is welcoming. The SCC students' notion of success was grounded in accomplishing goals, as well as finishing and connecting to community, and to that end the organizational culture is supportive of student success. SCC instituted high impact practices and programs that support student success and hired student support staff to engage with the targeted student of color groups. As a result of being a Hispanic serving institution, SCC had additional resources to address racially and ethnically diverse student success and retention via high impact practices.

While SCC promotes diversity in its mission statement, in its practice it is inconsistent and engages with diversity predominately as a strategic effort rather than as a cultural value. The college strategically responded to its structural diversity through a variety of student support programs and services. The structural response to diversity was mainly through enrollment practices, outcomes metrics such as retention and graduation rates, and hiring decisions. Diversity was viewed more as a deficit to remediate via high impact practices than an asset. More specifically, SCC frames racial and ethnic diversity from a deficit lens that is highly supportive of diversity as a way to fix institutional retention and

completion outcomes, not necessarily valuing diversity as a resource and asset for the institution. Remediation is frequently addressed by the hiring of diverse tutors, success coaches, and advisors. In key learning spaces such as the classroom, diversity as a value was inconsistent; and faculty skill and comfort with facilitating diversity discussion varied. Diversity and appreciation for diversity permeates the institution, but is fostered superficially, according to the students in this study. For example, there was not a deep curricular infusion of diversity. How it was addressed depended on who the faculty member was, and what subject was being taught.

The organizational culture at SCC predominately values student success. The structures that exist are enacted to provide students with the support and knowledge deemed necessary to academically succeed. The students reported that SCC has an overarching value of being an institution that is welcoming and inclusive. Students recognized SCC's efforts to do "their best to get everybody together as one." Overall, SCC has created a culture that fosters diverse student success for some students. The HSI designation provided resources and messages to Latina/o students that they were valued and supported. The gaps and areas where SCC was superficially engaging with diversity, however, were apparent to the students in this study. The emphasis on enrollment and remediation, the lack of faculty skills to facilitate effective discussions on race and ethnicity, and the lack of opportunities to bring racial and ethnic groups together more intentionally are examples of how the espoused value of diversity did not always inform how practices were enacted at SCC. A summary of the analysis of SCC is provided in Table 10.

Table 10 Summary of SCC

Description
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hispanic serving institution - enrolls 7,000 students, > 40% students of color• 2 campuses – suburban, urban• Evidence of diversity as central organizing principle: “culture of inclusion,” “global awareness,” “diverse community”• Evidence of high impact practices: Hispanic Summer STEM bridge program, advising, career counseling, tutoring, accelerated developmental education, achievement coaches, FYE success class (not required)
Students’ Definitions of Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finishing courses and programs of study• Achieving goals• Community interconnectedness for support• How to conduct yourself and making sense by having someone on campus there to guide you.
Diversity as a Cultural Value
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structural: Structural commitment to diversity as enrollment, outcomes metrics, and hiring; not a deep cultural value.• Strategic: Strategies to address deficits via programs and services. Global Awareness requirement in the curriculum that was uneven with surface coverage.• Deficit: Deficit and surface level of engagement with diversity via focus on assistance and support.
Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A culture that is welcoming and inclusive for students where the students found people to support them as individuals and in achieving academic success.• In spite of being welcoming and supporting success for students, there were observations of White students leaving right after classes and perceived to be running away from students of color.• Diversity and appreciation for diversity permeated the institution, but was fostered superficially.• Diversity value was inconsistent and engaged with diversity predominately as a structural and strategic effort rather than as a cultural value.• Diversity was viewed more as a deficit to remediate via high impact practices and hiring diverse staff than as an asset.• More specifically SCC frames racial and ethnic diversity from a deficit lens that is highly supportive of diversity as something to focus on and fix to improve student success and institutional retention and completion outcomes, not necessarily valuing diversity as a resource and asset for the institution.

West Community College

Overview of West Community College. West Community College (WCC), a public community college located in the northeastern United States, enrolls nearly 8,000 students and more than 30% of the student body identify as historically underrepresented racial and ethnic students. There are two campuses. The suburban campus has multiple buildings, ample green space, and parking. The urban campus is embedded in a nearby mid-sized city close to the state capital and has one building with another connected building under construction. The urban campus is sited very close to the public transportation system.

WCC demonstrates evidence of an institutional commitment to diversity through its mission statement, which links diversity, caring, and inclusion together. The institutional vision statement describes the institution as a regional source of hope and opportunity. While diversity is not named as an institutional value specifically, it is linked to broad institutional values such as access and opportunity for the community and student populations. Moreover, there are references in the vision statement to respect and inclusion, global citizenship, social responsibility, and justice as values that focus on all identity groups. The President's photograph is on WCC's mission, vision, and values webpage.

There is a diversity focused webpage, separate from the institution-wide vision and mission messages. The President's photograph is not on this page. Diversity is defined very broadly and inclusively on this webpage. All protected categories are listed. Also, diversity is named as a guiding value in the practice of the institution. This webpage includes the college's Statement of Inclusion, but WCC does not have a diversity strategic plan.

The institutional strategic plan states a goal to assess and enhance college-wide diversity initiatives. This goal is linked to a state government goal to address and close achievement gaps, including those based on race and ethnicity. The strategic diversity goals are addressed through the curriculum, co-curriculum, and college governance. Diversity is embedded in the governance structure of the institution via a formal diversity council. The council has been in existence for more than 15 years. Its purpose is to develop and recommend policy, to engage with strategic planning outcomes, to be a source of diversity related programming, and to improve the culture at WCC. Membership consists of faculty, staff, and students. Their purpose is converted to actionable activities such as identifying and delivering services that meet diverse student needs, serving on hiring committees, and raising awareness, including celebrating diversity and developing connections to diverse groups within WCC.

In terms of campus programming, WCC has a more than 20-year history of offering diversity focused programs annually. Additionally, WCC participates in an internationally recognized diversity skills training program that is embedded in new hire orientations and classrooms. Several student clubs and organizations are based on languages (e.g. French and Spanish), multicultural identities, national origin, and sexual orientation. The curriculum, specifically the liberal arts general education curriculum, identifies that graduates at WCC will be able to engage culturally; and there is an intercultural competency outcome that describes individual, social, and civic responsibility within a global context. The WCC

curriculum committee requires that each syllabus contain a diversity statement regarding WCC's commitment to diversity.

WCC also implements a wide range of high impact practices. All new students are required to attend orientation, and an ESL orientation for non-native speakers of English is provided. An online orientation program for transfer students is also offered. Furthermore, there are online Accuplacer test preparation resources available for students, as well as math preparation materials available in the library. Advising resources are offered in a center that combines student support and advising services. This center contains advising, career, transfer, personal counseling, veteran's services, and new student orientation. The institution uses an academic warning system for early alerts to inform students about academic issues via email.

High impact practices also characterize many elements of the curriculum at WCC. The First Year Experience (FYE) course was redesigned as a student success course and a liberal arts elective. Developmental courses are offered as Accelerated Developmental education and include an accelerated learning program (ALP) model for English and math modules. Also included are modules on financial literacy. There are robust tutoring services for students. Research experiences for undergraduates (REU) are offered in some health programs. Service learning is supported with a Service Learning and Civic Engagement staff position and offered in nearly seventy classes. Internships are offered in business programs,

and field experiences are provided for students in early childhood education and health programs.

At WCC, diversity is broadly defined and emphasizes an inclusive and social responsibility perspective. The institution has built a diversity framework via curriculum, governance structures, student programming, and institutional planning. The following sections provide a case analysis of WCC by first examining the students' definitions of success. Next, the chapter provides an overview of the organizational culture, examining how students describe the college's values, beliefs, and assumptions. Then, the analysis focuses specifically on the extent to which students view diversity as one of the college's cultural values. Subsequently, the chapter examines how students experience the college's culture in the classroom. The next section examines the students' experiences with high impact practices at WCC. A discussion of the organizational conditions that contributed to or interfered with student success concludes the case analysis.

Students' Definitions of Success at WCC. This study is based on the assumption that in order to conduct research on factors that support or impede student success, researchers need an understanding of how students themselves define success. Three main themes of student success emerged at WCC. First, students indicated that gaining knowledge was essential. Second, study participants noted that their successes and achievements are a shared responsibility between the student and their community. Third, according to WCC

students in this study, success is the result of their own choices or actions. The following discussion will expand upon these themes.

Students at WCC equated success with being able to gain knowledge by understanding the material covered in their classes. This view of success included passing all of one's classes. The concept was broadened to include being able to transfer what was learned in one class to another class as an ingredient of success. Taken further, beyond the classroom and WCC, the ability to apply knowledge in real life was salient. One student stated, "understanding the material and using what I know in real life situations" was student success. And finally, the ability to transfer their knowledge from peer to peer or to a family member was cited as an example of student success. Moving from acquiring to applying new knowledge illuminated the second emergent theme of shared responsibility.

The second student success theme was a sense of shared responsibility for student success and achievement. This theme involved a three-way relationship between the student, the institution, and the family. The students valued the opportunity they had "being able to come to school, achieving your academic goals while being in a safe place." The idea that their success was in partnership with WCC was reinforced by their expectation that the institution has "enough support, a support system at school and at the same time being able to find a good social structure at school because success is not measured by wealth and all that, but by how much you can achieve at any given time." Examples of the support provided for their success included advising, academic help through intentional high impact practices, faculty interactions, and financial aid. One student described student success as a desire "to

show the school that they've been a lot of help. In that everyone who's helped me along the way, to prove that they haven't failed their jobs.”

In addition to their drive to prove their success to WCC, the students also appreciated their families' contributions to their success and individual achievement. The role of family emerged as one that motivated the students to succeed for a variety of reasons. For example, a first-generation college student described going to college because you “want to prove to everyone you can do it and show your family that all the hard work, (that) they came from other countries, what they put into you to go through college” was worthwhile. The students were very conscious of their responsibility to be successful in college because of the sacrifices made on their behalf by their family members. Also they embraced their individual role as a student who is acquiring new knowledge and the future opportunities they would pursue. This individual motivation, however, was also connected to the institution's responsibility to provide the structure, faculty, and staff in a safe environment for them to engage as students. The notion of shared responsibility illuminated the third theme of self-directed action or individual responsibility.

The third theme that emerged was that student success was the result of their own choices or actions. While college resources and community connections were described as important to success, students noted that they had to be personally responsible for accessing these resources and making those connections. One student described having younger sisters “and in our family nobody's gone to school, finished high school. And as for me, personally student success is something that I have to do, because of my little sisters, because if I don't go to college, if I don't go ahead, how do I tell my sisters to continue their education?” The

decision to work hard in order to pass one's classes was a choice according to the students. Within this choice, students were deliberately engaging in activities that they believed would lead to their success. For example, seeking tutoring when needed or asking a teacher for help were actions described as part of their definition of student success. Additionally, successfully balancing good grades in school and a job was described in terms of student success. Repeatedly students made reference to their active choice to work hard as a critical part of student success.

Overall at WCC, students defined success as the result of their hard work and choices made within an interconnected system of the institution and their families/communities. Their understanding of student success was wrapped up with an individual drive to demonstrate to others that they were both worthy of the time invested in them and of being an authentic role model to others. Furthermore, students saw success as dependent on the institution providing a safe environment that has sufficient structure and support services. These definitions of student success provide the context for the following section, which discusses how WCC's organizational culture fosters or impedes success.

Organizational Culture at WCC. At WCC, students described several prominent cultural values, including an emphasis on safety and security, being a welcoming institution, and a focus on the individual success of students. While the students repeatedly discussed safety and security at WCC, they also discussed the friendly and welcoming character of the institution. The students described the institution as valuing student success, including valuing when their students move on, either through degree completion or transfer. These

three concepts – safety/security, being welcoming, and individual success – encompass the overarching values, beliefs, and assumptions of WCC, as perceived by the students.

To begin, safety and security were repeatedly mentioned by the students at WCC. Students at WCC reported that they feel secure and safe there. As one student observed, “they talk about safety all the time and even in some of the classes we talk about it in case of emergency where you have to go.” The armed campus police force at WCC is highly visible to the students. One student stated, “The cops are there all the time so that you won’t be abused by another person, so I think they value that.” The decision at WCC to have an armed campus police force reflects the institution’s commitment to safety.

As this study was only able to speak to students on the urban campus, it must be noted that several students described the city in which the campus is located. The students who lived in the same city as WCC spoke positively about the city and contested negative stereotypes about high crime rates and perceptions that the city is unsafe. One student remarked, “I feel secure here. When I was going to (places) nearby, I spent time around here...and I feel pretty secure...I’ve never had any bad experiences here.” The institutional commitment to safety is visibly apparent to the students by the placement of the campus police office directly in the main entrance lobby where people enter from the parking lot and public transportation. The students reported feeling safe being on campus to do their schoolwork. However, the police area on campus is a place that the students avoid, indicating a reluctance to engage with police unless they absolutely needed to. WCC’s emphasis on safety at the urban campus signals to the entire urban campus community that they are being protected while on campus. However, the students of color did not perceive

the campus nor the city in which it is located as unsafe. The intentionality of the safety message reflects WCC's institutional fear and desire to protect the WCC community from the crime risk associated with being located in the city. The institutional fear message on the surface appears to be unbiased; however, it contradicts the students' perceptions of the city in which the campus is located.

The importance of representational (structural) diversity and safety at WCC is illuminated when discussing the campus police. The students are keenly aware of the racial and ethnic composition of the campus police force. For example, when the students see a police officer who is racially or ethnically diverse, "...it makes you feel like this is a good place to be...You are not scared to say, 'Hi, how are you doing today?' to the police officer. When you see a police officer who looks like you, you still feel like these are just people who are there to protect you. So I think that is a good thing here." The fact that WCC has hired racially and ethnically diverse officers and diverse women officers who are patrolling inside and outside is a reflection to the students that WCC values diversity and safety.

In addition to safety and security, the next theme that emerged about WCC, in particular for the urban campus, was that the institution is friendly and welcoming. Attending the urban campus was described as "feeling like part of a family." One student said, "I think that the school is welcoming because every time I have questions, they always try to help me." Students described staff and faculty whom they said were always there, willing to help students or to support students in areas where they are weak. These supportive staff and faculty were available in the advising center, TRIO programs, counseling center, tutoring center, disability services, and computer labs. The notion that

faculty and staff at WCC “push us to be better” was balanced with a welcoming and friendly approach by the faculty and staff, according to the students in this study.

At the urban campus, the representational (structural) diversity of the student body was highly visible to the students, and they noted that the institution does not make any single student identity group “feel lower” than another, which makes WCC friendly and welcoming. Students noted that they “see the diversity in students and teachers in (the urban campus).” Even though students may come from different countries around the world, when they are at WCC’s urban campus, the campus does not “make it about difference” among them. One student summarized, “...it’ll feel good to know that you have a place where people would appreciate you, where nobody would judge you because we’re all different.” Another student said, “The diversity here (urban campus) makes me feel better.” Also, the campus hallways are lined with large posters of students from a variety of backgrounds and identities, and the posters include text that briefly summarizes their journey to WCC and beyond.

However, the suburban campus, for students who had visited it, took a class there, or had friends who took classes there, was perceived in a markedly different way. As one student explained, the suburban campus “is totally different.” The suburban campus was described as looking industrialized, lacking posters and signs about student achievements such as the Dean’s list. Several students described a lack of diversity at the suburban campus, leaving them feeling isolated. One described it as, “So when I went in there, I was the only black guy in the class. It looked different, like I’m in another dimension...It’s really completely different. I never thought of going back again.” These descriptions of the

suburban campus as cold and uninviting are directly contrary to images of the urban campus as a welcoming and friendly place for students of color.

On the urban campus, the students in this study felt broadly included and could find other racially and ethnically diverse students, faculty, and staff. In addition, students noted that there was visual representation of racially and ethnically diverse students in the artwork and posters on the urban campus. Whereas at the suburban campus, the lack of representational racial and ethnic diversity and institutional symbols led students to a very different conclusion about the culture of the suburban campus, and that they would not enroll in courses there unless absolutely necessary.

Finally, students indicated that WCC communicates clearly and through its practices that they want students to succeed. Specifically, WCC values student independence as evidenced through an emphasis on moving on or graduating, transferring, or going directly to work. One student described this as, “They really want you to be independent... You have to be independent, so I mean you really have to put your effort to do your work. And they help. So they want you to be successful in whatever you are doing.” Students receive messages about moving on beginning with orientation. The messages emphasize completing education as quickly as students can. There is a clear institutional message that while at WCC, students will be supported but also expected to be independently motivated.

There is an emphasis on independence coupled with ample help from tutors, advisors, and programs such as TRIO. While WCC has established structures and high impact practices to support success, the college emphasizes moving students through an efficient pathway toward their goal and prescribing for students the most efficient pathways to attain

their academic goals. This focus on completion appears to convey a factory or assembly line orientation to education, where the value of obtaining something (education as a commodity) is assigned more importance than the value of knowledge for its own sake or fostering a joy and passion for lifelong learning (education as a social good). Such a prescriptive approach limits students' opportunities to consider multiple academic options or ways to engage as students at WCC.

Overwhelmingly the students at WCC indicated that they believe the institution values students. They observed that WCC always is looking for new ways to help the students. The students expressed appreciation for the various support systems and offices where a student will be able to walk in and feel welcomed. They noted that they see posters of diverse students at the urban campus and appreciate their messages. Conversely, they avoid the suburban campus because it lacks representational (structural) diversity and symbols that they observe at the urban campus. The broad definition of diversity by WCC, at first review, is sufficient for creating a generally friendly and welcoming institution where students feel as though they are part of a family. Further exploration about how this broad definition of diversity impacts the organizational culture and the experiences of students of color will be explored in the subsequent discussion examining diversity as a cultural value at WCC.

Diversity as a Cultural Value at WCC. Institutional data suggest that WCC seeks to move diversity from a value statement into institutional practices. WCC defined diversity broadly in institutional documents, plans, and website pages by listing categories of people including race/ethnicity, physical abilities, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age,

religion, class, educational level, and employment category. The mission statement linked diversity, caring, and inclusion, which was aligned with the vision statement that described the institution as a “source of hope and opportunity.” This broad lens through which WCC espouses a value for diversity is connected to an institutional values statement that refers to “respect and inclusion,” “global citizenship,” and “social responsibility and justice” for all identity groups. Furthermore, through organizational structures and governance committees, institutional leaders seek to foster inclusion, respect diversity, and reduce achievement gaps based on race and ethnicity. Finally, institutional websites and printed materials describe campus programming, student clubs and organizations, and intercultural competency learning outcomes as an institutional value for and emphasis on diversity.

The students who participated in this study believe that WCC values diversity because of the visible racial, ethnic, and national origin diversity of the student body present at the urban campus. The very different student bodies in the urban campus compared to the suburban campus, however, led students to describe how WCC values diversity differently based on campus location. In fact, the suburban campus was described as “not as inclusive and diverse as we are in the urban campus.” A student noted that at the suburban campus, the students simply “go to school. They do what they have to do and they leave. To me it’s almost a little dead...Urban campus is a little more lively and more inclusive and very diverse.”

The students appreciated the broad inclusive definition of diversity at WCC. One student described the institution as “I don’t think they put special attention on one culture, but at the same time, I don’t think they underestimate any culture.” The main hallway at the

urban campus is lined with “posters of people that have been here, when, what they’ve studied, and it shows by their last names, but you can see what they are,” meaning their diverse racial and ethnic identities. The large posters of WCC students represent many of the various racial and ethnic student groups attending the urban campus.

The data revealed little student awareness about multicultural clubs or celebrations of cultural diversity, though one student had seen Hispanic students having a bake sale once. Another student identified the African American history class as evidence of the institution reaching out to the African American community. Most students did not describe seeing a lot of cultures being valued on campus. Another student stated, “I’ve never heard we had a racism case...Maybe that’s one of the reasons they don’t come out and make some commitment to prevent some of that stuff from happening.” Students did not receive direct messages about preventing racism or discrimination at WCC.

The structural diversity of the faculty and staff at WCC’s urban campus was noticed and appreciated by the students of color. For example, one student stated, “My advisor happens to be African American too, which is a real plus. It just happened to work out that way. So when I say stuff, she gets it.” Also, this is the case with the diverse student body. “So we are pretty much mixed here and very diverse,” observed one student, “And I feel like among the students ourselves, we appreciate that...we get to share with each other a lot, so I feel like the college does have influence in that, because if it’s so picky on who to

choose...you wouldn't have that." This aligns with the institutional value of being an inclusive, caring, and accessible college.

Overall, WCC demonstrates diversity as a cultural value by using a broad and inclusive definition in a range of institutional documents and statements. Furthermore, students see diversity as a cultural value through the representation of racial and ethnic diversity among students, faculty, and staff. Employees from diverse racial and ethnic groups, as well as their roles and presence on campus, were important symbols of diversity to the students in this study.

It appears that diversity is valued strategically at WCC through a generic definition of diversity that focuses on all protected categories, while at the same time the institution has external pressure to reduce achievement gaps that are linked to race and ethnicity. The dilution of the diversity at WCC results in the institution paying less attention to issues that are linked to particular diverse groups within their institution and community. While WCC hosts annual large scale diversity awareness programs, these programs did not appear to reach the students of color in this study. Furthermore, the fact that diverse students experience the two WCC campuses in vastly different ways is indicative of an organizational culture that values diversity from an enrollment and retention perspective, but has yet to fully value diversity as a cultural value for the entire institution. WCC values structural diversity through an efficiency lens by implementing a highly visible campus safety program on the urban campus where more students of color attend, and messaging to students that they should pursue their educational goals in an independent and efficient manner as this will result in improved educational attainment data for WCC.

Student Experiences in the Classroom at WCC. Examining the classroom experience for racially and ethnically diverse students further reveals the institutional culture of WCC. At WCC, students view the faculty as responsible for creating the discourse within the classroom, including what they discuss, how they discuss it, and who participates in the discussion. Yet one student summed up the student experience as, “I feel like I can always be myself, but I’m never myself in classrooms or in general.” Thus, there is tension between the students’ perception of the faculty and their actual experiences inside the classroom at WCC.

The students gave the faculty accolades including that the faculty are helpful, are content experts, and are willing to stay after class to talk to students, to help them in areas where they are having difficulty, and to answer their questions. The willingness of the faculty to reach out to students by email and to be available for office hours are key practices that the students appreciate. These observations align with students describing the faculty as, “they push us to be better” and “they want you to be successful.” Overwhelmingly, the students believe that the faculty truly care about them and their success.

However, in class, students described not feeling like themselves. Students repeatedly expressed a cautious approach to speaking in class or engaging with other students and faculty. One student indicated that it was not until the last two weeks of the course before a sense of comfort emerged for talking in class. Several students described how the other students in class made them feel. When students in class talked and shared with one another, students felt more comfortable in class. Furthermore, when students were able to present in class about their cultures and to hear about other students’ cultures, the result was

perceived as positive and inclusive. However, one student described, that there are “a lot of new people every time in class, so you’re just not sure if you should really show how you are...so you just blend in to seem neutral, so you can get along with everyone.” Another student described the challenge of being an immigrant and reconciling differences between what is valued in their home country and the countries that their fellow students are from; leaving one to describe that, “So sometimes you have to forget yourself a little bit” in order to be accepted by peers.

According to students in this study, their classroom experiences were shaped in large part by how faculty engaged with the racially and ethnically diverse students in the class. Students identified several dynamics about their in-class experiences at WCC, in particular when talking about diversity or being a student of color in a predominately White class. The classroom environment was positively impacted when faculty intentionally addressed the fact that biases can inform opinions and then, as one student noted, “...let everyone know everyone has their own opinion about things, and this is a place where you can share it, but you have to respect other people’s opinion.” The students observed that when faculty intentionally address the presence of bias, these actions help students of color feel less isolated. Students observed, however, that some faculty “...are really not doing well when it comes to students sharing their opinions...Some of them (faculty) really don’t say anything sometimes. I don’t know if they’re scared of students...” Overwhelmingly, when faculty “just say nothing and ignore the fact” that a biased comment was made or a majority White student dominated the discussion, there is a direct message to the students that the faculty do

not care. Interestingly, one student remarked, “I like online classes because I find myself really talking about my opinion, writing what I think and how I feel about certain things.”

Furthermore, when the students in this study were the only person of color in a class or program, they did not feel comfortable in that setting. One student explained that this led to times when “I felt like I want to leave. But at the end of the day, when you leave, you won’t do well in that class. It’s always the professor. If the professor can control the class, that’s something that I think is very important that will change a lot.” One student of color observed that they do not feel that faculty have:

tried enough...I feel like they (White students) get more...it’s just like every time I’m in the classroom, it’s always the Whites, like they don’t get more help...but they just have more of a say than everyone else. So because of that, they learn more...There was this one guy and he was just talking the entire time...She (teacher) tried but I don’t know. She didn’t try enough. So because of that, I would just go in class and do my work and leave. That is the one class that I didn’t try to talk in class. I did a presentation, but I mean, I passed the class.

As a result, the students described sometimes feeling less valued in class and more likely to drop the class despite faculty providing opportunities for students to work in groups, to share their cultures with one another, and to learn different perspectives about topics.

Repeatedly students commented that the faculty could do more to engage with racial and ethnic diversity in the curriculum and within their classrooms. In class, students described talking about diversity and learning about different cultures in humanities classes such as photography, speech, literature, or Spanish language. Also, social science classes

such as criminal justice, sociology, and psychology included discussions of diversity. The science, technology, engineering, and math classes, however, were not subjects where diversity was talked about, according to the students. When diversity topics were directly addressed or came up through contemporary issues discussions, in those cases faculty responses and facilitation skills varied. One student observed:

We just speak about diversity...I'd say I've had a good experience...(in) some classes they don't speak as much or they speak...stereotypical of what is known...not deep into what it really is, but what it's like...but there are still things when I feel like—times when I feel like it could be just more than that.

Diversity in the curriculum was frequently described by the students as lacking depth. While faculty were described as using small group work, in class discussion, debates, and speeches, students found that many faculty were unwilling to spend too much time on diversity related topics. Or some faculty were unwilling to discuss racial issues in class, leaving related topics not discussed at all. One student observed, “It really makes me sad. Who is it they're afraid of? I mean, are they afraid of me or am I afraid of them? So it makes us not really feel comfortable about ourselves.” Students observed faculty avoiding topics because “they don't like to spend too much time discussing one thing...But I feel it's mostly, you know, not to offend anyone, too.”

In the classroom, diversity topics are sometimes only touched upon. As one student noted, “it does come up in a sentence or so in class.” One student stated, “I don't know why people are scared of talking race. Most of the time, you find professors and the students,

they'll just kind of – they really don't want to go inside...So race issues in class, usually are not discussed.” The students observed that when faculty and students are unwilling to share their opinions about diversity and “they don't really go in deep when it comes to discussion,” the result is that students perceive the faculty do not want to engage with diversity. One student observed, “If they don't touch it, you will go without that knowledge. You won't have that knowledge if it's not talked about in class because where else are you supposed to learn it?” The inclusion of diversity in the curriculum and in the classroom was described by another student as essential because “we need to have a worldview because personal views bring assumptions, and assumptions can be dangerous.” Within the classroom, the faculty role carries the responsibility to raise the questions that the students may not have considered. One student observed, “I only know as much as I know. If someone does not bring it up or I cannot research into it, I'll never know. And some things you can only research a question that has been raised to you. If that question has never come to your mind, brought to your mind, you'll never know.”

In addition to classroom interactions, faculty provide critical advising for the students with whom they connect in their classes. The students who found a way to connect with a faculty member described benefits such as receiving help with applying for a job, or with academic advising even when the faculty member was not their advisor. One student described a faculty member in the following way: “She's always been there...The conversation keeps going on and I'm always asking questions in that class...it's like a mentor relationship.” Another student described taking two classes with the same faculty member and “anytime I see him in the hallway, he always asks me, ‘When are you going to finish

your classes? When are you transferring? When are you graduating? What are you doing?’”

This student no longer takes classes with this faculty member (who is a faculty member of color), “But every time I see him, he greets me and says, ‘If you need anything, you know where my office is.’” Overall the faculty play an important role as representatives of the institutional culture at WCC.

In summary, at WCC, the classroom experience for racially and ethnically diverse students is complicated. The students hold the faculty in high esteem and appreciate the personal connections they have established with some. In the classroom, students of color experience an uncomfortable dynamic that is the result of an absence of diversity in the curriculum or superficial coverage of race and ethnicity that inadvertently fosters negative stereotypes. Repeatedly students of color wondered if their fellow majority White students or faculty were afraid to engage with them. This rendered the classroom experience to be challenging for the students of color to navigate. However, when a faculty member was able to establish open dialogue with clearly articulated expectations around respectful discourse, then students of color indicated that they felt welcomed and were able to engage in the discussion.

High Impact Practices at WCC. WCC offers a variety of high impact practices including orientations, online Accuplacer test preparation, advising centers that include career and transfer counseling, student success courses, accelerated developmental education classes, a limited selection of research experiences for undergraduates (REUs), and internships and practicums in programs such as Business, Health, and Early Childhood Education. Students at WCC engage with the high impact practices of which they are aware

or to which they are assigned. This section will explore how the high impact practices at WCC are enacted, and then assess the extent to which these practices engage students of color.

Students at WCC displayed extensive knowledge about where they can receive advising information. As a result, the students move about the campus and seek answers and support in several key places. Faculty with whom they have made connections are frequent sources of information. A student described an instance when a faculty advisor told them, “I don’t want you to waste your money or spend your money on classes that you don’t need.” Faculty advisors were described by students as wanting to offer their help or their knowledge with students even if they are not an assigned advisee. The advising center is another resource that is easily accessed on the first floor of the urban campus building. The TRIO Center also offers multiple forms of support for eligible student participants. At WCC, advising is infused throughout the institution and faculty, staff, and administration are generally perceived as caring and helping. This is evidenced by the many places and people who students see and seek out as advisors.

Advising resources are plentiful, but students indicated that accurate advising was not always given. Students described being discouraged from pursuing a selective or competitive major, or being misadvised and then taking a class that would not transfer properly to their next school. A troubling outcome when students engage with the advising center at WCC, according to one student, was that when the student expressed an interest in one major, they reported that “[advising staff] try to tell you to take something else because they don’t see you in that field. So I’ve dealt with that once.” This occurred when the student interacted

with an advisor assigned to new, first-year students upon entering WCC. “I wanted to do nursing. He was like, ‘Why don’t you try social work?’ I’m like that’s not what I’m going for.” Furthermore, getting accurate information can be challenging for the students. For example, a student described, “When it comes to registering for classes, there’s always some classes you register for, and then when you go and meet a different person, they’re like, ‘No, you’re only supposed to take this.’ They’re dropping the other classes. So it’s sometimes so annoying. You don’t know what classes you’re supposed to take.”

Students are assigned an advisor in the advising center, but depending on how they perceive their experience with that advisor (e.g. accurate and/or supportive), students determine whether or not they will continue to work with that advisor. Students do have a degree of confidence that if they have a question about WCC and classes, they can get that answered by the staff in the advising center or by their faculty advisor. The academic administration and the faculty chairs were noted as being responsive to student questions such as finding another class when their class was cancelled. These individuals would call and email students to ensure that they were settled in their classes and things were going well.

The students were aware that WCC wants to ensure that students who are trying to transfer are able to successfully reach that goal within a certain period of time. Specifically, there is a pathway program that provides an assigned advisor to make sure that students are only taking the classes needed so that “you’re here for the least amount of time possible...They want you to do it quickly.” WCC, therefore, is intentionally messaging to students that they can earn an associate degree in two years so “that way you’re not here for

four, five years doing a two-year program...That way you're not spending a lot of time and your road to your career is as soon as possible.”

The advising center and its staff are clearly conveying messages to students regarding ways to efficiently move through their course pathways as seamlessly as possible to graduate or transfer in a timely manner. Students in this study viewed advising as essential to their success. One student said, “There’s no way you can pass your classes without a student advisor.” This reflects WCC’s messaging about staying on track to complete.

Advising resources were also available in the TRIO program, which has its own advisors and tutors to work with eligible students. TRIO was lauded by the students in this study as a place with responsive and caring advisors who are racially and ethnically diverse. The TRIO advisors actively arrange tutoring for students, select classes, assist with the financial aid process, and check in with students by email at least once a day. Also, the TRIO program takes students on field trips, organizes cultural celebrations, and provides opportunities to socialize. The students noted that their relationship with their TRIO advisor is an important factor in their success.

Regarding another high impact practice, two types of orientation programs were described by the students. First, a half day orientation program was offered at WCC, but students had little to say about it other than they participated or that it was “a waste of time.” Second, the TRIO program sponsored a week long orientation that appeared to provide information that students valued such as how to use the online learning system, a campus tour, tutoring resources, and explanations regarding why it is important to use tutoring resources for all classes. The week long TRIO orientation was described by a student as:

We got to learn different things like how to use Blackboard for school, how to use the online sites, and where to go. They actually gave us a tour, another tour around the school so we could be more familiarized with stuff. They gave us advice that makes sure you always get help with tutors with all the classes that you have, because you don't want to get far behind to the point where you can't catch up. That's what I've taken serious. It was like billed 9:00 to 12:00, so right there in the middle of the day, but they fed us and stuff like that, and it went by really fast.

These two orientation models were offered at WCC and yielded very different descriptions from the students. A student who participated in both orientations offered at WCC described the half day orientation as:

It was just long. And all you really do is review your schedule...they could have emailed it so we could have done it at home... It's a waste of a day off... they gave a little introduction about the school and how it was founded. That's about it.

The more in depth, week long TRIO orientation provided information that the students valued and was aligned with the institutional messaging of student success.

Tutoring and computer lab resources were accessed in many ways by the students. For some, the tutoring centers and computer labs were a critical resource though often described as too busy. One student had worked as a tutor and said, "You get to meet new people, kids coming in to school and stuff like that. It's pretty good." Some students go to the tutoring center even if they do not need help; they go just in case they do. Other students avoid the tutoring center or computer labs, describing the tutoring center as "not really relaxing." Instead, this student described seeking alternative places to study such as the

library or the top floor of the building where it is quiet and there are empty classrooms. Generally students gravitated away from spaces that were noisy or busy when they wanted to focus on their studies. They also chose places they perceived supported their educational goals. Tutoring availability was also problematic for some students as the type of tutoring needed was not always available when the student was. Several students stated that they do not use the tutoring resources at WCC. Others go to the professor for help, and this is reflective of the overall willingness of the WCC faculty to help students.

Students participated in interest-oriented clubs such as the STEM club, the Multicultural Club, Art Club, Film Club, and Phi Theta Kappa (honor society) to learn career information or to socialize. For example, the STEM club was a place where one student found social support along with professional support. The student stated, “Instead of me going out and drinking to clubs and stuff, I could go to that (STEM) club and socialize with them, while also speaking about content that will help me succeed in my program.” The Phi Theta Kappa honor society as well as other student award ceremonies were identified as valuable by the students, and they appreciated WCC acknowledging their academic success. College transfer fairs at WCC were also identified as evidence of support for the students’ desires to have accurate information about choices so they could make informed decisions about their next steps.

It is interesting to note that diversity programming was barely reported by the students, exposing a gap in awareness or communication among students of color about co-curricular opportunities. One student reported that WCC used to allow students to bring in their “ethnic foods whenever they threw parties” in TRIO or in classes, but that stopped due

to “allergy reasons or something ridiculous.” Now these events must be catered. Yet the students mentioned instances when they noticed posters and announcements on campus that address diversity and social justice issues. For example, a note placed on a bulletin board was described by a student:

There was a note that focused on African Americans. I was reading and really going through it, and then I realized that this school cares about that racial group and people with that status here. So that really made me think, they care, they know we are here. So as long as when I see certain things being done, just by seeing them that makes me feel that they know we are here, students who come from different areas. That makes me feel better.

While diversity programming did not emerge as a key HIP for students, the structural diversity and images on the urban campus representing former students of color and their success stories were valued by the students.

In summary, the data found that students of color engaged in the HIPs with which they were aware and with those where they made a personal connection with the staff or faculty from the program or service. The students found that the accuracy and quality of advising varied, thus they sought advising from individuals they perceived to be well-informed and reliable. The students connected with co-curricular programs that both related to their career/academic interests and provided a social benefit. The students gravitated away from support services that were noisy or busy, and instead went to the library or empty classrooms or common spaces. WCC emphasized supporting their students to accomplish their goals efficiently and quickly and messaged this to the students.

Summary of WCC. In this study, the students who participated in the interviews attended the urban campus, and they had limited experience at the suburban campus. This limitation is important to note. The students noted that the college appreciates everyone's culture. Overall, the institution appreciates all cultures and approaches to diversity from a global perspective. However, this approach to diversity yielded a generic interpretation, and did not deeply value the racial and ethnic identities, cultures, and histories of the students and the communities they serve. In fact, WCC presents a perception of fear of the racially and ethnically diverse urban community through its emphasis on safety.

The students at WCC were highly aware of the messages and services emphasizing timely degree completion. The institution focuses on fostering student success through an efficiency lens that promotes timely completion of academic goals by graduating and then entering the workforce or transferring. WCC messages timely completion and emphasizes that they do not want students to waste their time or money on courses that do not help them achieve their goals. While WCC has clear written statements about valuing diversity and on the urban campus large posters line the main hallway depicting students of diverse identities and backgrounds with their stories of success, diversity as a cultural value did not deeply permeate how students experienced the campus culture. The diluted, global diversity definition yielded a culture that potentially minimizes the diverse experiences and identities of students, particularly at the suburban campus. This was evidenced when students described not feeling like they can be themselves in class, and when they asked if White students and faculty fear them.

A key institutional value at WCC is campus safety. The institution has an armed campus police force and students regularly receive messages about campus safety from their faculty. Structurally, the location of the campus police office at the main entry of the institution reflects the institutional commitment to safety. The notion that the campus is safe is positively received by the students. However, the students who live in the local urban community commented that they do not find it unsafe. The students also noticed the diversity of the campus police officers' identities and appreciated the institutional effort to hire non-majority officers. By providing a safe campus and broadly defining diversity, WCC created an institutional culture that is welcoming to all students on the surface.

While WCC has clear written statements about valuing diversity, the symbolic appreciation of valuing diversity does not deeply permeate the way things are done and how students experience the culture. The students of color in this study described feeling less valued in class than their White peers, wanting to leave class when they find themselves the only student of color in a class, and encountering faculty who continue to ignore biased comments in class.

The area where WCC demonstrated valuing racial and ethnic diversity was in hiring and in structural diversity in student enrollments on the urban campus. Students noticed and appreciated the racial and ethnic diversity in the faculty and staff; they accessed these individuals as teachers and for personal, academic, and career support. Overall WCC's culture engages with diversity efficiently and structurally. The college has established student success offices and programs, emphasized diversity symbolically through posters and

statements, and made visible strides in hiring a diverse workforce. The students at WCC found the institution to be welcoming and friendly, valuing their students.

Conversely, students of color described the suburban campus as isolating due to the lack of visible racial and ethnic diversity. The students described that they often did not feel like they can be themselves in class with faculty who lacked skills in engaging with diverse content and interacting with racially and ethnically diverse students. The notion of faculty fearing racial and ethnic diversity was a question posed by the students. A summary of WCC is provided in Table 11.

Table 11 Summary of WCC

Description
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enrolls nearly 8,000 students, > 30% students of color• 2 campuses – suburban, urban• Evidence of diversity as central organizing principle: “diverse, caring, inclusive community,” “beacon of hope and opportunity for diverse student body,” “global citizenship,” closing achievement gaps, syllabus statement regarding a “commitment to diversity”• Evidence of high impact practices: placement test preparation, orientation, advising for career and transfer, student success course, tutoring, diversity and global learning objective, service learning, early alerts
Students’ Definitions of Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Passing classes• Gain knowledge• Shared responsibility• Individually self-directed to ask for help to complete in a timely manner.
Diversity as a Cultural Value
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structural: Values diversity through a structural and efficiency lens by emphasizing enrollment and outcomes metrics of retention and graduation rates. Highly visible campus safety program at the urban campus. Hiring diverse faculty and staff.• Strategic: A diluted and broad definition of diversity. Global perspective. Prescriptive approach left little room for diversity as a cultural value.• Deficit: Belief that diversity is to be feared.
Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promotes a broad definition of diversity to create a welcoming culture to all students on the surface, but a diluted interpretation of diversity minimizes diversity as a cultural value.• Culture emphasized independence and student success through an efficiency lens.• Students of color said that they felt less valued than White peers in class, wanted to leave class when they were the only student of color and/or when faculty ignore biased class comments.• Perception of fear of racially and ethnically diverse students through emphasis on safety at urban campus• WCC conveys a cultural value that being located in an urban area is dangerous for the WCC community, and therefore protection is necessary through a highly visible campus police force coupled with frequent messages about safety.• The structural diversity on the urban campus messaged that the college was welcoming and inclusive while the suburban campus lacked racial and ethnic diversity, “like I’m in another dimension...I never thought about going back again.”

East Community College

Overview of East Community College. East Community College (ECC), a public community college in the northeastern United States, has multiple campuses. The main campus is located two hours from the state capital in a rural area on several hundred acres. There are two additional satellite campuses in two mid-sized cities and a third satellite campus in the suburbs off a main highway that leads to the state capital. This is the smallest institution in the study, enrolling just over 4,700 students and 25% of the student body identify as historically underrepresented racial and ethnic students. The main campus has one main building that contains a series of interconnected wings that house the academic building, science center, fine arts center, the library, student services offices, and the cafeteria. There is also a child care center and a fitness and wellness center on campus. Satellite campus one, in a mid-sized city, is located in a few floors of an office building and provides adult basic education, English as a Second Language (ESL), and several certificate programs plus there is an enrollment and student services office. Satellite campus two located in another mid-sized city, is home to several health programs and housed in a community health center. Finally, satellite campus three is located the furthest from the main campus and closest to the state capital in several floors of an office building in an industrial park. It houses several science and technology labs and courses, adult basic education, non-credit courses, and corporate training as well as advising, placement testing, and tutoring services.

The institutional commitment to diversity at ECC is evident in the mission and values statements, though not in the vision statement. In the mission statement, diversity is

mentioned in an acknowledgement that the world is comprised of a “diverse and global society” for which ECC prepares students. The overarching themes for the institutional values are grounded in the “importance of diversity” that includes valuing and uniting the college community as members interact with one another respectfully. The values and goals mention diversity as a broad theme, but do not specify its meaning. Under the access goal, increasing diverse student and non-traditional student participation at ECC is mentioned, implying that increasing enrollments of racially and ethnically diverse students is a focus. The strategic plan is based on statewide outcomes that include broad categories such as college participation and completion, as well as closing achievement gaps. Strategic plan goals include reducing achievement gaps, as well as valuing and celebrating a diverse campus environment by hiring and training employees. There is a separate diversity and civility statement from the President of ECC on the website that includes a photograph of the President. This statement emphasizes an anti-discrimination perspective coupled with a commitment to the value of diversity as an enriching element of the institution. Diversity is represented in the organizational structure via a Diversity Committee whose purpose is to foster an environment where diversity is valued. Overall, ECC espouses a value for diversity by emphasizing the need for an environment that is free of discrimination and that is inclusive and supportive for the success for all.

Diversity in the curriculum is included through a global perspective in the institutional student learning outcome “engage with local, national and global communities.” Also diversity is mentioned under a second learning outcome, “original work that demonstrates knowledge of their field” where students “analyze creative works from a

variety of cultures and perspectives.” These learning outcomes are listed on the ECC website as part of their outcomes assessment information. Furthermore, the President sponsors an academic diversity competition where students submit material they created around the value of diversity. There is a monthly speaker series devoted to diversity topics. These activities align with ECC’s goals and structures to place a value on diversity.

ECC joined a regional higher education collaborative that seeks to promote diversity and equity with a focus on historically underserved and underrepresented groups including students of color, the LGBTQ community, and women; this regional group seeks to reduce achievement gaps through data collection and sharing best practices. Through successful grant requests, the institution received funding to racially and ethnically diversify student pipelines into health careers and to develop humanities curricula that examine themes from diverse cultural perspectives. ECC has a webpage that provides student admission information in Spanish, which many college websites do not. Furthermore, ECC is aware of and striving to increase racial and ethnic diversity in its workforce. The strategic plan indicates an established goal to “hire and recruit more minority faculty and instructional staff.”

There is evidence of high impact practices at ECC. There is a required orientation offered in person for new and transfer students, and an online orientation for veterans. The online portal provides student advising, registration, and financial aid information. Students can download a placement test preparation web app (application) to study for the placement test. Also, the online student information includes directions in Spanish about how to enroll. ECC offers online degree audit capability and workshops to set academic and career goals

designed to enhance student retention and degree completion. Via a frequently-asked-questions webpage, the questions and answers seek to define key practices and terms (i.e. what is a prerequisite?) in order to provide all students with essential knowledge needed when pursuing higher education. While ECC does not have late registration policies overall, they do restrict late registration for lab science courses. There is an early alert system and targeted programs for first generation students (TRIO) and for veterans. ECC has an on campus child care center at the main campus and a food pantry.

A required First Year Seminar is offered for students who test into developmental reading or writing. This course can be applied as a general education elective and is a student success course. The Library and Academic Support Center, a combined unit, offers in person tutoring. There are several targeted initiatives including a STEM academy that provides a summer program, scholarships, and access to undergraduate research experiences (REUs). Students have access to internships and cooperative learning experiences through courses and academic programs. Clubs and organizations focused on diverse students include the Asian, Latino(a), African American, Native American, and Bi/Multiracial (ALANA) club, the ESL club, and the Cultural Engagement and International Service club. Civic learning and community engagement programming are evident on the website, and service is noted on a student's academic transcript. An honors program is also available for qualified students.

Evidence indicates that ECC has a structural and rhetorical commitment to diversity. It has implemented programs and structures to foster racially and ethnically diverse student success. Its overarching focus is to ensure that all students are prepared to learn and work in

a diverse society. Through diversity statements, diversity goals, and a clear commitment to civic engagement and service learning, ECC has created programs and artifacts to demonstrate an institutional commitment to diversity and student success.

The following sections provide a case analysis of ECC. First, the chapter provides an examination of the students' definitions of success. Second, the discussion focuses on ECC's organizational culture, including an examination of diversity as an organizational value, the students' classroom experiences, and their experiences with high impact practices. Third, the chapter examines the organizational conditions that students said contributed to or interfered with student success.

Students' Definitions of Success at ECC. The students at ECC identified three prominent student success themes. The first theme centered on finishing and degree completion. The second theme focused on having a support system. The third theme focused on goal attainment, in particular career achievement. These three themes informed the students' definitions of success and ultimately how they engaged with the institution.

The students described "finishing" as a definite element of student success. The ability to finish a course or a degree was salient and occurs within the unique context of what each student faced in order to finish. The notion of finishing should not be devalued according to one student, who defined success as finishing whether one earned a D grade or an A. The journey of "getting through and knowing that you did it no matter what you faced

is student success.” This theme illustrates the complex and unique paths each student may travel in order to complete a course.

The second theme is about having a support system to facilitate their pursuit of higher education. An example of this was described as “if I didn't have my mom I wouldn't be able to do what I'm doing right now, because if I came here (US) alone, I would have maybe had to go to work instead of going to school. So my success is kind of like my family, the support that they give me.” Another student described their family system of motivation as, “I mean I've got to work hard because my aunt would have kicked my ass.” Therefore, student success is dependent on having a support system in place that allows and motivates students to pursue their education.

The third theme focused on achieving one's personal goals. This theme pertained to the way a student's goals are connected to their professional career goals. As a student, the academic work and time spent on campus should align with attaining a final degree that leads to a career. However, one student remarked, “I didn't have much of a great experience at ECC because they don't provide a lot of things for me, that I would use to be successful or have to be successful.” The students acknowledged that for a student to be successful, complete a degree, and achieve a particular professional career, the student needs to be involved in the school and community to take advantage of the opportunities and information that are available. While the students valued the opportunities offered at ECC, repeatedly they were unable to access them due to time conflicts, location, and the demands of personal responsibilities. For example, the distance between the satellite campuses and the main campus at ECC prevented an interested student who attended the satellite campus the farthest

from the main campus and worked part-time in the summer from attending the Summer STEM program at the main campus. Similarly, a full-time pre-nursing student who was also a parent had an interest in co-curricular programming, but did not have the extra time available to participate. Furthermore, the timing of scheduled co-curricular programs of interest was described as directly conflicting with students' course meeting times. These factors impeded students' ability to participate and thus brings into question how decisions to schedule programs are made at ECC.

Overall at ECC, the students defined student success in terms of achieving their career goals. They were very granular in their definition and view of student success as finishing a course in light of the complexity of what they are faced with in their lives. Furthermore, given this complexity, students noted that they often seek out systems of support which may be their families or engaging in opportunities within ECC that will help them learn more about the career and professional goals they are striving to achieve. This definition of student success provides the context for the following analysis of ECC's organizational culture.

Organizational Culture at ECC. Two main cultural themes emerged at ECC. The first is that ECC values the academic work of the students; and the second is that they value the students themselves. The two values were described as interconnected by one student who said, "...you are willing to work, you'll find help." One student described what ECC values as, "I think they value just the students themselves. It does tie into your work, but they have so many different ways to show students that they're there." A discussion of the connection between valuing the students and valuing their academic work follows.

The cultural theme of valuing students' academic work at ECC must be unpacked to reflect the complexity of the students' role and their identities that influence how they engage with their academic work. For example, a veteran student who balanced active service and being a student, found that by communicating their dual responsibilities and conflicts to key faculty and staff members, they were able to get what was needed to do their academic work. Sometimes they would need their work in advance of a deployment and other times they would need tutoring. The availability of key staff, faculty, and programs illustrates how ECC values the academic work of their students. Students identified veterans' services, a STEM program, ALANA and other clubs where "you can share your thoughts, you can talk about your feelings, your thoughts." According to the students in this study, faculty and staff are accessible to provide help outside of the classroom. One student described reading a message from the college president describing a long serving faculty member's commitment to students and "what he loved doing was helping students and helping them to achieve what they wanted to achieve." ECC demonstrates an overarching commitment to provide structures, services, and employees who are focused on the students' academic work. ECC demonstrates a clear commitment to helping students holistically to achieve success academically via a focused service and support framework.

The second cultural theme of valuing the students themselves is linked directly to valuing their academic work. ECC's commitment to provide a variety of means for students to connect to faculty, advisors, services, and clubs/organizations reflects the institution's belief that the institution exists to serve the students. Faculty are described as making themselves available for students. Staff are described as making sure students who are at risk

of failing get the tutoring they need to be successful. One student reported, “So if you know the professors, you know the staff, they make sure that the students are getting done with whatever they need. So I think that’s what they value the most is their students.”

The students identified key spaces they utilize when they are on the main campus which include the fitness center, the student lounge, the cafeteria, and the open space in the STEM wing of the main building. Each space provided unique experiences for the students. The fitness center was identified as a place where one working-parent student was able to carve out a little time for “relaxing” alone. The student lounge was identified as a lively “place for all the students (to) hang out.” In the lounge, there are games, TVs, and music, as well as posters notifying students of upcoming activities on campus. One student described seeing posters for events such as karaoke that contain images of diverse students not solely White students. The cafeteria also served as a place where “almost everyone in the (main) campus hangs out...especially between 12:00pm and 1:00pm.” The cafeteria booths and windows provided an appealing setting for students to eat and relax between classes, providing them space to engage with others or enjoy some solitude. Several students identified an upper floor in the STEM wing of the main building as a spot where they frequently went. The STEM wing space appealed to students because of its beautiful views out the windows, comfortable seating, and proximity to faculty, faculty mentors, or faculty advisors. One student stated, “The end of the building is gorgeous...with all my teachers being nearby, I can always come to them when I need help with anything.”

The students at ECC perceive that the institution values them and operates in support of their academic work. These values are demonstrated to the students in the ways that the

faculty and staff offer their guidance and answer their questions. The institution appears to believe that by providing support through structures and roles, they can support students in their academic work. These values align with the students' definition of success as finishing courses and degrees within a supportive environment. ECC appears to assume that by valuing students and fostering a supportive learning environment, their students will achieve their goals. The next section examines the extent to which diversity is a cultural value at ECC.

Diversity as a Cultural Value. The institutional mission and values at ECC incorporate diversity from a global perspective. Institutional documents acknowledge diversity as both an enriching element and an important factor for students to be prepared to engage and interact with. Furthermore, ECC is driven by external pressures to reduce achievement gaps and is striving to build structures and representational (structural) diversity to support racially and ethnically diverse students' success. Finally, there is an institutional commitment to promote a compliant environment that is free of discrimination and that has civil human relations.

At ECC, there is a commitment to diversity and global perspectives in the curriculum and co-curriculum. Diversity is frequently addressed in social science and humanities classes. Students described courses in criminal justice, psychology, sociology, economics, English, and ESL classes as predominantly the places where diversity was discussed. The depth and quality of the discussions were informed by the comfort level of the faculty to engage with diversity as a topic and the diversity of the students in the class.

The representational diversity of the student body and the surrounding community informed how the students interacted with one another and how ECC prepared students to engage and interact with diversity. ECC's main campus and three satellite campuses yielded different experiences for the racially and ethnically diverse students in this study. Satellite campus one has mainly racially and ethnically diverse students and several diverse staff of color. At this campus, the racially and ethnically diverse students felt at home and had ample opportunity to connect with diverse people and to share their cultures. However, the main campus was described by one student as "...at first, it might be intimidating because it's not something that maybe some of them are used to, because where we come from, we're not used to all White people. So it's kind of like it's a new system that you're learning."

Another student echoed the impact that the lack of structural diversity at the main campus has on diverse students as, "And then you have the people who have never been around Black people before either. That's also here, so it's new for them. So you don't know how to approach certain things at first, so you're both afraid to interact..." Another student observed that "the majority of people grew up around people who have different backgrounds, so no one really points out or says anything different." As a result of having class together and seeing each other frequently, ultimately the students interact and friendships may develop among students of color and White students at ECC.

External pressure by governing bodies created institutional accountability for closing achievement gaps and increasing access for underserved student groups. ECC's structural responses to support students of color are seen in two very different ways by the students themselves. First, the students observed that they did not see a clear commitment to diversity

at ECC. One student observed, “I think it’s more if you’re coming here, no matter what color you are, you’re a student and that’s what they see, they just see students.” Conversely, the students were very aware of several of the student programs in place that target particular student groups. The ESL, ALANA, TRIO, and student leadership programs were named by students as available to support racially and ethnically diverse students’ success. Another student observed seeing posters at the main campus for events that included images of students of color, not just White students. Satellite campus one, which offers the ELL program, was described as “like a second home.” Another student expressed concern about moving to the main campus and whether they would feel comfortable. However, when the student arrived at the main campus, “...once I got here, I saw everybody smiling, kind of welcoming me...yea, it’s a good place.” The students appreciated the establishment of a satellite campus focused on ESL training. They also noted the availability of programs and services at ECC focused on racial and ethnic student success.

ECC articulated a commitment to creating a learning environment that values diversity and empowers all. This message is communicated through a specific multicultural awareness and diversity website, as well as in the institutional mission and values statement, and the strategic plan. The clarity of the non-discrimination and civility message underscores ECC’s commitment to valuing diversity with an emphasis on compliance and reducing achievement gaps.

Overall ECC values diversity through its statements, programs, and practices. Diversity is included in the social sciences and humanities curriculum, as well as through an emphasis on service learning and the arts. Student support services, clubs, and organizations

are developed to help ensure that diverse students are retained and achieve their academic goals. ECC engages with diversity to promote equity and access through support strategies coupled with curricular initiatives designed to increase understanding across differences. For example, the main campus was described by one student as, “So at first it’s intimidating but afterwards it’s amazing.” ECC aspires to increase the number of diverse employees as a means to reflect the communities that they serve, to address achievement gaps, and to prepare all students to engage in a diverse world they will encounter outside of their local communities.

ECC has developed many structural mechanisms to support racially and ethnically diverse students, but the culture of the institution does not appear to be shaped around a value for diversity. Students described a lack of experience with racial and ethnic diversity by White majority students, faculty, and staff. Students of color both perceived and experienced a fear of racially and ethnically diverse students by White faculty, staff, and students at ECC. The institution engaged with diversity through a theme of support and representation, which does not lend itself easily to valuing diversity as an organizational asset or cultural value. Such a perspective lends itself to a deficit lens of diversity that results in institutional assumptions about the contributions and abilities of students of color. In fact, a fear of diversity permeates the institution for students of color that appears to be the result of a naïve appreciation for diversity.

Student Experiences in the Classroom at ECC. Students described complex experiences inside classrooms at ECC. The main campus and the three satellite campuses each serve unique student and community populations by providing tailored educational

programs. The faculty serve as key actors who create the classroom experience. The students in this study readily acknowledged that “the professors are really nice, patient, and will cheer them up.”

The first day of class is important to most students. A student described a first day in a science course where the faculty member asked everyone what they wanted to do for a career and what was their major. The faculty member leveraged this individual student information into answers to questions about what classes they should take next. From the first day of class, this faculty member was described by the student as caring about their success, and making themselves available before class and in office hours. This is what the student believed a professor should do. The student’s race or ethnicity was not a factor in how this faculty member engaged with the students in the class, according to this student.

The faculty were described as “the first ones to connect with us. They kind of see how we are doing.” In this context of student appreciation for the faculty, there was an acknowledgement that the faculty are noticing each student individually. One active military reserve student stated, “I believe 95% of the faculty here care. I’ve seen it. It’s happened to me where teachers would work with me if they know I’m going to be gone....So long as the teacher knows what’s going on, they will definitely figure out a way to work with you.” Also, the faculty refer students to resources such as leadership programs, clubs, and organizations. The faculty members’ willingness to work with students individually was apparent at ECC. Yet the students noted that the faculty members’ skills varied when they engaged across generations, life experiences, and identities.

Once inside a classroom, students noted that they are faced with faculty expectations and faculty assumptions about them which varied by faculty member. When faculty demonstrated to students that they had high expectations of them, the students generally tried to meet those expectations. For example, one English language learner student described their college-level English faculty as:

She was really amazing. She was trying to push me harder and harder. I got mad at first because I'm like, "What do you expect me to do? I'm an English learner." She said, "You're not just an English learner, you're a student. And if you want to learn, if you want to do better, you have to work harder." And every time she'd be pushing me. I remember the first thing she did to me, and I got really pissed off, is I came five minutes late to a class, and she did a quiz, two questions, and I'm like, "Can I have the questions?" She's like, "You are late." I'm like, "So I won't be able to get it?" She was like, "No." And I got mad, and I'm like, "It's just five minutes." She's like, "My class starts at 9:00, and you weren't here at 9 o'clock." And when I came in they were still writing, and I'm like, "I can still do it." And after that, she was like, "I want you to be on time in class because they speak English very well. They were born here. They were raised here. They know about English. You, you have to be on time and do your work so you can pass." And at the end of this semester, I can tell you, that's the class that helped me... because really she was helpful, but she was hard. She was really tough.

This example illustrates how one faculty member individualized their message to a student in order to help them successfully finish the class. However, this example also illustrates the

faculty member potentially raising the bar for some students for whom they believe need to work harder to achieve success based on their race and/or ethnicity. This notion was reinforced in a slightly different way by another student who described student-faculty interaction in class as, “So if you don’t care, they won’t see you, they won’t help you out.” How faculty determine if a student “cares” is a complex notion and is informed by the faculty member’s individual values and perceptions.

While the students at ECC believe that the faculty care about their success, the classroom experience was not always positive. At ECC, the main campus is predominantly White, whereas satellite campus one, where the English learners study, is predominantly students of color. The students have very different experiences depending on where they attend. One student stated that minorities receive more help on the ESL campus than the main campus. At the main campus, the students found that who was in the class with them impacted their class experience. If they were the only student of color or if the faculty lacked skills with teaching diversity related topics or engaging with students of color, the experience for the student of color was not supportive or positive.

The notion of shared responsibility for student success between the student and the faculty member highlights some challenges that racially and ethnically diverse students experienced at ECC. Even though the students of color believed that most people have grown up with people from different backgrounds and identities, “But then you have those select few who just don’t know how to be - I don’t know, respectful of someone’s culture or someone’s race.” For example:

...in class where we were talking about race issues... and the professor asked me if I ever experienced anything, and I told him my experience and what happens with my son and how he's the only Black kid in his class. And the girl behind me, she goes, "Well when I graduated high school, there were only three colored people when I graduated."

In this incident, the student described the professor immediately responding to the use of the term "colored" by asking the student of color what was the correct term to use. The student of color responded "either Black or African American" and then the professor informed the class that they would be using that term moving forward in the class. The student of color described this faculty member as "super, super cool. I love him. He's an amazing faculty member, too." This is one example of a racially and ethnically diverse student being asked to provide personal examples of discrimination in a predominantly White class, and then asked to serve as the expert and teacher in the proper use of racial terms.

ECC has few racially or ethnically diverse faculty or staff. One student described ECC's lack of faculty and staff of color as something you can feel and sense among them in their lack of experience with racial and ethnic diversity. Another student observed, "Most faculty kind of fear us because they have a really bad way of seeing Black people...scared first impressions based on appearance and skin color due to never having Black students." This sense of fearing students of color by the faculty had an impact on the student experience in the classroom. Students of color indicated that they often need to assess the level of fear in each classroom space held about people of color, and then determine how they could both allay the fear while at the same time acquire knowledge.

The students were aware that ECC has policies that prohibit discrimination. One student stated, “I know that there’s a no-discrimination policy, but I definitely feel like there are some professors who still do it, but they try not to be outwardly discriminatory with it.” For example, one student described a faculty member who “definitely had some discriminatory qualities” and the student was often the only racially and ethnically diverse person or one of the very few in many classes. Yet when two or three students raised their hand to respond to a question in class, the professor “wouldn’t readily call on me.” In another example, when a student of color was struggling to stay awake in class due to a rigorous work schedule “and if he fell asleep, she would call him out in the middle of class...but if someone else would fall asleep she wouldn’t say anything.” These student experiences illustrate the unique ways that these racially and ethnically diverse students experienced their faculty inside the classroom. Often being the only non-White student, they were very aware of the ways that majority White students receive different faculty treatment than they do.

In class, the racially and ethnically diverse students reported teaching their White peers and professors about diversity, racism, and discrimination. Multiple students described being asked to teach their classmates about diversity and race. The students described some of the faculty at ECC as “it’s like most of the professors, even though they will be helping you later on, but at first they kind of fear (you).” One student attributed the faculty fear at ECC as based on negative stereotypes “of seeing Black people.” This student described the following conversation with a faculty member:

My professor told me, "at first I was really scared" because I had really long braids and [laughter] I started doing them, and they were like my hair in the dreads, and she was like, "The first day that you walked in my class, I was like, I'm going to have a bad semester. That was my first thought." Yeah, she kind of was saying sorry for the way that she was thinking. And I like that because she came forward and kind of she was apologizing. She was like, "I thought that you'll be the trouble of the class, you'll be the one giving me trouble because I never had Black people in my class before." And the way they're showing things on TV, the way that people are talking about you and I was like, "Uh-oh, that's not going to be good." And she told me that she was surprised to see that I was the quiet one, the one who would be doing her work, asking questions for help, always smiling. And I was like, "What's going on?" "What I've heard and what I'm seeing is two different things, so I should come to you at the end of the semester." Because she came to me and she was like, "I'm sorry. That's what I was thinking and you showed me something else. That kind of made me feel that not everything that they say are exactly true about Black people and that you are the best student that I have in my class. You are respectful. You are a hard worker. You are always smiling, even though sometimes I feel like you are tired." So she came forward. I sense that in many professors already, but that will change later because they don't know what you're going to give them. They don't know if you are going to be the burden of the class, kind of making things go south, so they have kind of like a--a guard up. Yeah, they kind of at first, they'll be like, "I don't know."

Yeah, it depends a lot on the teacher. I think if a professor's never really interacted

with--A White professor's never interacted with Black people that much, that they are automatically defensive when you first come in, but the more you talk to them—The more that they see that you can show something different, they'll be really eyes on you, ready to help you, better than any other student in the class.

The preceding quote illustrates the fear and defensiveness that the faculty member felt because they had a Black/African American student in their class. The student had to work to overcome the negative stereotypes held by the faculty member as they conducted the class. While ECC communicates a commitment to non-discrimination, students described faculty who had little to no experience with racial and ethnic diversity and comported themselves in a defensive and fear-based manner in class until they gained comfort with the individual student. Conversely, the racially and ethnically diverse student must work to show the faculty that they do not reflect the negative stereotype about their group and allay the faculty members' fear of them.

Learning in an environment where some of the majority White faculty fear students of color is challenging for students of color. One student described, "You can feel it. You can sense it when you come for the first day" that the faculty and the students are used to having all White students in class. The students reported that when the faculty are "willing to learn...to see what's going on with a blended class, laughing, everybody together...It's kind of like we have to teach them but they are, most of them are, willing to know who we are and kind of understand our background." While the students reported that it was not easy to cope with such faculty fear, it is "like a process" when the faculty are willing to learn. Yet when the faculty are not willing to learn who they are, then it gets harder for the students.

When the faculty "...don't want to see, they don't understand who we are and what we are willing to do. But other than that, it's not a burden to teach them." A regular mainstay in the classroom at ECC is that students of color are regularly teaching the White faculty and students about diversity, race, and ethnicity.

Inside the classroom, institutional student learning outcomes inform the curriculum. At ECC, it is intended that students will be able to demonstrate the skills to "engage with a variety of communities locally and in the world." The students described social science and humanities as the classes where diversity was a topic that faculty engaged with. The multicultural requirement according to the students drove the inclusion of diversity in the course content. One student stated that race is an essential topic in criminal justice that cannot be avoided and was not avoided by the faculty. In psychology, sociology, economics, and English classes, diversity was a discussion topic, according to the students in this study, and the multicultural requirement may be embedded in these classes more predominantly than others.

The students identified that when the faculty appeared racially or ethnically diverse or the classes had a majority of racially or ethnically diverse students, diversity as a topic was deeply engaged. For example, in an evening English composition class at satellite campus three, the class was majority Latinas coupled with book selections that addressed diversity. The student described:

...the class was always involved with the group discussions that we had about diversity. Pretty well because it was a night class too...most of the Latina moms

were there and I was the only guy...they were pretty strong about their opinions, like diversity.

Additional examples provided were discussions on affirmative action and hiring practices in a microeconomics class and disease patterns in mental health in a psychology class. One student summarized that, "...they'll be raising questions and going on and on. But that doesn't give really big troubles because it's always handled." Handling diversity means that the faculty are confident and allow expression of opinions, and they address negative stereotypes, biases, and discrimination without sole reliance on a student of color to teach the content or address behavior. The students were seeking classroom experiences with faculty who appreciate diversity and have evidence that they have developed a body of knowledge regarding diversity that informs their teaching and subject area.

Different from faculty skill in handling diversity content and discussions in class, one student described faculty discrimination in the classroom. Another student said they reported racist behavior by a faculty member to an ECC administrator but nothing came of it. This student stated, "That was the worst class I took because the professor, they couldn't say they didn't like Black people, but it was showing...we really suffered from (the professor)." The student believed that this faculty member was of a diverse racial or ethnic identity. The professor was described as changing the assignment criteria when the students turned in their work. When the other students asked about the change, the professor yelled at the students.

They all tried their best to kind of go against and confront and make the professor see that it's not fair...but the professor didn't get it. We did talk to someone, but they

told us they were going to work on it. And the administrator even told us that it's not only us who are saying that. That's been the feeling for a long time.

This scenario illustrates a misalignment at ECC between stated values and institutional practices.

The student experience in the classroom was mixed. One student observed that they were more involved in high school and noted differences between high school teachers and college faculty. For example, the student stated, "High school teachers are always there for you...they cared more about the students than the college professors...Some of them (college professors) actually do love teaching though." This description identified the way this student perceived how many of the ECC faculty approach their role with students. In fact, this student went on to describe an ECC faculty member who "didn't let us speak" and described this faculty member's unwillingness to engage in a discussion with the students or encourage them to ask questions in math class. This type of dynamic hobbles many students from successfully engaging with the subject material. Conversely, the student also described a science teacher with whom they shared a common racial and national origin identity and the student felt connected to that professor. The student remarked that "it's odd, actually" that there are so few racially and ethnically diverse faculty:

That's pretty weird. I think they should try to get more diverse faculty members because it made me feel more comfortable talking to my science teacher. They also gave me food, which was pretty nice. I feel more connected with that teacher out of all the teachers I had.

Diversity in the classroom was a mix of faculty “handling” the topic, student opportunities to express their voice, and students coping and teaching faculty and students when needed or asked to.

More favorably, the students often identified their faculty as the person at ECC who they rely on for support and successful navigation of ECC. Several students reported that their faculty were the ones to tell them about leadership programs or the STEM program, or invited them to do community service in a neighboring city. The classroom was identified as the place where students could be themselves when it was a class in their academic major, providing alignment with their career goals. One student observed, “...it’s the science classes that make me comfortable. If I’m taking English classes, I know that I don’t speak well...but when it comes to my chemistry, biology, you won’t make me shut up.” For another student, their math class was “where I can actually feel myself.” It was a math faculty member who recommended that the students get together to form a study group. As a result, the students formed a study group and met in the library to study together. Again it was a STEM faculty member who suggested that a student participate in a STEM based community service event at an urban youth program center that one student was originally skeptical about, but described the experience as, “It was actually pretty fun, I gave them (the children) hard puzzles and they still solved it. Impressive for five-year olds...I wish I had more things like that when I was little.” The faculty member’s offer of a community service opportunity, while initially seen as not relevant to the student, resulted in a positive experience for the student to work with young racially and ethnically diverse students in a STEM based activity.

For students of color to be themselves in class was challenging in most classes at ECC. The student experience in the classroom was a mélange of faculty support, employing coping strategies to overcome negative stereotypes, and overt discrimination by some faculty and students, and adopting the role of teacher regarding racial and ethnic information for professors and students. Once students proved themselves to the faculty and overcame stereotypes the faculty had about them, then they were able to successfully finish their classes and achieve their goals.

Inside the classroom, the students generally held the faculty in high regard, but also noticed when faculty were apathetic towards teaching, and they spoke up when they perceived discrimination in the classroom. Repeatedly the students described a necessary willingness to teach their faculty and fellow students about diversity for two main reasons. First, the faculty member may directly ask them to. Second, they are compelled to help erase or minimize negative stereotypes, including fear about their racial/ethnic identity group in order to be able to gain access and support for their learning from the faculty. The class discussions about racial and ethnic diversity were “handled” by the faculty but seemed to lack depth unless the faculty member was willing to engage deeply with the topic or the students of color themselves were willing to share their voices in the discussions to expand the content.

High Impact Practices at ECC. ECC established a variety of high impact practices including structures, programs, and designated staff intended to foster student success. The students at ECC identified several high impact practices with which they were aware or engaged. Students commented on practices that were available at the main campus or at

satellite campus one where the ESL program was offered. This section will explore how high impact practices at ECC may foster or fail to impact diverse student success.

The advising center on the main campus was seen as the place where students go in person to learn what they need to do as a student. This center provides orientation, academic advising, transfer counseling, and career planning services. One student stated that advising is “the first stop for everyone.” New student orientation was described as:

They did the new student orientation and you meet with the adviser and they take you upstairs, show you how to log in to (the portal), show you how to use the computers, and they show you how to register for class. They do all of this with you.

Another student said, “I don't think it's mandatory for orientation at ECC.” A general new student orientation was not salient to the students. The advising center, however, served as one of the key places for advising information for the students. The students saw career focused programs such as the STEM program and the Nursing Program Orientation as programs designed to share admission requirements, career information, and information about opportunities within ECC that supported their career goals.

Students described multiple ways they accessed an advisor. One student remarked: I got assigned an advisor. I don't know how. She just emailed me one day, and she was, ‘I'm going to be your new advisor since you don't have one’...And so far, she's doing a pretty good job with me...and whenever I want I can email her.

Another student described two different advising experiences. First, they went to the advising center several times, “...one of the advisors helped me, told me what I should take and what I should do if I want to transfer...not (an) assigned advisor but she knew what she

was talking about.” Second, when they called advising the day before classes began, they were placed in the wrong developmental class. The advising center staff were described by one student as, “They just let us do all our stuff on our own... I will go to advising and I can ask them any questions I need about my career path.” Another student described the advising center as, “Sometimes they give you bad information. For the most part they give you really good information. They show you what you need and they take you in the right direction.”

Students who are learning English as a second language are routed to satellite campus one for ESL classes. ECC’s website provides information for prospective ESL students about the ESL courses, the admission and placement testing process, and financial aid in English and in Spanish. The website includes information on tutoring, international student visas, and transfer opportunities, as well as introduces four “popular majors” as 1) business administration, 2) computer information systems, 3) computer graphic design, and 4) education. The reason these four majors are highlighted on the ESL website is unclear as this does not occur elsewhere, or on the targeted veteran’s website.

The ESL students are assigned an Academic Counselor-ESL Advisor. This advisor was described as “...my first advisor when I was in ESL class...showed me how to use BlackBoard, the (student portal) and everything... whenever I want my schedule and the amount that I have to pay, the ESL advisor would print it out.” This ESL student indicated that when they left the ESL classes at satellite campus one and moved to the main campus, “At first I was going to the satellite campus one and asking, ‘Can you kind of print it out for me? I want to know how much money that I owe and everything’ because I didn’t know that I could ask my advisor (at the main campus).”

Differences in racial and ethnic student composition were observed by the ESL students who attended both satellite campus one and the main campus. In fact, one student observed that "...when I was in the (satellite campus one) ...there won't be any White people taking ESL classes." There was also an ESL club that met monthly:

We'll be talking about our past world, where did we come from, what did we learn, and we'll have games...at the end of the semester we'll have kind of a little party. So it's the only club that I was in that really kind of help us...not because we don't speak English well or we don't belong here or anything because sometimes we'd find White people coming in to help us out.

The dedicated ESL advisor played a key role in helping students of color who were also ESL to navigate the financial aid process and maximize each student's eligibility while at ECC. At satellite campus one, the combination of a dedicated ESL advisor and the ESL club formed the support services for ESL students. However, the transition for ESL students from satellite campus one to the main campus was abrupt. The ESL students ultimately figured out how to navigate the main campus services from individual determination, looping back to their ESL advisor at satellite campus one, and ultimately finding a person or persons with whom they could connect for accurate information and support at the main campus.

ECC requires placement testing for new students in reading, writing, and mathematics. One student stated that he was required to take the First Year Experience course based on his placement test results. According to this student:

It was an easy class. I got an A. It teaches the kids about studying, how to study, and how to prepare for college really...It was really nice. They talk to you about your career to see if you really want to go into that career.

Additionally this student was placed in a developmental level reading course, but upon completing the reading course was advised that they actually needed to take a developmental writing course instead. The student retested and progressed to college level classes. The developmental class taken was described as, "...it was teaching you to – I think it was the difference between your, you're...I don't remember much from that class because it was nothing that I needed to learn." The process of testing and advising can result in a student taking developmental courses that they did not need, according to some students in this study.

At the main campus, students accessed advising directly from the advising center, an assigned advisor, a faculty member, faculty mentors, or within specific career or identity focused programs. They indicated that they go to an individual from whom they have received accurate information and who is either their assigned advisor who may be a faculty member, or to an advisor in the advising center to meet with "someone that helps all the students." Students at ECC engage with advising as a means to get accurate information about which courses they need to take to finish their degree, to build their schedules, and to plan their transfer path to their next college or university in order to accomplish their career goals. ECC has built structures that support teaching students how to use the available advising and registration technology and at the same time provide advising staff for students to engage with as needed. What is evident at ECC is that advising experiences vary based on

the interest and identity of the student coupled with varied degrees of proficiency of the individuals providing advising information. For example, a student in the STEM program had an advisor for academic planning and an assigned STEM mentor who served as a source of information and support about the STEM discipline. For students who are active military or veterans, the veteran's resource center is a source of academic advising and support for balancing military life and academic life. Furthermore, the advising center provides both assigned and walk-in services, where the accuracy of information or the quality of the relationship with the advisor depends upon who the student interacts with.

Tutoring services are available at ECC in person and online. The in-person tutoring is available at the main campus and satellite campus one. At the main campus, the library and the academic support center are integrated into one location and unit. The proximity of tutoring and the library was described by one student as:

I took extra help in research....the front desk can help you if you have a research project, they can help you with the topic, they can help you find references...I had my first project in psychology, and they helped me a lot with that paper assignment.

While ECC has academic support embedded in the library, in the STEM program, and in the veteran's resource center, academic help also occurs outside the classroom via student study groups.

Clubs, organizations, and programs based on identity groups are established at ECC. Students learned about these opportunities on the main campus in a variety of ways including from faculty, from observation of activities on campus, and from posters and signage about groups for the LGBTQ or ALANA communities. The ALANA Club (Asian, Latino(a),

African American, Native American and Bi/Multiracial), classified as an “Interest and Social Club” by ECC, was identified by the students as providing cultural programming at the main campus. One student observed that while they did not have many opportunities to interact in meaningful ways with people from other cultural backgrounds, “I think that ALANA can help you to know people from your group, at least Latino groups.” The students indicated that they appreciate the cultural programming they see on the main campus. One student described seeing “Spanish cultural day and it’s beautiful... They’ll be dancing and showing their clothes, what they do in their country, their food, which is really, really amazing... to see other people’s culture.” The student added:

I never had the chance to do such things...one day someone asked me if I wanted to join the club since I’m Haitian. So I could kind of do a day for Haitians. I kind of refused because at that time I was a full-time student and I was working full-time...

Finding the time to participate and the actual meeting times were significant hindrances for participation in the ALANA Club. One student stated:

The ALANA, if I had more time I’d love to participate in that program. But really it’s hard sometimes, it’s the same time as my class and sometimes I need to rush for my kids, so it’s hard. But if I had more time, yeah, of course I would (participate).

Another student had heard of ALANA and was invited to go to “a big conference, that was going to be all day. I wanted to go, but couldn’t the day they were doing it.” One student stated that they were aware that the ALANA Club “wants to involve minorities in some conference...I don’t go really frequently to the meetings because of the times...I would have gone if I had the time because it’s interesting...But right now I am really focused on me and

(finishing).” Other students either had never heard of the ALANA Club or had heard of it but never went to any meetings. The ALANA Club is known to some students, but while the students appreciate it, most are unable to participate because of scheduling conflicts.

Students commented positively about the appeal of the ALANA club to them, yet also described either barriers to participation or a lack of awareness about the ALANA Club. The messaging that students received about the purpose of the ALANA Club differs from the college website description. Online, the ALANA Club’s purpose is described as a group of students “working together to foster cultural exchange between students and to raise awareness through programs and activities for the college community....support(ing) the holistic development of ALANA and Bi/Multiracial students so that as confident students of color they attain their goals for academic achievement, personal growth and cultural development.” But there was a lack of understanding by the students that the ALANA Club is designed to promote diverse student success. In fact, the ALANA Club was perceived as a club that promotes cultural awareness through celebrations predominately and through a leadership conference. Interestingly, ECC has another interest and social club, the Cultural Engagement and International Service Club, whose “mission is to foster global awareness, understanding, and appreciation through programs and civic engagement projects designed to promote international, educational, service activities as well as contribute to a culturally diverse learning environment.” However, the students did not identify this club as one with which they were familiar.

Designated space for curriculum related interests and student interests is built into ECC. Student clubs are categorized as academic (curriculum) clubs that link to academic

majors, or interest or social clubs (special interest) that link to racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, and veterans identities or social justice, hobby, or political interests. For example, there is a prominent fine and performing arts presence that is supported through a theatre, gallery space, and clubs. There is an Art Club classified as a curriculum club; and a Theatre Club and Musicians Club both classified as interest and social clubs. Several of the students commented on the arts at ECC. One student stated, “I love art. I love theatre so I always think about that and maybe someday I can sneak over...(to) audition but really don’t have time.” Another student stated, “...they have this hallway just full of art and I always walk through it because I need to head to my class. It’s just nicer to take the longer route to go through that.” The students appreciate the arts opportunities at ECC, but often do not have the time or desire while there to engage in these opportunities while focusing on their academic goals.

Programs and service opportunities that link to career interests are in place at ECC. Several students described being referred by their faculty members to the STEM program at ECC’s main campus. This program provides a faculty mentor, up to two free courses with books provided, a summer leadership academy, mandatory study hours, tutoring, a stipend, career information, and mandatory field trips for selected student participants. One participant described it as:

(the advisor) is helping me with the STEM program and everything, showing us how to do things. We have our own tutors if we want to use them and (the advisor) helped us choose our mentor. So it’s kind of like everything is linked together...but it starts with the professors definitely.

This is a comprehensive and structured program housed on the main campus that provides academic tutoring, career exploration, transfer counseling, a professional mentor, and financial support. Another student commented about the accessibility of the STEM program:

They had a STEM program, but there was no way for me to get up there....And they made it really difficult for me to attend there. And they said I have to be there every day at this certain time. I never attended it, so that's the issue. I had to drop it, and it sucks because I really wanted to know more about what they do for the summer for the STEM program. So I never got that opportunity...Most of my classes were (at the main campus), it's a long drive, because there were several teachers that actually wanted us to be more involved in STEM. My (math) teacher took us to the Boys & Girls Club to see the science fair. She taught me a lot of things. And I looked around the science fair, and I really felt more involved. And I saw all the other students and all the little boys and girls, seeing success.

The STEM program is designed to foster student success yet its design resulted in limiting participation to students who have access to transportation and who can choose to commit to the program schedule requirements.

The students described additional examples of how ECC provides access to career-related experiences and information. A criminal justice student described being selected to serve on ECC's Judicial Board with other students and faculty in response to a student conduct matter. "And being a part of that showed me what I wanted to do in my next step with my career. So that's when I was like, 'Maybe law school. Maybe politician kind of thing.' I don't know (laughter)." One student described the Nursing orientation offered

every six months that provides advising about what courses students need to take and how to transfer. Another student stated:

They send me emails about jobs, career fairs that (ECC) is providing. It happens every three weeks, I would say. Yeah, I mean I found it annoying because I can't really go to a career fair yet because I need to do the classes first...I feel like they should provide internships...pathways to internships.

Whether a structured program like the STEM program, a specific Nursing program orientation, or a single leadership opportunity to serve on a student judicial board, these opportunities fostered student engagement, as well as introduced students to career paths. However, the outreach and timing of these opportunities often did not align with the student's readiness and schedule.

Academic and student support programs are key services utilized by the students at ECC. For veteran students, there were multiple services including a veteran's resource center that has several designated staff. One student described the center director as always making sure all of the students in the center are getting what they need. The staff at the center make referrals to tutoring, personal counseling, child care, food pantry, and other veteran related services. Embedded in the center is academic advising and tutoring. Described as "all in this one little corner together," the veteran's resource center and the parent support group advisor's office make accessing these services easy for veterans who are also students and parents. There is an online virtual orientation for veterans, which provides a large amount of information about ECC's services, as well as local and state veteran's services, and makes intentional connections to ECC's available student support

services and college staff. The accessibility of staff for the veterans was described as:

If you go to him and ask him anything, he doesn't care if you knock on his door in the middle of him being on lunch. If you need help, he will help you. He doesn't care.

He's definitely an amazing dean.

Additionally there is an interest and social club for veterans.

Furthermore, the parent resource group and the onsite child care center provide key support for students at the main campus. One student described how their involvement in the parent resource group as a club officer was the most important resource for them. This student stated:

...then the parent support group was started and it was a game-changer because it's times where you're like, "Oh, crap. I don't have money for this for my child. Where am I going to get it?" And we would do sales where we would sell clothes for \$1. Nothing more than 5 bucks for an entire outfit. We would sell toys for no more than 5 bucks, and you can go in and get toys, especially during the Christmas holidays. And what we would do is we would get all these huge donations of stuff and the parent support group members would go in and be able to take the things that they need for their kids first, especially when it's one of those hard time moments. We did a costume sale for Halloween, and we were able to get free costumes for our kids, and at that moment in time, I planned on buying him a costume, but I completely forgot and it was the day before Halloween, and I was like, "Oh my goodness, there's nothing in the stores." So they were always there, and then just the members alone, we have our own Facebook page, and we talk to each other for

advice. I mean just even small things. If something gets recalled in the stores, we all let each other know... So I think the parent support group has been the most helpful, because they're the people that can understand what you're going through the most, because they know what it's like to be a full-time parent and a full-time student at the same time.

These programs and services along with the dedicated staff advisors yield direct impact on students and their ability to persist at ECC. Students believed that the staff in these programs and services understood what the students need in order to persist.

ECC's high impact practices are built into the organization and include staffing, programs, services, and policies designed to promote success for all students. There is a strong commitment to career development evidenced by the STEM program, nursing orientation sessions, and the ESL program. When the students were enrolled in developmental or ESL classes, they had ample opportunities to interact with students from diverse backgrounds. One student stated, "I guess if you're taking harder classes – I don't want to sound like that, but there's more White people than in my Reading class, there was more Black people." As the classes became more advanced, the students in class were described as predominately White. Also, the transition from the ESL program at satellite campus one to the main campus seemed to lack a clear transition process as one student described not realizing that they could get the same advising and registration services at the main campus as they had at satellite campus one.

Students were aware of several of the clubs and organizations at ECC. While ECC messages a wealth of practices that support diverse student success, the diverse students are

focused on practices that support finishing their classes and achieving their academic and career goals. With the exception of the extensive work for veterans and parents, the students at ECC found the timing of these opportunities inconvenient and therefore inaccessible.

Summary of ECC. ECC strives to foster an inclusive culture for racially and ethnically diverse students within its history of having been a predominantly White institution and region. In that context, the organizational culture was characterized by naiveté regarding diversity. Diversity was underdeveloped as a cultural value, resulting in a lack of authenticity between espoused values and actually advancing diversity as an institutional value. ECC messages that it values diversity from a generic global and cultural perspective by targeting racially and ethnically diverse students through specific high impact programs and services. There is a cafeteria-like menu of high impact practices available on four campuses. These high impact practices exist within an institution that appears to have an overt resistance to and/or fear of diversity. For students of color, this level of fear means that on the first day of every class at the beginning of the semester, they must determine the willingness and skill of their faculty to engage with people of color, and to assess the actions they may need to take to minimize the stereotypes the faculty and students may have about their racial or ethnic identities. This fear and resistance results in a lack of authenticity that the organization truly values diversity, and thus, diversity is only a surface level value.

There is evidence that the institution is struggling to evolve to become more deeply appreciative of diversity. While ECC espouses valuing diversity, it does not appear to have pervasive expertise in racial and ethnic diversity within the workforce, albeit a few staff and faculty truly foster racially and ethnically diverse student success. The institution

acknowledges a goal of diversifying its faculty and staff, yet students notice the scarcity of racially and ethnically diverse faculty and staff. Subsequently the burden of care regarding diversity falls on the students of color who are willing to help allay the fears that they observe in their predominantly White classrooms. Faculty were described as merely “handling” diversity content and discussion in class, rather than skillfully engaging with diversity related content in their disciplines. Some students of color assumed the role of teacher regarding diversity for their faculty and classmates as a means to persist and gain full access to their own education.

There was a cultural value and emphasis on finishing at ECC. While there were only four students who participated in the study from this site, their observations about the institution were fairly consistent. These observations reflected the ways in which students defined success as finishing, having a support system, and achieving career goals. The institution mirrors this notion of student success in its practices. For example, the ESL program website promotes four “popular majors” of business administration, computer information systems, education, and computer graphic design to which the institution wants to expose the ESL students. However, there were not similar messages elsewhere in the college’s website and other student groups were not directed to “popular majors.” This tactic responds to students achieving career goals, yet it may inadvertently limit the scope of possibilities for prospective ESL students. In fact, students observed that as they advanced from developmental courses with many diverse students to higher level courses, there were fewer students of color.

Focusing on finishing does not communicate student success. While on the surface, it appears the institution has operationalized a student success framework, the framework of diversity and success at ECC is one of granular steps toward degree completion, not one that authentically values diversity. The result is a lack of depth regarding racial and ethnic diversity and student success.

ECC messages valuing diversity and diverse student success. In particular, satellite campus one, which houses the ESL program, is noted for its ability to foster racially and ethnically diverse student success and for valuing diversity. However, the transition to the main campus was not smooth for many students of color. Moving to the main campus was described as intimidating at first, but once the students learned how to navigate and access services, and ideally found at least one person for support, they were able to continue on their path toward finishing.

Overall, the organizational culture is naïve regarding diversity and diverse student success. The organizational culture for diverse students is a mix of extremes. ECC appears to have adequately developed several key high impact programs and services that, if students are able to access them, can foster their success. Students at ECC who were able to engage with the high impact practices described some benefits from their participation. In this vein, the organizational culture appears to value student success. However, high impact practices were implemented in a culture that fears racial and ethnic diversity. Coupled with this are classroom environments where racially and ethnically diverse students may experience discrimination, and often shoulder the responsibility for teaching their faculty and peers about diversity, specifically race. The institution messages a superficial, compliance

approach to diversity through an emphasis on non-discrimination, affirmative action laws, and civility. The institutional message and the lived reality for diverse students do not yet align. While diversity is generically defined as important and essential in a global society, the impact of valuing diversity is underdeveloped, thus resulting in a granular or piecemeal approach to diversity at ECC. The institution struggles to develop an organizational culture where diversity is viewed as more than a necessary concept to respond to due to external pressure to reduce achievement gaps, to respond to changing student demographics, and to minimize risk associated with non-compliance that can result from discrimination. A summary of ECC is provided in Table 12.

Table 12 Summary of ECC

Description
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolls nearly 4,700 students, 25% students of color. • 4 campuses – one rural, two urban, and one suburban • Diversity as central organizing principle: “diverse and global society,” “importance of diversity,” “narrow achievement gaps,” “celebrate a diverse campus,” “global perspective,” nondiscrimination. • Evidence of high impact practices: clubs, online testing study guides, orientation, first year seminar, tutoring, STEM program, diversity and global learning, early alert, TRIO, veterans program, on-campus child care.
Students’ Definitions of Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finishing • Achieving goals • Support system • Finish a class with an A or D and being able to take advantage of HIPs.
Diversity as a Cultural Value
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural: Responding to external pressure to reduce achievement gaps. Aspires to increase the number of employees of color. • Strategic: Emphasis on a global and celebratory perspective. Messages a commitment to be free of discrimination and to foster civil human relations. Naïve appreciation of diversity as enriching and something to prepare students to engage and interact with. • Deficit: Fear of diversity permeates from lack of experience with and assumptions about racial and ethnic diversity by White faculty, staff, and students.
Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping all students to achieve at ECC was a key organizational value. • The accessibility of faculty and staff was perceived by the students as evidence that the institution in fact values the students themselves. • Culture characterized by a naiveté regarding diversity as underdeveloped; is struggling to evolve to become more deeply appreciative of diversity. • Diversity generically defined as “important and essential in a global world,” results in a piecemeal approach to diversity. • Culture is a mix of extremes that values student success via several noted HIPs (TRIO, STEM program, veteran’s center) enacted within a culture that fears racial and ethnic diversity. • An overt resistance to and/or fear of diversity • Diversity is necessary concept to respond to due to external pressure to reduce achievement gaps and to respond to changing student demographics at ECC, and minimize risk associated with discrimination complaints. • Results in a strategic response to diversity with a menu of HIPs.

CHAPTER 5

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

This cross-case analysis examined the role of organizational culture in fostering racially and ethnically diverse student success. Three community colleges were the unit of analysis and were selected on the basis of: 1) structural diversity of at least 25% racially and ethnically diverse students enrolled, 2) evidence that the institution espouses diversity as a value in institutional documents and statements, and 3) evidence that the institution implements high-impact practices offered in each of the three categories of planning for success, initiating success, and sustaining success (see Table 4). The selected campuses offered high impact practices in each of the three categories, and overall yielded between nine to 13 practices per college (from a total of 15 possible practices). By examining the organizational culture as understood by students, this study sought to understand how the organizational culture of community colleges, that have an espoused value of diversity and that have implemented high impact practices, foster diverse student success. The research question this study sought to answer is: *What role does organizational culture play in fostering success for racially and ethnically diverse community college students?*

For this study, student success was not defined as a standardized outcome measure, such as graduation or retention rates. This study instead used a student success definition

that was self-defined by the students themselves, while acknowledging that the students' experiences were informed by external and pre-college influences, as well as individual factors, including sense of belonging, academic dispositions, and academic performance (Bandura, 1997; Museus, 2014; Museus & Maramba, 2011; Museus et al., 2017). The students selected to participate in this study demonstrated academic performance by having earned at least 12 credits and no more than 45 credits, and being enrolled in at least nine credits at the time of the study.

Colleges identify and enact a host of high impact practices that are intended to increase student engagement and thereby increase student success (CCCSE, 2012; Kuh, 2008). Faculty and staff enact high-impact practices within the unique organizational culture of their institution. The beliefs, values, and norms that comprise organizational culture can empower or marginalize racially and ethnically diverse students (Ibarra, 2001). The Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) model provides a means to understand how organizational cultures may foster racially and ethnically diverse student success. The CECE model posits that when colleges create conditions that are both culturally relevant and culturally responsive, these institutions can foster racially and ethnically diverse student success. Colleges that create conditions that validate students' cultural identities and backgrounds, as well as provide curricular and co-curricular learning experiences that allow students of color to both learn about and engage with their communities and peers, establish environments for racially and ethnically diverse student success. Furthermore, the model asserts that when colleges reflect collectivist cultural orientations, this further creates conditions for racially and ethnically diverse student success. Several CECE survey items

were included in the participant selection survey, as well as in the interview guide as a means to further enhance understanding of students' experiences.

Through the identification of emergent themes across cases, the researcher sought to make sense of the organizational culture across cases and to ultimately respond to the research questions. The following sections will provide a cross-case analysis of 1) how students defined student success, 2) the extent to which the organizational cultures at these three community colleges reflected diversity as a cultural value, and 3) how students of color in this study experienced the classroom environment and high-impact practices across the three cases. Those analyses will be followed by a comprehensive organizational culture analysis.

Student Success Definitions

Three main student success themes emerged across the cases: 1) *finishing or passing*, 2) *achieving academic goals*, and 3) *community support* (see Table 13). These themes emerged when students were asked to define student success for themselves at the onset of the interview.

Table 13 Overarching Themes of Student Success Definitions

Overarching Themes	SCC Themes	WCC Themes	ECC Themes
1. Finishing/passing	Finishing	Passing classes	Finishing
2. Achieving academic goals	Achieving goals	Gain knowledge	Achieving goals
3. Community support	Community interconnectedness for support	Shared responsibility	Support system

First, the notion of *finishing or passing* emerged as a success theme for students. “Finishing is important” and “finishing what you started” are ways that students at South

Community College (SCC) described student success. A student at West Community College (WCC) stated that student success “would be to pass all my classes.” At East Community College (ECC), a student stated, “Finishing is definitely student success whether you finish with a D or you finish with an A, actually getting through and knowing that you did it no matter what you faced is student success.” The act of completing a class regardless of the grade was salient for students at ECC.

To finish a class or to finish a program served as a tangible benchmark of success for students. Students described passing a class and working hard as deliberate choices that would lead to their success. The notions of “working hard on your academics” and “working hard and finishing what you started” were descriptions of success by several students at SCC. A student at WCC stated, “...the student has to do what they have to do to be successful; study a lot, take a lot of courses, and receive help from the school such as tutoring, help with financial aid, especially that, or go ask the teacher for help...” To finish a class meant that time was managed, choices were made, tutoring was sought, academic work was submitted, knowledge was gained, and the actual grade earned was not as important as finishing the class. Finishing for students occurred within the complex and unique paths that they travel to complete a class or program. An internal drive for success was described by a student at WCC as “...just being able to do your own thing kind of, get yourself done and do it for yourself.” Finishing was associated with believing in themselves as they engaged with their academic work.

The second student success theme that emerged is *achieving academic goals*. Closely associated with finishing, achieving academic goals is a complex theme as it reflects how

students make sense of what they are doing as students. Through gaining new knowledge, the students learn “how to conduct yourself in whatever environment you’re in” according to a student at SCC. Another student at SCC made a connection between student success and achieving their dreams when they said, “Student success for me means I’m doing something or achieving something that you would always want to be getting, whether it’s a career plan, whether it’s a house, whatever dreams you have or desires, achieving those goals.” Building on the notion of passing, a WCC student described success as “I have to pass my classes and continue my education, so that tomorrow when I go visit my sisters, I’ll tell them this is the way, this is the key, there is no other way.” At ECC, one student described student success as the achievement of a professional career goal to become a nurse through achieving academic goals of being prepared to transfer to a university nursing program. Acquiring the knowledge of the academic or professional discipline they are pursuing is more than just the academic work; for the students in this study, the learning process also included the cultural norms, behaviors, values, and beliefs that the student acquires.

Important to achieving goals was an appreciation of the importance of being involved and taking advantage of the opportunities and information available to students. One student at SCC stated, “I define student success pretty much as working hard to achieve your goals, whether it be academically or being involved around campus.” Another student at SCC described “...an internal motivation to succeed and to please your own goals and needs for that self-esteem and need for achievement and to better your own life.” According to a student at WCC, “Student success...is being able to come to school, achieving your academic goals...because success is not measured by wealth and all that, but by how much

you can achieve at any given time.” Achieving academic goals is accomplished through the alignment of their goals with their academic work, time spent on campus, the ability to share their learning, and to complete their degree. While finishing and achieving goals are important components of the students’ definitions of success, they occur not only as individual concepts, but also within a community of support.

The third student success theme was infused with descriptions of human relationships and institutional relationships. At SCC, a student attributed student success to their community college and said, “You get a lot of help; they help you, the students. It’s a community.” The role of family and the role of having caring faculty and staff were key relationships that informed definitions of student success. The influence of family was described by a student at SCC as:

...depending on the way you’re raised. You can have a different mindset. You can be like ‘I’m just gonna go to college, do a two year thing and get it over with’; and that’s not what you want. Or it can be ‘Oh, I’m doing this for my family; I really want this and pull through in 2 or 4 years’.

A student at WCC stated that success meant going to college “to prove to everyone you can do it and show your family that all their hard work; that they came from other countries, what they put into you to go through college.” Another WCC student defined student success as “...something that I have to do because of my little sisters, because if I don’t go to college, if I don’t go ahead, how do I tell my sisters to continue their education?” A student at ECC offered a different perspective of family support when they said, “I mean I’ve got to work hard because my aunt would have kicked my ass” if they did not do so. Another ECC

student described student success as the environment that is in place for you to achieve. This student elaborated by stating:

For me, if I didn't have my mom, I wouldn't be able to do what I'm doing right now...if I came here alone, I would have to maybe go to work instead of going to school; so my success is kind of like my family. The support they give me, I think that's the success.

Family, whether parents, siblings, children, or extended family members were critical actors in a student's journey. The students described their success as being motivated to be a role model, to better one's life, and to acknowledge what one's family may have sacrificed for the student to attend college.

Also regarding community support, the students in this study noted that the institution provides access to a supportive environment where students strive to finish their classes and achieve their goals. "Having teachers, administrators, somebody there helping you, guiding you" is student success, according to a student at SCC. Each student brings a unique set of goals. For example, a student at ECC stated, "As I told you, I am not here for socialization, I am here to study...If you want to achieve your goal you can do it here...there are people that help..." Through a community engagement STEM activity, a student at ECC was invited to participate by a faculty member and observed that being more involved with the school and community were associated with student success.

Student success was intertwined with the institution's responsibility to provide structure, faculty, and staff in a safe environment. At WCC, student success included "being in a safe place and having enough support, a support system at school." Another student at

WCC included the idea that "...my success is really to show the school that they've been a lot of help...everyone who's helped me along the way, to prove that they haven't failed their jobs, too." At SCC, a student summarized success as "...having teachers, administrators, and somebody there helping you, guiding you to achieve...just having that support and a plan to follow." A student at ECC observed, "So if you know the professors, you know the staff, they make sure that their students are getting done with whatever they need." The interconnectedness of the student with key individuals from home and the institution was salient to how students defined student success.

While the three themes of student success emerged across sites, each site had a unique student success nuance that emerged. At SCC, there was an emphasis on learning how to conduct yourself and making sense of everything around you by having someone on campus to guide the student. At WCC, student success highlighted being individually self-directed to ask for help and to seek out the available support system such as advising and tutoring in order to complete one's goals in a timely manner. At ECC, student success emphasized being able to take advantage of opportunities such as the STEM program, veterans center, and academic support. These nuances illustrate how individual campus cultures may inform how students understand success.

Organizational Culture

Each community college in this study had a unique organizational culture that shaped student experiences. Also, each college had two to four campuses, and each of those campuses demonstrated a distinct cultural context. This study sought to analyze the

organizational culture from student perceptions of how they experienced the organizational culture at each institution. Table 14 illustrates the unique cultural themes at each case.

Table 14 Cross-Case Cultural Values

	SCC	WCC	ECC
Cultural Values	1. Student Success 2. Being welcoming	1. Safety and security 2. Being welcoming 3. Individual success of students	1. Academic work of the students 2. Value the students

While there were some similarities, such as “being welcoming” and “valuing students,” the different combinations of values reflected the unique cultures at each institution.

At SCC, two value themes emerged. The first was *student success* and the second was *being welcoming*. SCC had two campuses, a suburban campus and an urban campus.

Student services were generally offered at each campus. The cultural values were evidenced at both campuses by the students. For the students, evidence of SCC valuing *student success* was found when they witnessed a common practice of students, faculty, and staff helping one another. They also noted that “there is always someone to teach you.” The accessibility of people to help and engage with students in person and via email was emphasized. This was described by students as the ability to “just go up and talk freely” to faculty or students, as well as the accessibility of the faculty by email, even at night. Overall the students perceived SCC to have caring and responsive faculty, deans, directors, and coordinators who make themselves available to the students.

The second cultural value at SCC was *being welcoming*. This cultural value emerged from the students’ sense that when you come to SCC “there’s always like a welcome sign on, an invisible sign that you see once you step on the (urban) campus.” SCC appears to have

created a culture that is welcoming and inclusive for students. In this culture, the students found people to support them as individuals and in achieving academic success.

SCC is different from the other cases as it is a Hispanic serving institution (HSI). The students who did not identify as Hispanic, however, noticed the targeted programs and services for the Hispanic students, but also mentioned the dearth of services for other minority groups on campus.

In spite of SCC being welcoming and supporting success for students, there were observations of White students leaving right after classes, which was perceived as running away from diverse students. The students remarked that SCC could do more to connect students across groups. Furthermore, there were “hot spots” identified as places where “you feel like you’re walking into a room...that is specifically for a type of action” versus a communal space for all to use.

Next at WCC, three cultural values emerged: *safety and security*, *being welcoming*, *individual success of students*. WCC had two campuses, an urban and a suburban campus. For this study, the student interviews were only held at the urban campus as no student participants were available to meet on the suburban campus.

The first value of *safety and security* emerged from the students’ comments and observations about WCC. There is an armed campus police force at WCC that has its office located directly at the entrance to the urban campus building from the main parking lot, making it highly visible to those entering from their cars or by public transportation. A student stated that “they talk about safety all the time and even in some classes we talk about it.” The students indicated that they felt safe and secure at WCC and noted that “the cops are

there all the time.” The students felt safe being on campus and knew that the police are there if needed, but they noted that the police area is not one that they seek out. WCC conveys a cultural value that being located in an urban area is dangerous for the WCC community, and therefore protection is necessary through a highly visible campus police force coupled with frequent messages about safety.

The second cultural value at WCC was *being welcoming*. Attending the urban campus at WCC was described as “feeling like part of a family.” At the urban campus, the students noted the visible racial and ethnic diversity of the student body and remarked that they do not feel that any one student group is “lower” than the other. They noted that even though the students come from different countries when they are at WCC’s urban campus, the campus does not “make it about difference.” One student observed, “It’ll feel good to know that you have a place where people would appreciate you, where nobody would judge you because we’re all different.” The racial and ethnic diversity of the urban campus “makes me feel better,” according to a student.

While all the interviews were conducted on the urban campus at WCC, the students described the suburban campus as “totally different.” For those who had been to the suburban campus or had friends who had attended, they commented on the lack of racial and ethnic diversity, as well as the lack of posters or signs about student accomplishments. One student stated, “It looked different, like I’m in another dimension...I never thought about going back again.” The students stated that they would not enroll in courses at the suburban campus unless absolutely necessary.

The third value was the *individual success of students*. The students described how WCC conveyed a value of wanting students to be independent. This notion of independence was supported through the provision of a safe and secure campus environment where the students “put your effort to do your work” and the college will help the students to be successful. As a result, there was an emphasis on independence coupled with ample help to support them.

Finally, at ECC, two main cultural values emerged: the *academic work of the students* and *valuing the students*. ECC had four campuses, which included a main campus located in a more rural area, two satellite campuses located in different cities, and a suburban campus the furthest away from the main campus. The types of programs and services offered varied by location.

The first value, *academic work of the students*, emerged as the students spoke about ECC’s available structures such as targeted clubs and organizations for veterans, a program for STEM majors, and child care for parents. Through the provision of structures, services, and faculty and staff, the institution demonstrated commitment to student success.

The second value, *valuing the students*, emerged when students described how faculty and staff made themselves available and accessible to students. As one student described, “So if you know the professors, you know the staff, they make sure that the students are getting done with whatever they need. So I think that’s what they value the most is their students.” The accessibility of faculty and staff was perceived by the students as evidence that the institution in fact values the students themselves. ECC’s organizational culture was informed through a structural approach of providing resources such as targeted programs

along with faculty and staff as the means to support the students' academic work and success. Helping the students to achieve at ECC was a key organizational value.

At each of the three institutions, there were cultural differences depending on which campus the students considered. Whether a campus was in an urban or suburban setting provided context that informed the student experience. Campuses located in urban areas were perceived as more racially and ethnically diverse. This perception led the students on the urban campuses to perceive them as supportive and to believe that the college valued them due to their inclusion in the student body. For example at SCC, a Hispanic serving institution, students commented on the visible support for Latina/o students at the urban campus. At WCC's urban campus, the students perceived this campus as valuing racially and ethnically diverse students, including providing a safe campus for them to attend. However, WCC messaged a cultural value that being an urban, racially and ethnically diverse campus also required structures in place to ensure campus safety such as a visible campus police presence. At ECC, many students of color attended a satellite campus in an urban setting to learn English and then moved to the rural main campus to take courses in their academic major and career programs. The transition from the urban satellite campus that was perceived as highly supportive to the rural main campus was challenging for students as the transition pathway was not always apparent to them. Overall, the cultural differences among the campuses were expressed in terms of campus safety structures, curricular offerings, and perceptions of campus support for students of color.

Diversity as a Cultural Value

When diversity as a cultural value was examined across the cases, common themes emerged to further inform students' understandings of the organizational culture at their college. Each site selected for this study had diversity as a central organizing principle reflected through evidence of diversity mentioned in institutional documents such as mission and vision statements and strategic plans; embedded in the curriculum as a learning outcome or value; and reflected in campus programming and organizational structures. Four common themes of diversity emerged across the sites: 1) *global perspective*, 2) *structural diversity*, 3) *diversity in the curriculum*, and 4) *diversity as a deficit* (see Table 15).

Table 15 Themes of Diversity as a Cultural Value

Overarching Themes	SCC Themes	WCC Themes	ECC Themes
Global Perspectives	Global awareness Culture of inclusion Celebrates diversity	Inclusion, global Respect and inclusion Broadly defines diversity as all protected categories; this creates a broad and diluted definition of diversity	Global perspective Enriches and students need to prepare to engage/interact with it Offer co-curricular clubs/organizations including celebrations
Structural	Structural diversity of faculty/staff but not in leadership Minority serving institution White students perceived to run away after class	Structural diversity of student body means diversity is valued Diversity is valued from enrollment and retention perspective	Intimidating for racially and ethnically diverse students because so few racially and ethnically diverse students, faculty, and staff (on the main campus)
Curriculum	Social science classes where diversity discussions occur but often at surface level White students noticeably uncomfortable	Addressed in humanities and social science classes In class discussion handled with varying degrees of effectiveness Superficial, fear of diversity	Addressed via social sciences and humanities curriculum Fear of diversity Lack of experience with diversity Colorblind message
Deficit Lens	Engage with diversity from an assistance and support perspective White students fear students of color	External pressure to reduce achievement gap Diverse police = safety Fear of people of color	Close the achievement gap Theme of support and representation Compliance

First, diversity was understood and appreciated from a *global perspective* at all sites.

A global perspective is one that includes global awareness, respect, inclusion, and celebration

of diversity. The perspective sees diversity more as a commodity than a value. It appreciates differences among people and groups from a marketplace perspective; valuing the importance of different world views as essential to being able and ready to work in a global marketplace. A global perspective privileges the marketplace perspective and ignores issues of history, power, and privilege for some groups over others. At SCC, for example, there was a curriculum requirement of “global awareness” that reflected the global perspective of diversity. WCC also emphasized the value of “global citizenship” as an institutional value, and curriculum design was enacted with consideration of the “global context.” At ECC, diversity was incorporated across the institution in response to “our increasingly global and diverse world.” At the institutional level, diversity was broadly defined to include a global, international, and inclusion perspective that valued all protected categories of people as a means for the institution to reflect that it valued everyone. The global perspective of diversity signaled diversity as an asset that enriched the institutions and provided a means for everyone to learn how to engage in a diverse society both locally and globally.

The second theme of diversity as a cultural value was the notion of *structural diversity*. While all three sites were chosen for their structural diversity (at least 25% racially and ethnically diverse student enrollments), structural diversity itself was an important cultural signal to the students in this study. Across all three institutions, structural diversity represented who is a part of the institution as well as who is missing. Who is visible in each type of role such as students, faculty, staff, support staff, and administrators reflected what the institutions valued and how the students experienced the campuses.

In particular at SCC, as a Hispanic serving institution (HSI), the institution targeted resources and developed designated programs and services that focused on Hispanic students. The fact that at least 25% of the student body identifies as Hispanic provided a means for SCC to directly address inequitable achievement outcomes for Hispanic students. Structural diversity was generally a catalyst for funding and programming to address achievement gaps, and was not necessarily connected to valuing the educational benefits of diversity or to view diversity as a cultural value leveraged to “create liberatory classroom environments, work compassionately with students as whole human beings who can best function with an ethic of care and support, and transform underserved students into powerful learners who overcome past invalidation and oppression” (Rendón Linares & Muñoz, 2011, p. 28).

At WCC, racially and ethnically diverse employees in roles such as faculty, counselors, and campus police provided students access to people whom they perceive “get them,” as one student observed. At WCC, the racially and ethnically diverse campus police presence allayed their fears of saying hello to the officers. Access to other students of color also signaled to the students that they were valued by the institution.

At ECC, an entire satellite campus was devoted to ELL students. Institutional responses to structural diversity at ECC included providing targeted support programs and services, hiring bilingual staff, employing a diverse campus police force, offering ELL programs, and delivering a curriculum that included diversity topics.

Across the three institutions, visible structural racial and ethnic diversity at a campus provided a level of comfort for students. For example, a student at WCC appreciated that via structural diversity “...we get to share with each other a lot.” When racial and ethnic

diversity was visibly limited on campus – for example, in a classroom, among the faculty, or in the senior leadership -- some racially and ethnically diverse students reported feeling more isolated or intimidated. When a campus lacked structural racial and ethnic diversity, it was perceived as “almost dead” and students did not want to venture there unless they had to, according to a student at WCC who described the suburban campus. And at the main campus of ECC, a student observed that the lack of structural racial and ethnic diversity may make the campus appear “intimidating” to students as they may not be used to interacting with White people. Students described the White population at ECC as lacking experience with students of color, which resulted in White students and faculty fearing racially and ethnically diverse students. Structural racial and ethnic diversity thus emerged as a salient theme across cases.

The third theme of diversity as a cultural value was *diversity in the curriculum*. All the cases reflected diversity as a value in the curriculum via intentional content or as an add-on in class through current issues. However, regardless of a stated diversity-related learning outcome, the enactment of diversity in the curriculum varied. Diversity across the curriculum was not a pervasive practice; instead, diversity content in courses was located primarily in the humanities and the social science disciplines at all three colleges. For example, at SCC, a student described, “Most conversations limit how far you can go with it [diversity], especially when it comes to personal conversations that could offend someone.” Frequently discussions in class addressing diversity were described as being “handled” by the faculty at ECC to control or manage the level of engagement with the topic. Or at SCC, faculty were described as ensuring that there was no more than a “surface level” discussion

of diversity in order to minimize White students' discomfort with the discussion. Often at ECC, students of color were faced with determining whether participation in the diversity discussion was worth the risk; or would they be called upon to give their thoughts as the diversity expert? The risk could include discomfort in being singled out or fear that correcting the faculty member could result in a negative impact on their grade. At WCC, diversity in the curriculum was often about addressing commonly understood stereotypes, leaving one student to state, "there are still things when I feel like, times when I feel like it could be just more than that." Overall, the lack of diversity as an overarching theme in the curriculum runs counter to institutional values that promote diversity as valuable for the institution.

Fourth, diversity viewed through a *deficit lens* shaped the organizational culture at each of the three institutions. While diversity was purported to be a central organizing principle, appreciated through a global perspective, and visible through the structural diversity of the student body and some employee groups, diversity was still overwhelmingly engaged through a deficit lens. In fact, an overarching theme expressed by students was that diversity is feared as much as it is valued. At SCC, a student described White students leaving campus after class as if "it's like they're running away from us" and they do not observe White students staying on campus after class. At WCC, a student asked, "Are they afraid of me?" when describing the superficial level discussions of diversity in classes where the students and faculty are predominantly White. Finally at ECC, a student described a mutual fear between students of color and White students to engage with one another. Fear contradicted the notion of diversity as a cultural value and organizational asset.

Across the three institutions, diversity as a value was evident mainly from an assistance and support perspective, which does not lend itself to valuing diversity as an organizational asset. The institutions faced external pressures to reduce achievement gaps between racially and ethnically diverse students and White students, driven by performance funding pressures. This external accountability pressure drove these institutions to seek funding, develop programs, and identify diverse faculty and staff who can be placed into the existing institutional structures to increase diverse student success. Institutions intentionally developed a range of programs to support degree completion, entry into the workforce, and transfer to a bachelor's degree program in a timely manner. To that end, support and assistance were provided to promote equitable outcomes for diverse students. However, such an approach is grounded in a deficit perspective that strives to "support" students of color through strategies that maintain current structures and do not explore systems and values that may perpetuate inequities.

The notion of diversity through a deficit lens played out in the minimization of diversity in the curriculum, the fear of diversity that the students witnessed in class, and a lack of visible diversity in the administration leadership roles, as well as faculty and staff positions. Generally, the curriculum across the cases limited inclusion of diversity content, if at all, to social science and humanities classes. Compounding the lack of diversity content in the curriculum was that many faculty lacked skills in facilitating discussions on diversity content. This was perceived by the students, across cases, as a fear of diversity when the diversity content was minimized or ignored by faculty. The lack of people of color in visible leadership roles also signaled a deficit lens about racial and ethnic diversity to the students as

they valued opportunities to have relationships with faculty and staff of color. These hiring practices perpetuated the stereotype of White identities being associated with leadership.

While diversity was frequently expressed through a deficit lens, each institution had unique expressions of diversity as a cultural value. SCC had the distinction of being funded as a Hispanic serving institution. The visible structural diversity of the Hispanic students drove the cultural identity of one campus at SCC, making diversity a structural and visible value. The focus on assisting and supporting Hispanic students, however, was noticed by other racially diverse student groups who felt less connected to institutional programming and messaging. Thus, the Hispanic-serving designation did not seem to convey a sense of inclusion for all students. Here, it is appropriate to question whether this college sought Hispanic-serving status as a way to acquire funding to address achievement gaps, rather than as a way to convey an institutional value for diversity. Thus, in this college, diversity was enacted through a deficit lens instead of as an organizational asset.

WCC had two main campuses, one very diverse and the other lacked diversity. The lack of visible diversity on the suburban campus left it described as “dead,” and students of color gravitated to the more diverse urban campus. As a result, WCC appears to value diversity structurally, yielding a superficial approach.

Finally, at ECC, there are multiple campuses with varying levels of structural racial and ethnic diversity on each. The English Language Learner (ELL) program was housed on a campus located near a mid-sized city resulting in high structural diversity. The main campus, however, was in a rural area and had minimal structural diversity. This arrangement resulted in a lack of experience with diversity by students and employees at the main campus.

ECC appeared to have a naïve appreciation of diversity coupled with a fear of diversity that was informed by the students moving from the ELL program to other campuses as the region becomes more diverse, and more diverse students enroll at ECC.

When summarizing the analysis of diversity across cases, diversity as a cultural value was based on a diluted definition that framed diversity in terms of globalization (knowledge for students to function in a global world) and from a compliance perspective that included all protected categories. Due to external pressures to address achievement disparities between students of color and White students, diversity was valued from an enrollment and retention perspective, and not as an authentic cultural value for the institutions. Diversity was engaged through a theme of support and representation, which does not lend itself easily to valuing diversity as an organizational asset. Instead, diversity was something to be dealt with as a source of fear for the institutions as they struggled to critically embrace it within their established cultures. As a result, diversity was not a deep cultural value; instead, it was a structural and surface value. Moreover, diversity was appreciated in naïve ways, leaving open ways for understanding diversity both as an asset and a deficit.

Classroom Experiences

This section examines the students' experiences in the classroom. The discussion will examine emergent cross-case themes as a means to understand how the organizational cultures fostered or impeded student success in the classroom.

The classroom is a critical venue where students of color experience the organizational culture of the institution through faculty, peers, and curriculum. In Table 16

three themes and their related sub-themes regarding the classroom experiences of students of color experiences are presented. Across the three cases, student experiences can be

Table 16 Students of Color Experiences in the Classroom Themes

1. Faculty engagement with diversity in the classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content experts there to teach them • Facilitate discussions • Varied interest or knowledge about diversity
2. Student experience with diversity in the classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggle to be themselves • Impact of structural diversity • Compelled to teach about diversity
3. Fear of diversity in the classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty fear • Peer fear

organized into three main conceptual themes about their experiences and how they make meaning of the classroom experience. The themes are: 1) *faculty engagement with diversity in the classroom*; 2) *student experiences with diversity in the classroom*; and 3) *fear of diversity in the classroom*. These three themes allow exploration into how racially and ethnically diverse students experience diversity as a cultural value in the classroom, providing structure and insight into how the classroom experience may or may not foster success.

The first theme of *faculty engagement with diversity in the classroom* illuminates how across the three sites, students acknowledged the notion of faculty as content experts who are there to teach them. The faculty are the key actors in a class; and a student at SCC reported that they are the often “my favorite part” of a class. At SCC, students described faculty members as people with whom students could build a relationship, especially when the faculty either “take an interest in them” or “believe in them.” Faculty “push us to be better” and “they want you to be successful” according to students at WCC. At ECC, the faculty

were described as “the first ones to connect with us. They kind of see how we are doing.” At SCC, students described how some faculty were “interested in our culture.” At WCC, students commented that when they were allowed to present about their culture in class and to hear about other students’ cultures, they found those practices to be both positive and inclusive. However, a student at ECC observed that “...if you don’t care, they won’t see you, they won’t help you out,” illustrating how a student must work to show their faculty that they care about the class in order for faculty to help them. The students in this study were very aware that their racial and ethnic identities informed how faculty and peers, who are often White, engage with them in ways that do not always foster their success.

When further analyzing the student experience through the first theme of *faculty engagement with diversity in the classroom*, students described common experiences across the sites. At all three colleges, students described faculty who willingly and openly addressed diversity. When faculty were observed as able to establish open dialogue with clearly articulated expectations around respectful discourse, then students felt welcomed and able to fully engage in discussion. When faculty addressed biases upfront, they positively impacted diverse students by increasing their willingness to contribute to discussion. For example, a student at WCC described a faculty member who “let everyone know everyone has their own opinions about things, and this is a place where you can share it, but you have to respect other people’s opinions.” At ECC, a Criminal Justice faculty member engaged students in discussion about diversity because “the professor doesn’t care what color you are, criminal justice involves race as a topic.”

More often, however, students described faculty who were not intentionally setting up discussion parameters to ensure respectful or inclusive discussions. Instead many faculty limited discussion of diversity in class. At SCC, some faculty “didn’t allow us to go further, (they) had a limit. So we didn’t go far.” At ECC, diversity discussions were described as “just really quick...some teachers...try to avoid the discussion because people are opinionated.” When faculty “just say nothing and ignore” instances when student comments perpetuate stereotypes, students at WCC believed that the faculty do not care about them. Or when faculty were observed leveraging stereotypical observations about diversity or including diversity only through a couple of sentences in the lesson, students at WCC noted this and believed that the faculty could do more with diversity in the curriculum.

Students observed that diversity often came up in class as a comment at best, and discussions on diversity were often linked to current issues being covered in the media. Faculty at WCC, for example, were described as not going “deep when it comes to discussion,” leaving diverse students to think that the faculty do not want to engage with diversity or even lack the knowledge of how diversity informs and connects to the content they are teaching. Repeatedly students at WCC commented that the faculty could do more to engage with diversity in the curriculum and within their classrooms. These observations were echoed at the other two sites.

Interconnected with the first theme, *faculty engagement with diversity* in the classroom, is the second theme, which is the *student experience with diversity in the classroom*. The two themes are not mutually exclusive and inform one another. Three common subthemes emerged regarding the student experience with diversity in the

classroom. First, students described a struggle to be themselves in class. Second, structural diversity in the classroom (or the lack thereof) impacted their experience. Third, students were sometimes compelled to teach diversity content in class.

Students across all three sites in this study noted that the classroom is not automatically a place where students can be themselves. A tension in the classroom exists for diverse students to navigate. At SCC, students described the classroom as a place where “I cannot be myself.” One SCC student said, “...it can be a bit hard to be yourself...everyone wants to say a little bit of their own story and your story is completely different from what everyone else is saying.” At WCC, the student experience in class was described by one student as “I feel like I can always be myself but I’m never myself in classrooms or in general.” This reflected the students’ cautious approach to speaking in class or engaging with other students in class. One student at WCC explained that at the start of a class there are “a lot of new people every time in class, so you’re just not sure if you should really show how you are...so you just blend in to seem neutral, so you can get along with everyone.” At ECC, students described classroom experiences in which their “otherness” was emphasized (Harper, 2012a). A student at ECC described a classroom where “you have those select few who just don’t know how to be - I don’t know, respectful of someone’s culture or someone’s race.” Racially and ethnically diverse students were reminded of their diverse identities via comments and questions about their identities in predominantly White classrooms by White students.

Students observed that when faculty address bias in class, those efforts help to address their feelings of isolation and disconnection. When faculty were described as

“interested in our culture,” students noted that they felt comfortable in class. For immigrant students, the tendency of faculty to leverage mainly national and local contexts in examples and stories regarding race and ethnicity left immigrant and non-local students outside the discourse in class. For example, an immigrant student at SCC described how sharing personal stories in class often did not align with their lived experiences leaving them outside of the discussion. A non-native speaker of English at ECC described their college-level English faculty as pushing them harder than the students who were born in the US and already know English. This student went from feeling “really pissed off” to acknowledging “that’s the class that helped me...because she was really helpful, but she was hard. She was really tough.” The overarching observation of students of color not feeling they can be themselves was also influenced by the structural diversity and the lack of knowledge about diversity in the classroom.

Racial and ethnic structural diversity in the classroom impacted the diverse students’ experiences. When the class was comprised of mainly White students, at SCC students observed that discussions about diversity including racism were generally “controlled” by the faculty, and the White students showed by their facial expressions that they wanted to move off the topic. Also at SCC, a student described that “it’s harder when you’re in a White setting...sometimes you’re afraid you’re going to get judged...sometimes you do feel discomfort.” Conversely at SCC, when the class was majority students of color, faculty would allow discussions about diversity and racism “to go as far as we wanted because we were all diverse students.” At WCC, students noted that when the classroom was predominantly White, it was important for faculty to address the impact of bias when a

biased comment was made. Again, students indicated that those practices allowed them to feel more comfortable and engage with the class. At ECC, students observed that when the faculty member appears racially and ethnically diverse or the class had a majority of students of color in it, in these cases diversity as a topic was delved into more extensively. Furthermore, when the faculty member is racially and ethnically diverse, students at all sites noted that they felt more comfortable in class.

Across all cases, students observed White students and White faculty lacking comfort with racially and ethnically diverse students. Moreover, the students in this study noted that faculty sometimes struggled to manage the classroom equitably. At ECC, students described examples of biased behavior by faculty in class. This biased behavior emerged when there were few racially and ethnically diverse students in the class and the faculty would repeatedly call on White students with their hands raised to answer questions and not call on the student of color. Other examples included when a White faculty member would chastise a student of color for falling asleep in class and ignore a White student who did the same thing. At WCC, a student described White students getting “more of a say than everyone else” by monopolizing the class, which resulted in students of color not trying to talk in the class. At SCC, students described trying to “please the teacher,” yet found themselves in discussions that were guarded and limited by White faculty and students who lacked knowledge and comfort with diversity. Students at SCC described researching a faculty member through their social networks before they enrolled in a course with them to avoid a faculty member they perceive as not “great.” This informal student network provided

racially and ethnically diverse students a roadmap to the institution outside of the conventional resources available.

Finally, racially and ethnically diverse students in this study were often compelled to teach diversity content in class. This notion is different from classroom assignments that ask students to speak or write about their identities. When faculty engage students in pairs, in small group work, presentations, or papers that involve sharing their racial and ethnic identities, this is part of the curriculum was viewed by the students as fostering their success. Across cases, however, students indicated that they were sometimes compelled to teach about diversity in class.

Students of color in this study were compelled to teach about diversity because a faculty member asked them to, or they did so to address a stereotype or bias that emerged in class. Racially and ethnically diverse students filled in gaps to address stereotypes or lack of knowledge about diversity. At SCC, students described using in class discussion groups to “...enlighten them on how it’s done differently elsewhere and not just this way you know...” A student at WCC described how they challenged a faculty member regarding the lack of depth of a class discussion as “...if you have a student like me in class, I’ll probably challenge you” about stereotypes or unaddressed diversity issues. At WCC, a student described preferring online classes, “because I find myself really talking about my opinion, writing what I think and how I feel about certain things” in an online environment rather than in a face-to-face class environment. At ECC, a student was asked by their faculty if they had ever experienced racism. As a result of the student’s response, this prompted a White student to comment “there were only three colored people when I graduated.” The discussion grew

into the faculty member addressing the White student's use of the term "colored" by asking a student of color student about what was the proper term to use instead. In another example from ECC, a student described interacting with White faculty in particular as:

...if a (White) professor has never really interacted with Black people that much, they are automatically defensive when you first come in; but the more you talk with them, the more that they see that you can show something different...they'll be ready to help you...it's not a burden to teach them.

Students at ECC believe that most White faculty are "willing to know who we are," yet when the White faculty are not willing, then students believe that the faculty will not see who they are and what the students are capable of. Racially and ethnically diverse students were compelled to teach about diversity to address gaps in knowledge and stereotypes as well as to create conditions and relationships in the classroom that support their success.

Overall, student experiences in the classroom were shaped by the level of faculty skill in fostering an inclusive and respectful environment for all students. Students of color were faced with navigating the classroom in order to disprove stereotypes about their racial and ethnic identities while assessing how they can be themselves and still achieve success in the class. Their experiences were also shaped by structural diversity in the classroom, where low numbers of diverse students and faculty negatively impacted their ability to feel comfortable and be themselves. Furthermore, they were sometimes compelled to teach diversity content because they were asked to or they felt they needed to in order to address bias and stereotypes.

The third theme identified in relation to the classroom experience is the notion of *fear of diversity* in the classroom. The *fear of diversity* theme is connected to the other two themes of *faculty engagement with diversity* in the classroom and the *student experience with diversity* in the classroom. Repeatedly students used terms such as “fear,” “scared,” and “afraid” to describe how others reacted to them in the classroom. At each site, students described how they observed or perceived that some White members of the campus community feared diversity content or feared them because of their racial and ethnic identities.

For example, at SCC, students described that while there is structural diversity in their classes, they notice that the White students leave campus immediately after class, “it’s like they’re running away from us.” Another student at SCC observed, “...there’s a lot of White people...the thing is that most White people after class, they just leave right away...they always just go.” Coupled with the exit of White students after class is the sense that students of color are “afraid that they...say something wrong to one side...you’re afraid to start that problem.” These actions and assumptions were informed by a sense of fear of diversity at SCC.

Students repeatedly perceived a sense of fear of them or of diversity content from their faculty, generally their White faculty. Avoidance or glossing over diversity content was a frequent practice across cases, according to students in the study. When faculty lacked skill at creating inclusive classrooms where diversity content could be discussed, the students noted that they were negatively impacted as a result. At SCC, some faculty were described as limiting how far the conversation could go regarding diversity in particular when the class

was predominantly White. At WCC, when faculty were unwilling to discuss racial issues or left related topics not discussed at all, one student observed, “It really makes me sad. Who is it they’re afraid of? I mean, are they afraid of me or am I afraid of them? So it makes us not really feel comfortable about ourselves.” When diverse students at WCC observed faculty avoiding diversity content or not responding to biased statements, they wondered if the faculty are “scared of students...” Repeatedly students wondered if their fellow White students or faculty were afraid to engage with them at WCC.

The notion that some White faculty fear racially and ethnically diverse students was evidenced by several interactions reported by students at ECC. At ECC, a student observed, “Most faculty kind of fear us because they have a really bad way of seeing Black people...scared first impressions based on appearance and skin color due to never having Black students.” One White faculty member reportedly told a student they had been “really scared” of them due to the fact that their hair was in dreads, and they anticipated that the student would be a problem. These dynamics leave racially and ethnically diverse students at ECC engaging with “people who have never been around Black people before...So you don’t know how to approach certain things at first, so you’re both afraid to interact...” Taken in sum, the notion of fear of diversity was evidenced through a reluctance by some faculty to engage in diversity content in class and by biased first impressions that impacted student success.

Fear of diversity permeated the classroom across cases. Faculty avoidance of diversity content, whether due to a lack of knowledge or fear of what may occur as a result of the discussion, impacted the learning environment. When students of color observed their

fellow White students discomfort with diversity content and their faculty redirecting the discussion to avoid the discomfort, their learning environment was negatively affected. In fact, the students in this study described a fear about how to engage in the class with majority White students when diversity had been glossed over. Furthermore, when students of color witnessed White students leaving campus immediately after their classes with them, they thought that the White students may fear them or have no interest in interacting with them after class. And finally, when faculty lack experience with racially and ethnically diverse students and avoid critical diversity content, students are left to engage with faculty and peers who may hold negative stereotypes, biases, and a general lack of understanding about their racial and ethnic identity groups.

In summary, the classroom experience for racially and ethnically diverse students was complicated. Across the three sites, students indicated that they respect and appreciate their faculty, often finding them to be their favorite part of the classroom experience. Faculty were seen as content experts plus the source of key institutional and professional knowledge that students need to progress (finish or pass) and achieve their goals. The faculty were viewed as key members of the students' community of support; and so the classroom was a place where they established critical institutional relationships.

A tension, however, emerged for students of color when faculty avoided addressing biases or negative stereotypes in class. Furthermore, when faculty were seen as glossing over diversity content or avoiding diversity related content, students in this study reported feeling uncomfortable in the classroom and therefore less willing to engage in class. At times, faculty avoidance or lack of skill resulted in students being directly asked to teach diversity

content. Or a student of color may offer to teach diversity content as a means to address negative stereotypes and misinformation, and thus open the door to establish a positive relationship with the faculty member or peers.

Key High Impact Practices

This section examines the students' experiences with high impact practices. The discussion will examine emergent cross-case themes as a means to understand how the organizational cultures shaped the enactment of HIPs and how they fostered or impeded student success.

Each community college was selected for this study because the institution had evidence of high impact practices available for students. Furthermore, the participant selection survey asked students to identify the high impact practices in which they were engaged. The survey results highlighted the overall lack of participation by diverse students with high impact practices across the three cases. In this section, relevant data from the survey, along with qualitative data from interviews, provide important context for understanding levels of involvement in high impact practices. Appendix G provides the full set of frequency counts for the survey items that address high impact practices across the three institutions.

The student interview participants indicated that they participated in several common high impact practices, such as orientation, advising, faculty advising, class group discussions, academic support, and student support and engagement programs and activities. These high impact practices were designed to positively and strategically impact student success (CCCSE, 2012). The Center for Community College Student Engagement groups high

impact practices into three categories designed to progressively foster success: 1) planning for success, 2) initiating success, and 3) sustaining success. In Table 17, the six most commonly discussed high impact practices across the three cases are presented in the CCCSE three-part framework as a means to map how the institutions are attempting to foster diverse student success.

Table 17 High Impact Practices Designed for Student Engagement and Success

High Impact Practices	Planning for success	Initiating success	Sustaining success
Orientation	X		
Advising/Centers	X		
Faculty accessibility & advising		X	X
Class group discussion		X	X
Academic support		X	X
Student support & engagement programs/activities			X

Orientation programs took many forms across the three cases. Students described participating in some type of orientation upon entering their community college.

Orientations were either general and short, lasting several hours and required of all new students; or they were offered to students in programs such as TRIO, STEM, or health academic programs. Generally, students attended some type of orientation at the beginning of their entry into their community college (see Table 18).

Table 18 Student Participation in Orientation Programs

Survey item	SCC Total participants = 57	WCC Total participants = 60	ECC Total participants =41
Q3 Participated in Orientation Programs	Yes = 29 (50.8%) No = 21 (36.8%) Blank=7 (12.2%)	Yes = 35 (58.3%) No = 21 (35%) Blank =4 (6.6%)	Yes =22 (53.6%) No = 12 (29.2%) Blank =7(17 %)

More than 50% of the survey participants across institutions reported that they participated in an orientation activity at their college with the first-time freshmen orientation the most often reported orientation activity and a transfer student orientation the second. A small number of students reported participating in a students of color, leadership, Summer Bridge, TRIO, or career focused orientation.

Most racially and ethnically diverse students interviewed found participating in an orientation program somewhat useful. The students participating in half day or less programs described them as focused on campus logistics and navigating the campus in terms of buildings, rooms, and offices. A student at SCC described their orientation experience as follows: “When I went to the orientation, they showed us the new building and how nice it was and the new equipment, not really about all the advisor, financial, and all this stuff. More about the facilities.” At WCC, a student described their orientation experience as “all you really do is review your schedule...they could have emailed it, so we could have done it at home... It's a waste of a day off.” At ECC, a student described an orientation experience embedded in the advising center as, “They did the new student orientation and you meet with the adviser, and they take you upstairs, show you how to log in to (the portal), show you how to use the computers, and they show you how to register for class.” Regardless of how the new student orientation was delivered, the content was generally about how to register for a

class, use the website, and navigate the campus. In general, students found these orientation experiences to be somewhat useful, but some students described them as a waste of time.

However, when the orientation was part of a one week to two week program such as a TRIO orientation or a STEM Summer Bridge program, the students lauded these experiences. They found them valuable regardless of the required time commitments. For example, the STEM Summer Bridge program at SCC was described as “a good program to get students that are really scared on how they're going to do in college.” This program also provided a peer mentor to new students. Similarly, TRIO orientations provided both an introduction to the college and to the TRIO program services. These orientation programs generally required more of a time commitment by their participants, but students found the experiences worthwhile.

Orientation experiences aligned with the students’ notions of their own success as they provided a means for students to learn about the available community of support at their colleges. Furthermore, an orientation program signaled to the students that the colleges value students and their success. Yet when the orientations lacked opportunities for students to make meaningful connections to an available community of support and were mainly transactional, these orientation experiences were viewed negatively by the students. The orientation programs, as high impact practices, varied in design and in targeted student populations. On the surface, all of the orientation programs appeared to reflect organizational values such as student success and being welcoming. However, the prevalent short-term, transactional orientation designs were enacted in a manner that was misaligned

with the students' definitions of success, particularly the importance of finding a community of support.

Advising was offered in person at advising centers, via online systems such as DegreeWorks, via their faculty, and via student success programs such as TRIO or a veteran's resource center. Their impressions of advising overall ranged from seeing it as an essential part of college that is infused in the institution to an unreliable resource in which they lacked confidence. Advising, as a high-impact practice, is enacted within the organizational culture of an institution and conveys institutional values through advising practices and messages to students. The following analysis will explore how students of color made meaning of advising across the cases.

The study's participant selection survey asked students whether or not they participated in academic advising (see Table 19). In response to that question, at

Table 19 Student Participation in Academic Advising

Survey Item	SCC Total participants = 57	WCC Total participants = 60	ECC Total participants =41
Q10 Have you participated in academic advising?	Yes = 23 (40.3%) No = 16 (28 %) Blank = 18 (31.6%)	Yes = 25 (41.6%) No = 15 (25%) Blank =20 (33.3 %)	Yes =17 (41.4%) No = 10 (24.3%) Blank =14 (34.1%)
Three or more times	Yes and participated in advising 3 or more times = 12 (52.1%)	Yes and participated in advising 3 or more times = 18 (72%)	Yes and participated in advising 3 or more times =12 (70.5%)
Two or fewer times	Yes and participated in advising 2 or fewer times = 7 (30.4%)	Yes and participated in advising 2 or fewer times = 4 (16%)	Yes and participated in advising 2 or fewer times =4 (23.5%)

SCC, 40.3% reported ‘yes’ and 28% reported ‘no’. At WCC, students reported 41.6% ‘yes’ and 25% reported ‘no’. At ECC, students reported 41.5% ‘yes’ and 24.3% ‘no’. Among the students who participated in advising, the largest number reported engaging with advising three times or more.

Also, the survey asked the students about their participation with career counseling. The students invited to complete the participant selection survey were those who had earned between 12 and 45 credits and were currently enrolled in at least 9 credits. The students’ enrollment status may have influenced their interest in career counseling services. Typically at this point in their academic career, if they are pursuing an associate’s degree, they may not be advised to or have considered seeking career advising. The advising strategies are evolving as researchers and practitioners are considering new advising strategies and pathways to help students think about their career paths upon entry to college. Such strategies may reinforce the efficiency lens to reduce the time and cost of earning a college degree for the student and the institution. Nevertheless, few students at the three selected colleges appeared to be accessing career counseling as indicated by their reported participation (see Table 20). The survey responses for career counseling indicated at

Table 20 Student Participation in Career Counseling

Survey Item	SCC Total participants = 57	WCC Total participants = 60	ECC Total participants =41
Q10 Have you participated in career counseling?	Yes = 8 (14%) No = 5 (43.8%) Blank = 24 (42.1 %)	Yes = 10 (16.6%) No = 24 (40%) Blank=26 (43.3%)	Yes =2 (4.8%) No = 19 (46.3%) Blank=20 (48.7%)

SCC as 14% ‘yes’ and 43.8% ‘no’; at WCC as 16.6% ‘yes’ and 40% ‘no’; and at ECC as 4.8% ‘yes’ and 46.3% ‘no’. Participation with career counseling by students of color across the cases was low compared to academic advising.

The students’ understanding of advising centers was predominantly transactional where professional advisors assisted students to learn about prerequisites, academic programs, and to register for classes. Across the cases, students understood that advising was a service to assist them to make their academic and career plans, and to register for the necessary courses to complete their degree requirements or to prepare to transfer. Career exploration and transfer planning were included in their understanding of advising, though to a lesser degree.

When students described their advising centers, they commented on the ease of access to them as they were frequently in very visible locations. They also knew that if they asked a question at the advising center, they would get their questions answered. At SCC, a student noted that “you can just walk in. That’s what I do, just walk in. Whoever is there will help you.” At WCC, a student said, “They’ll help you towards your goal or where you want to be in life for your career.” At ECC, one student said that the advising center is “the first stop for everyone.”

While the advising centers were sources of academic and career information for the students, the centers are also sources of inconsistent, incorrect, and unwelcoming messages. An overarching theme that arose about the advice received in the advising centers was a lack of accuracy that caused confusion, could possibly lead them to take the wrong classes, or even discourage them from academic or career paths. For example, at SCC, a student said, “I

think when you go see the advisor, if you go today and they say to come back tomorrow, then they give you different advice. I get so confused." Similarly at WCC, a student described, "When it comes to registering for classes, there's always some classes you register for, and then when you go and meet a different person, they're like, 'No, you're only supposed to take this.' They're dropping the other classes. So it's sometimes so annoying. You don't know what classes you're supposed to take." And finally at ECC, a student said, "Sometimes they give you bad information." Also at ECC, for ELL students moving to the main campus, the shift from their more personalized ELL advisor to a general academic advisor was not always a smooth transition for them to learn how to navigate the resources at the main campus. Overall, the students sought accurate advising in the advising centers, but found that the quality of the information was inconsistent.

In combination with accessing advising centers, the students described receiving emails and early alert messages about their progress; and they mentioned leveraging online degree audit systems at their institutions. At SCC, a student observed that students are "constantly receiving emails like to notify me of events going on." Also at SCC, others receive early alert emails "to tell you that you need to pick it up, where you can get help." However at SCC, due to the frequency of the emails, often they go unread. At WCC, the students described receiving messages and emailing faculty, advisors, or administrators about their advising matters. At this college, emails were viewed as another method to gather advice. And at ECC, students also described accessing advising resources via email. The online strategies served as ways for the students to initiate contact with advisors. The emails

from the institutions were useful when students opened and read them, but could be left unread by some students due to their frequency.

Evidence suggests that a culture of valuing students and valuing student success drove advising services at these colleges. The advising centers and outreach strategies were designed to connect students to the information they needed to be successful and to achieve their goals, generally in a centralized location with professional staff who were experts. Providing advising services supported the students' success notion of achieving their academic goals. However, advising in a centralized structure did not align with the students' definition of success to include community support. It focused on efficiencies more so than relationships. While the advising was centralized, it lacked the reliability and trust that are reflected in a community of support. Furthermore, the interactions between the advising centers and the students were described as inaccurate, confusing, and sometimes unwelcoming. The students in this study often experienced advising services in ways that were not congruent with the organizational values of student success, valuing the students, and being welcoming.

Interestingly a student at SCC described advising overall as having "a lot of confusion between faculty, because they're always changing classes, prerequisites, even the advisors don't know what to advise the students - the outcome is wasting time, money and everything." This comment was salient as advising is part of the faculty portfolio, and across the three colleges students described receiving useful and accurate advising from their faculty who may or may not have been their assigned advisors. The faculty as advisors were sources of course, career, and program information that the students noticed and valued.

Faculty accessibility and advising emerged across the three cases as an important means for students to receive key academic advising information. The students described advising experiences as connecting with faculty in a variety of ways, including via their office hours, in class, and when the faculty are assigned as their advisor. The role of faculty emerged as a frequent source of reliable and personalized advising for the students in spite of the complexity and frequent changes to the curriculum.

At SCC, students described several faculty as being someone with whom they could build a relationship and have a faculty member “take an interest in them” or “believe in them.” The students empathized with their faculty advisors who they believed must also navigate the confusing and changing advising requirements put forth by the institution. Likewise at WCC, the students observed that their faculty are sources of academic and career information. When the students at WCC connected with a faculty member, they described how “the conversation keeps going on.” Finally, at ECC, faculty advising occurred in the classroom and through special faculty-driven programs such as the STEM, ELL, and veterans programs. Also at ECC, faculty were described as sharing key information about programs, opportunities, and careers that students then accessed based on their availability and interests. Generally faculty were perceived as caring for the students.

When students faced challenges in the classroom, they described faculty as key in helping them succeed. A student at WCC described their first weeks of class as, “I didn’t know what I was doing...I couldn’t understand what the professor was explaining. So I was struggling and then one day I went to the (professor’s) office...in like 15 minutes he helped me understand things I couldn’t understand in two weeks.” Another WCC student described

asking their faculty members for help right after class or by email, but commented that “it feels weird asking the professor.” The notion that students can reach out to faculty when they are in academic trouble was conveyed by multiple students at WCC. A student described:

Professors...give you office hours to get help. I haven't reached that breaking point yet...I've had a couple of incidents where I had to go to a professor for a paper and they were always there. I haven't met one that didn't care.

The feeling that the faculty care and are accessible was repeated at ECC when a student described how a faculty member “...always makes himself more available for his students so that they can understand...I felt more connected to him. I usually talk to him about a lot of things really: family, food, school, my next class I'm in.” At SCC, students reported that their faculty are “easy to talk to,” “very helpful,” and that “they see our potential and they want us to make it a reality.” Overall the role of faculty in supporting and advising students was reported as critical for the students in this study, and they generally believed that the faculty care about their success.

The role of faculty as advisor and their accessibility aligned with the students' notion of community support as salient to their success. The relationships they established with faculty informed their achievement of academic goals, and whether they finished or passed a class. Faculty provided students with access to knowledge they sought about a class or career. Students who were able to connect with faculty described this relationship as evidence that the institution values students and their success. When faculty made

themselves available to students, whether in person or by email, this availability fostered a sense of a supportive community for the students.

Class group discussion, a pedagogical strategy for diversity/global learning and collaborative learning, is a high impact practice. This HIP yielded varied experiences for the students. While faculty were frequently described as caring and encouraging across all three sites, the students did not always experience class group discussions as inclusive or effective. At WCC, for example, students were cautious about speaking in class unless they had been provided opportunities to speak or present about their cultures, and to hear about other students' cultures as a means to gain a level of comfort in class. At ECC, when faculty "handled" discussions well, in particular discussions about diversity topics, then the class discussion provided space for expression of opinions, while negative racial and ethnic stereotypes were addressed by the faculty. Across the three sites, a desire to participate in discussion was expressed by the students. However, when faculty crafted discussions that left little space for the lived experiences of their diverse students, the students reported that they felt disengaged. As a student at SCC described, "So you kind of like sit back when you're in that kind of class, and enjoy their stories" because there was no opportunity to share a cultural connection.

Repeatedly students across the three sites described being thrust into diversity discussions in the role of content expert or teacher about diversity topics. In some cases, the students volunteered to educate their teachers and fellow students as a means to establish connections among them, or to address inaccuracies, stereotypes, or biases during the discussions. In other cases, the faculty called on racially and ethnically diverse students to

provide the content they lacked. Faculty skills in facilitating discussions about diversity varied widely with students describing these discussions as “limited” and “really quick,” and the faculty “avoided” or were “afraid” or “scared” to engage in diversity content.

Class group discussions, as a high-impact practice, have the potential to foster a culture of success for students. Students described faculty who set up conditions for respectful discourse in advance, who were caring and encouraging about including all voices in the discussion, and who fearlessly addressed biases and stereotypes as they occurred. These practices fostered racially and ethnically diverse student success and reflected the espoused organizational values of the colleges. However, the students also experienced group discussions that were enacted in a biased and non-inclusive manner, thereby creating the opposite of a community of support. When discussions lacked depth, when biased statements were not addressed, or when the racially and ethnically diverse students were called upon to be the only spokesperson about a diversity topic, these practices did not foster their success.

Academic support resources were key spaces identified by the students where they accessed resources such as academic tutoring, computer and math labs, and libraries. These spaces served multiple purposes for the students, linking to their desire to succeed academically and to connect to a community. They also served as social spaces for some students.

The participant selection survey provides some insight into how the students of color engaged with tutoring at each community college in this study (see Table 21). Among the

Table 21 Student Participation in Tutoring

Survey Item	SCC Total participants = 57	WCC Total participants = 60	ECC Total participants =41
Q10 Have you participated in tutoring?	Yes = 19 (33.3%) No = 19 (33.3 %) Blank =19 (33.3%)	Yes = 12 (20%) No = 19 (31.6%) Blank =29 (48.3%)	Yes =10 (24.3%) No = 13 (31.7 %) Blank =18 (43.9%)
Three or more times	Yes and participated in tutoring 3 or more times = 9 (47.3%)	Yes and participated in tutoring 3 or more times= 6 (50%)	Yes and participated in tutoring 3 or more times = 7 (70%)
Two or fewer times	Yes and participated in tutoring 2 or fewer times = 6 (31.5%)	Yes and participated in tutoring 2 or fewer times = 3 (25%)	Yes and participated in tutoring 2 or fewer times = 2 (20%)

students participating in the survey, at SCC, 33.3% reported ‘yes’ that they had used tutoring services, while 33.3% indicated ‘no’ that they had not. At WCC, 20% reported ‘yes’ and 31.6% ‘no’; and at ECC, 24.3% reported ‘yes’, and 31.7% ‘no’. SCC reported the highest percentage of participation. The availability of bilingual tutors at this HSI may have been a factor in enhancing student participation.

Tutoring spaces were key places for students in this study. Tutoring spaces included tutoring centers as well as computer labs and math labs. At SCC, some students went to these spaces “for everything” from meeting friends in a computer lab to studying in a math lab. They had confidence in the tutoring staff’s ability to explain content that they may not have understood in class. For example, one student at SCC said, “They (tutors) honestly know more than what the teacher is teaching you. They (teachers) want you to do it this method and they (teachers) can’t explain it to you. The tutors do it better.” Also at SCC, there were bilingual tutors which were helpful for students who could take advantage of that. At WCC, the tutoring spaces were valued and seen as spaces to connect with and support

other students. A student at WCC observed, “I go to tutoring. I like going there a lot. Even if I’m not doing anything, I don’t need help but I will go there if maybe if someone might need help. Like I go there a lot.” At ECC, a student described how the tutoring staff provided more than content help. “Some of them, if they know you enough, they’ll be always telling you, ‘Do you know about this program or this one?’... the tutors, kind of, direct me to people that could help me.” For students who accessed campus tutoring spaces, they identified tutoring staff as key resources. While the tutoring centers across the three sites could be busy, making it challenging to connect with a tutor or to access a computer because it was too crowded, overall they were places where students went for support and to meet other students. The tutors themselves were held in high regard as the students commented positively on their content knowledge and support for students.

The campus library emerged as another key place for students to study, to work in small groups, and to socialize. At SCC, the library was where students went to study alone or in groups. At WCC, the tutoring and computer labs were often described as too busy, not relaxing, and limited. Some students at WCC, therefore, gravitated away from these places and sought alternative places to create community around studying. They often went to the library or to the top floor of the building into vacant classrooms. At ECC, tutoring was embedded in the library making these resources connected. Some students at ECC found there were small rooms they could reserve in the library for study groups. The libraries across the three colleges served as key spaces sought out by the students to pursue their academic work.

Overall, these spaces were an essential part of student engagement on campuses. The students sought tutoring for academic help and social connections. The libraries served as essential spaces for studying as they were flexible enough to provide both quiet places to study, as well as private rooms for group work. Across all cases, tutoring offices, labs, and libraries were venues where students engaged with campus resources. The academic support resources aligned with the students' definitions of success to include finishing or passing courses, as well as serving as a community of support. Furthermore, these academic resources were implemented in ways that connected with institutional values for promoting student success.

Student support and engagement programs and activities provided the students with another high impact practice that offered a variety of resources. Focused student success programs brought students together based on eligibility criteria, and provided community, advising, and support. The TRIO Student Success programs at each of the three institutions served eligible low-income, first generation students. A similar veteran's center at ECC provided assigned advisors to students who were military veterans. STEM focused programs or clubs provided focused career and academic support. Finally, students in this study reported that they participated in or were aware of several clubs and organizations based on affinities and/or interests.

TRIO programs appeared to provide a model of advising and academic support within a centralized location. The TRIO advisors were resources for academic and career information that students were drawn to, and the students in this study spoke highly of their connections with TRIO staff, services, and resources. At SCC, the TRIO program offered a

one-day orientation, as well as provided students with an assigned advisor. The TRIO advisors were described as taking time with their students thereby giving them consistent and accurate advice and support. At WCC, the TRIO program offered a week-long orientation program and students were assigned to an advisor. The TRIO advisors were described as responsive and caring staff, who helped students with arranging tutoring, selecting classes, and assisting with financial aid, and they checked in with their students daily. At ECC, a veteran's center provided resources that were similar to the TRIO program. The TRIO programs across the sites served to support and foster student success, largely by providing a community of support.

In addition to TRIO, each site had some form of STEM-focused program. At two sites, there was a STEM summer bridge program that created a cohort of students who received specialized advising, career exploration, and mentoring. At the other site, there was a STEM student club. Across the three sites, students who connected with one of these STEM programs commented about the connections and services they received. A student at SCC who participated in the two-week STEM summer bridge program observed, "...they give you the little look inside of how college is going to feel... they assign you a mentor once you start the fall semester, and then you can meet up with them if you need help with class or you just need to talk with anybody." At WCC, a student described the STEM club as a place where they found social connections and professional support. At the STEM club, the student explained, "I could go to that club and socialize with them while also speaking about content that will help me succeed in my program." At ECC, a STEM program provided tutoring, advising, field trips, and mentoring. A student described this program as "(The

advisor) is helping me with the STEM program and everything, showing us how to do things...they help us choose our mentor.” A more formalized mentor component was available in the two STEM summer bridge programs. In one program, the assigned mentor was a faculty member, and in the other program it was a peer.

There were challenges for students with the STEM or career focused programs. For example, at SCC, with the peer STEM mentor program, “...we got busy, and we didn't have time to really meet,” which resulted in the discontinuation of the mentoring component of the program for that student. In spite of that outcome, the student observed, “I thought it was useful. If they gave everybody a mentor, it would've been great. Everybody would have understood the school more.” The value added of the mentoring component to the program was evident in this student’s observation. A student at ECC wanted to participate in the STEM program but found:

There was no way for me to get up there...And they made it really difficult for me to attend. And they said I had to be there every day at this certain time. I never attended it...I had to drop it, and it sucks because I really wanted to know more about what they do for the summer for STEM.

What emerged across cases was students’ desire to engage in focused programs that link to their goals such as STEM or health careers. What was a challenge for the students was how to participate given the structure of the programs, including the time and location features.

At each campus, while the mix of student clubs and organizations was different, the students mentioned experiences that related to their identities or interests. Students mentioned clubs and organizations in which they either participated or observed them as

available on campus. At ECC, student leadership and student government were mentioned as organizations where students could engage with one another and with the staff who led them. SCC is a Hispanic serving institution and the students described a monthly social/political issues discussion group. At SCC, the students described coming onto campus and hearing “their music” playing as part of a cultural festival. At WCC, the students described a multicultural club, an art club, a film club, being part of the theatre performances, and Phi Theta Kappa honor society. At ECC, the students described a performing and visual arts club on campus, as well as organizations for the LGBTQ and ALANA students. A student at ECC noted how they wished they could represent their culture as they had seen another group do on campus, but they had time constraints. All of these opportunities were discussed by the students to share examples of how their institutions support students. However, most of the students were aware of these opportunities but did not regularly participate in them.

The student support and engagement programs and activities were enacted within the organizational cultures of each community college. Generally the practices were enacted through a culture of valuing students and their success. The targeted programs provided staff who understood their students and their definitions of success, particularly in terms of including students in a community of support. Where they sometimes lacked was the structural manner in which they delivered their services, which resulted in limiting student participation. Specifically, the locations and times of programs often did not align with the students’ needs and prevented their participation.

In summary, the six high impact practices that were identified across the three sites support the notion that when institutions implement these practices, students engage with

them to varying degrees. These high impact practices were intended to foster student success for all students. The analysis revealed, however, that despite organizational values regarding student success, the deficit lens of diversity still characterized the implementation of many high impact practices, and may have resulted in the misalignment of the implementation of high practices in fostering racially and ethnically diverse student success.

For example, advising designed and delivered to be mainly transactional fails to appreciate and acknowledge the student success values of students of color, in particular the notion community support. The lack of accuracy and occasional messaging of low expectations implied a deficit perspective in advising, which the students perceived as inadequate. Another example that illustrates diversity as a deficit in the implementation of high impact practices is the dearth of diversity content in the curriculum as evidenced when students described their experiences in group discussions. The lack of faculty skill facilitating diversity discussions, coupled with the tendency to minimize or ignore diversity content or bias, reinforces the notion of diversity as a deficit. By offering programs and services without aligning them with the perspectives of students of color, including their definitions of student success, many programs and practices fail to foster the success of students of color as the students avoid them or the practices are insufficient. In either case, students of color do not gain the intended benefit.

The high impact practices experienced by the students in this study reflected the institutional cultures and structures of each college. The short orientation programs on the surface promoted student success, but resulted in providing mainly transactional information. The misalignment of advising with the students' definitions of success was evidenced

through the lack of a sense of community support by the students when they engaged with advising centers and their staff. The group discussions in class at times resulted in students of color navigating discriminatory stereotypes and biases without the support of caring faculty or peers, even at times compelled to teach the class to address discrimination and biases. While many of the support programs were designed to assist students, conversely the career and interest-focused opportunities were structured such that the times and locations prevented many racially and ethnically diverse students from fully participating.

The students appeared to seek out the high impact practices that best aligned with their own definitions of student success which were: 1) finishing or passing, 2) achieving academic goals, and 3) obtaining community support. In particular, community support was critical to the students' decisions about whether to engage in the high-impact practice. When a high impact practice did not create community support as perceived by the students, then the practice resulted in students not engaging with it.

Cross-Case Summary of the Student Experiences

The impact of the organizational culture on the classroom environment and the implementation of high impact practices cannot be ignored. Across the three cases, the impact of espoused institutional values at the surface was often misaligned with the organizational cultures that the students actually experienced. At all three colleges, the institutional cultures messaged valuing all students and emphasized diversity from a global perspective. A global perspective of diversity included global awareness, respect, inclusion, and celebration of diversity. The global perspective signaled diversity as an asset that enriched the institutions and the campus community as a whole. A global perspective was

promoted as inclusive of all types of diversity, generally based on non-discrimination and a global/international market lens. However, the reliance on the global perspective of diversity yielded a broad and diluted definition of diversity for these institutions. This notion was even reflected at SCC, a Hispanic serving institution, though to a lesser degree.

Whether as a Hispanic serving institution or as an institution faced with racial and ethnic achievement disparities, the campuses were led to develop structures and programs intended to promote racially and ethnically diverse student success, or at least to reduce achievement disparities when compared to White students. As a result, the institutions enacted curriculums, implemented programs, and made hiring decisions to promote student success. However, the visible lack of diversity in the administration, faculty, and staff, as well as the lack of student racial and ethnic diversity at particular campuses led students to reluctantly attend those campuses if at all.

The participant selection survey was designed to help identify student awareness of and participation intensity in high impact practices at their colleges. While the response rate was low as indicated by the high numbers of blank responses, the data do provide another way to understand student experiences across the cases. While the interview data indicated that diversity in the curriculum occurred mainly in humanities and social sciences classes, the survey data also provided insight into student experiences with the curriculum (see Table 22). First, the students who responded to the survey did not report significant

Table 22 Opportunities for Diversity or Global Learning

Survey Item	SCC Total participants = 57	WCC Total participants = 60	ECC Total participants =41
Q6 Participated in diversity or global learning opportunities	Yes = 6 (10.5%) No = 43 (75.4 %) Blank = 8 (14%)	Yes = 7 (11.6%) No = 47 (78.3%) Blank = 6 (10%)	Yes = 1 (2.4%) No = 32 (78%) Blank = 8 (19.5 %)

participation in diversity or global learning at any of the community colleges with reported participation at SCC of 10.5%, at WCC of 11.6%, and at ECC of 2.4%. These small percentages indicate limited engagement by students of color in diversity or global learning regardless of the availability of such in the curriculum at their respective colleges. These data indicate that the curriculums at each community college did not consistently provide opportunities for racially and ethnically diverse students to participate in diversity or global learning, reinforcing their classroom experiences where diversity was minimized, nonexistent, or feared. These results provided an initial understanding of how the diversity curriculum and discussions may be limited at these campuses regardless of the institutional messages and values.

Within the classroom or within a program, students spoke of a tension in class where diversity was a side issue or one that was not fully engaged with. Often diversity was included in response to a current event in the media or in a stereotypical context. The classroom environment provided the opportunity for success but did not always foster community support for students of color, as they often felt unable to be themselves or found discussions of diversity left their White peers noticeably uncomfortable. The students aspired to finish or pass almost in spite of the environments they navigate as diverse students.

Across these colleges, diversity as a cultural value was framed through a deficit lens. The need for these institutions to engage with diversity from an assistance and support perspective overshadowed the notion of valuing diversity as an organizational asset that informed institutional practice. With an emphasis on responding to changing campus demographics, external pressures to reduce achievement disparities, and to ensure campus safety, the organizational cultures that were enacted did not align with espoused institutional values and messages. Furthermore, when diversity was (de)valued through a deficit lens, the student experiences and definitions of student success became misaligned with the campus culture. The deficit perspective highlights evidence of cultural misalignment between the importance of community support and the manner in which the culture supported or hindered student success.

As a study about how organizational culture fosters racially and ethnically diverse student success, it was important to also explore how the classroom environment and high-impact practices align with the students' own definitions of success as they engaged with these practices. The three common themes of student success that emerged across the cases were: 1) finishing or passing, 2) achieving academic goals, and 3) community support. The institutions on the surface valued student success and were welcoming. However, when students of color engaged with their classroom environments and took part in high impact practices, they experienced a surface level value of diversity that was frequently enacted with fear. Or they engaged with programs and services that were transactional and sometimes unreliable, leaving them without the community support component of their definition of success. Nevertheless, the students of color were nimble and through peer networks, and by

locating key programs and people on campus, they were able to establish community support, to finish or pass their classes, and to achieve their goals in spite of an organizational culture that was misaligned with their own value for community support.

Cultural Analysis via Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE)

The Culturally Engaging Campus Environment (CECE) model (Museus, 2014) is useful to understand the role of organizational culture in fostering diverse student success in this cross-case analysis. The CECE model suggests that culturally engaging campus cultures are more likely to promote racially and ethnically diverse student success. The model further suggests that when colleges enact cultures that intentionally engage racially and ethnically diverse students with their backgrounds and identities, such intentionality fosters student success.

Specifically the CECE model provides nine indicators of a culturally engaging campus culture (Museus, 2014). The CECE indicators are divided into two groups. The first group encompasses *cultural relevance* indicators that “focus on the ways that campus learning environments are relevant to the cultural backgrounds, communities, and identities of diverse college students” (Museus et al., 2015, p. 32). *Cultural relevance* indicators include 1) cultural familiarity, 2) culturally relevant knowledge, 3) cultural community service, 4) meaningful cross-cultural engagement, and 5) culturally validating environments. The items in the second group of *cultural responsiveness* indicators “focus on the ways in which campus learning and support systems engage and respond to the cultural norms and needs of diverse students” (Museus et al., 2015, p. 33). The four *cultural responsiveness*

indicators are 1) collectivist cultural orientations, 2) humanized educational environments, 3) proactive philosophies, and 4) holistic support.

The CECE model provides a framework that institutions can use to intentionally create cultures that are inclusive and equitable. The following section leverages the CECE model as a means to better understand the role community college organizational culture plays in fostering racially and ethnically diverse student success.

Cultural Relevance. This subsection will explore data that relate to the five CECE *cultural relevance* indicators.

Cultural familiarity explores opportunities that students may have to “connect with faculty, staff, and peers who share and understand their cultural backgrounds and experiences” (Museus, 2014, p. 210). This study’s participant selection survey provided insight into how the respondents experienced cultural familiarity on their campuses (see Table 23). At SCC, an HSI, 49.1% of the student survey respondents ‘agree/strongly agree’

Table 23 Student Experiences with Cultural Familiarity

Survey Item	SCC Total participants = 57	WCC Total participants = 60	ECC Total participants =41
Q 12. On campus, there is sufficient space for me to connect with people from my community.	Strgly Agree/Agree = 28 (49.1%) Neither = 8 (14%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 17 (29.8%) Blank = 14 (24.5%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 27 (45%) Neither = 11 (18.3%) Disagree/strongly disagree=6 (10%) Blank=16 (26.7%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 19 (46.3%) Neither = 4 (9.8%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 4 (9.8%) Blank=14 (34.1%)
Q 18. It is easy to find people on campus with similar backgrounds as me.	Strgly Agree/Agree = 28 (49.1%) Neither = 5 (8.8%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 11 (19.3%) Blank= 13 (22.8%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 26 (43.3%) Neither = 12 (20%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 6 (10%) Blank= 16 (26.6%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 13 (31.7%) Neither = 8 (19.5%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 6 (14.6%) Blank= 14 (34.1%)

that there was both sufficient space to connect with people from their community and that it was easy to find people with similar backgrounds at their college. Also, at SCC it is important note that 29.8% of the students indicated they ‘disagree/strongly disagree’ that there was sufficient space to connect with people from their own community; and 19.2% indicated that they ‘disagree/strongly disagree’ that it is easy to find people with similar backgrounds at SCC. The percentage of students at SCC who disagreed that there was sufficient space to connect with or find people of similar backgrounds might reflect the fact that SCC is a Hispanic serving institution, and students who do not identify as Hispanic might not notice opportunities for connection aligned with their own racial identities.

At WCC, the ‘agree/strongly agree’ percentages for the “sufficient space to connect” (45%) and “find similar people on campus” (43.3%) items were similar to those at SCC.

Likewise, at ECC, 46.3% ‘agree/strongly agree’ that there was sufficient space to connect with people from their community. However, only 31.7% ‘agree/strongly agree’ that it was easy to find people with similar backgrounds at their college. While ECC met the structural diversity criterion for the study, the students of color at ECC were less likely to indicate that they could find people with similar backgrounds at their college. The number of campuses and their dispersed geographic locations may have impacted ECC students’ ability to find people of similar backgrounds. The main campus was located in a rural area with a predominately White population. The satellite campuses were in more populated areas including two urban centers and a suburban satellite yielding more structural diversity, particularly in the campus that offered the ELL program.

Culturally relevant knowledge explores the degree to which students have opportunities “to cultivate, sustain, and increase knowledge of their cultures and communities of origin” (Museus, 2014, p. 210). Table 24 illustrates how the participant selection survey respondents reported their perceptions about opportunities at their colleges

Table 24 Culturally Relevant Knowledge Opportunities

Survey Item	SCC Total participants = 57	WCC Total participants = 60	ECC Total participants =41
Q 13 On campus, there are enough opportunities to learn about the culture of my own community?	Strgly Agree/Agree = 28 (49.1%) Neither = 10 (17.5%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 10 (17.5%) Blank=9 (15.7%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 22 (36.6%) Neither = 12 (20%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 10 (16.6%) Blank=16 (26.6%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 12 (29.2%) Neither = 9 (21.9%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 6 (14.6%) Blank= 14 (34.1%)

to engage in educational experiences to learn about their cultural communities. Their responses illustrated the limited opportunities for diverse students to learn about their own communities across the three colleges. At SCC, an HSI, 49.1% ‘agree/strongly agree.’ The ‘agree/strongly agree’ percentages were lower at the other two sites. At WCC, 36.6% agreed or strongly agreed; and at ECC only 29.2% agreed or strongly agreed. Overall, this survey question revealed strong ambivalence or disagreement that there are enough opportunities for the students to learn about their own cultural community. This finding was reinforced in the students’ observations that diversity is minimally addressed in the curriculum as well as feared by the faculty.

Cultural community service suggests that providing opportunities for diverse students to engage with and impact their cultural communities positively impacts their academic success (Museus, 2014). Across the three cases, 19.2% of the respondents at SCC, 35% at WCC, and 17% at ECC reported participating in any service learning or community service activities (see Table 25). The participant selection survey also asked respondents

Table 25 Cultural Community Service Opportunities

Survey Item	SCC Total participants = 57	WCC Total participants = 60	ECC Total participants =41
Q7 Have you participated in service learning or community service?	Yes = 11 (19.2%) No = 37 (64.9%) Blank = 9 (15.7%)	Yes = 21 (35%) No = 33 (55%) Blank =6 (10 %)	Yes = 7 (17%) No = 25 (60.9 %) Blank = 9 (21.9%)

if there were enough opportunities (research and community service projects, etc.) to give back to their cultural community (see Table 26). At SCC, 47.3% ‘agree/strongly agree’

Table 26 Opportunities to Give Back to my Community

Survey Item	SCC Total participants = 57	WCC Total participants = 60	ECC Total participants =41
Q14 At my institution there are enough opportunities (research and community service projects, etc.) to give back to my cultural community.	Strgly Agree/Agree = 27 (47.3%) Neither =8 (14%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 8 (14 %) Blank= 14 (24.5 %)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 20 (33.3%) Neither =15 (25%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 9 (15 %) Blank=16 (26.6 %)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 13 (31.7%) Neither=11(26.8%) Disagree/strongly disagree=3 (7.3%) Blank=14 (34.1 %)

that their college provided enough opportunities to give back to students' own cultural communities. The 'agree/strongly agree' percentages were lower at WCC (33.3%) and ECC (31.7%).

SCC, an HSI, interestingly had fairly low reported participation in service learning at 19.2% yet the highest 'agree/strongly agree' percentage about having enough opportunities to give back to students' cultural communities at 47.3%. The respondents' beliefs that there were enough opportunities to give back to their cultural communities may reflect their appreciation of these opportunities regardless of their frequency of participation.

Additionally, the students who were interviewed rarely reported engaging with their own communities via community service. When they did so, they observed that the service opportunities were not deeply embedded into the curriculum. The opportunities were mainly single service experiences as part of a class or leadership program.

Opportunities for meaningful cross-cultural engagement suggests that the availability of intentional and meaningful programs and practices that facilitate "positive and purposeful interactions with peers from disparate cultural origins" promotes positive student experiences and success (Museus, 2014, p. 211). The participant selection survey asked respondents

whether there were enough opportunities on campus to have meaningful discussions about racial and ethnic issues. Table 27 illustrates the minimal or inconsistent opportunities that diverse students reported about engaging in meaningful discussions about race and ethnicity.

Table 27 Meaningful Discussion about Race and Ethnicity

Survey Item	SCC Total participants = 57	WCC Total participants = 60	ECC Total participants =41
Q15 On campus, there are enough opportunities to have meaningful discussion about race and ethnic issues.	Strgly Agree/Agree = 25 (43.8%) Neither = 10 (17.5%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 9 (15.7%) Blank=13 (22.8%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 22 (36.6%) Neither = 12 (20%) Disagree/strongly disagree=10 (16.6%) Blank=16 (26.6%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 11 (26.8%) Neither = 10 (24.3%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 6 (14.6%) Blank= 14 (34.1%)

The survey respondents reported the highest “agree/strongly agree” percentage at SCC (43.8%), an HSI. The ‘agree/strongly agree’ percentages were lower at WCC (36.6%) and at ECC (26.8%). The opportunities to have meaningful cross-cultural engagement were inconsistent at best.

Culturally validating environments suggests that when colleges convey to diverse students that their cultural identities and backgrounds are valued, students experience a validation of their cultural identities, which in turn supports their success (Museus, 2014). The participant selection survey asked respondents if they agreed that their culture was valued at their college (see Table 28). Data from the participant selection survey

Table 28 Campus Values Students' Culture(s)

Survey item	SCC Total participants = 57	WCC Total participants = 60	ECC Total participants =41
Q 17 In general, my culture is valued on campus.	Strgly Agree/Agree = 21 (36.8%) Neither = 20 (35.1%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 3 (5.3%) Blank=13 (22.8%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 21 (35%) Neither=20 (33.4%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 3 (5%) Blank= 16 (26.6%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 7 (17.1%) Neither=17 (41.5%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 3 (7.3%) Blank=14 (34.1%)

provides further evidence of a generic global version of diversity. Across the three colleges, the percentage of diverse students who agreed or strongly agreed that their culture was valued ranged from 36.8% at SCC, to 35% at WCC, to only 17% at ECC.

While SCC (36.8%) and WCC (35%) yielded similar student perceptions that they 'agree/strongly agree' their cultures were valued on campus, at ECC (17%) the 'agree/strongly agree' response was substantially lower. ECC's naïve understanding and approach to diversity may explain the results for this survey item. The organizational culture at ECC undervalued diversity, and the students were aware of the lack of authenticity regarding diversity at ECC.

Cultural validation was more prominent in the Hispanic serving institution (HSI) in this study. The HSI designation and dollars are evident in programming and messaging for students who are members of the target group. Nevertheless, despite the HSI designation, only 36.8% of the students 'agree/strongly agree' that their culture was valued. Overall, the results suggest that all three colleges struggled to move from valuing diversity in a superficial and deficit manner, to one that deeply values diversity and thereby validates the cultural identities of racially and ethnically diverse students.

Cultural Responsiveness. This section will explore the four CECE cultural responsiveness indicators: 1) collectivist cultural orientations, 2) humanized educational environments, 3) proactive philosophies, and 4) holistic support.

Collectivist cultural orientations suggests that a campus culture with a collectivist orientation is more likely to foster success for students who come from communities with more collectivist versus individualist orientations (Museus, 2014). The students, across cases, in this study defined student success as finishing or passing, achieving academic goals, and obtaining community support. The theme of community support reflected a collectivist orientation among study participants. The participant selection survey asked respondents whether people on their campus help each other succeed (see Table 29). SCC yielded an “agree/strongly agree” result of 61.4%. The “agree/strongly agree”

Table 29 People on Campus Help Each Other Succeed.

Survey Item	SCC Total participants = 57	WCC Total participants = 60	ECC Total participants =41
Q 16 In general, people on this campus help each other succeed	Strgly Agree/Agree = 35 (61.4%) Neither = 4 (7%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 7 (12.2%) Blank= 11 (19.2 %)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 28 (46.6%) Neither= 11(18.3%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 4 (6.6%) Blank= 17 (28.3 %)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 13 (31.7%) Neither = 12 (38.7 %) Disagree/strongly disagree= 2 (4.8%) Blank= 14 (34.1%)

percentages were lower at WCC (46.7%), and at ECC (31.7%). It is important to note that SCC is a minority serving institution and has bilingual staff and tutors.

All three colleges tended to focus on supporting individual student success by providing a variety of high impact practices. High impact practices were often designed to draw students into services that were efficient and transactional, focused on a student’s

individual success. While individual student success is a critical focus of any higher education institution, the students in this study sought an environment that was more collectivist in its orientation. The students in this study similarly identified the notion of community support as critical to their success. Therefore, when students encountered services that were highly individualized and transactional, as was more likely at WCC and ECC, they were less likely to engage with the high impact practices or to see them as welcoming or reliable.

Humanized educational environments emphasize the importance of opportunities for students to connect with faculty and staff in order to develop meaningful relationships with people who care about their success (Museus, 2014). Two participant selection survey items asked respondents whether the faculty and the staff at their college were committed to their success (see Table 30). The results for the “faculty committed to my success” item showed

Table 30 Commitment to Student Success

Survey Item	SCC Total participants = 57	WCC Total participants = 60	ECC Total participants =41
Q 19 In general, faculty on campus are committed to my success	Strgly Agree/Agree = 37 (64.9%) Neither = 5 (8.4%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 2 (3.5%) Blank =13 (22.8%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 34 (61.6%) Neither =9 (15 %) Disagree/strongly disagree= 1 (1.6 %) Blank= 16 (26.6%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 20 (43.7%) Neither = 7 (17 %) Disagree/strongly disagree= 1 (2.4 %) Blank= 14 (34.1%)
Q 20 In general, staff on campus are committed to my success.	Strgly Agree/Agree = 38 (66.6%) Neither = 4 (7 %) Disagree/strongly disagree= 2 (3.5%) Blank= 13 (22.8%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 36 (60%) Neither = 6 (10%) Disagree/strongly disagree=2 (3.3%) Blank= 16 (26.6 %)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 20 (48.7%) Neither = 5 (12.1%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 2 (4.8 %) Blank= 14 (34.1%)

the highest ‘agree/strongly agree’ percentage at SCC (64.9%). The ‘agree/strongly agree’ percentages were lower at WCC (61.6%) and at ECC (43.7%) for faculty commitment. Similarly, the results for the “staff committed to my success” item showed the highest ‘agree/strongly agree’ percentage at SCC (66.6%). The ‘agree/strongly agree’ percentages were again lower at WCC (60%) and at ECC (48.7%).

Across all three community colleges, students repeatedly described experiences where they had engaged in meaningful conversations with faculty and staff who openly discussed their plans with them, supported their goals, and stated they were working to help the students. However, the students in this study also repeatedly described experiences that were not positive. Examples included being dissuaded from an academic goal without a concrete reason given, being told that a faculty member feared them because of their race, or the presence of a security guard in proximity during a challenging conversation about being misadvised by an advisor. The students also noticed the lack of structural racial and ethnic diversity in faculty and leadership roles, and the more visible diversity of the lower level staff such as tutors and campus police. The enactment of a humanized educational environment appeared to be hampered further when diversity was viewed fearfully and/or as a deficit to be “fixed” so that degree completion outcomes could improve.

Proactive philosophies suggest that when faculty and staff proactively share information with students, not waiting for students to seek them out first, this practice positively impacts their success (Museus, 2014). The participant selection survey asked the respondents if people on their campus send them important information about learning opportunities and about available support (see Table 31). Regarding the item for receiving

Table 31 Sending Important Information to Students

Survey Item	SCC Total participants = 57	WCC Total participants = 60	ECC Total participants =41
Q21 People on this campus often send me important information about new learning opportunities.	Strgly Agree/Agree = 32 (56.1%) Neither =4 (7%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 7 (12.%) Blank= 14 (24.5%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 29 (48.3%) Neither = 9 (15%) Disagree/strongly disagree=6 (10%) Blank= 16 (26.6%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 21 (51.2%) Neither = 4 (9.7%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 2 (4.8%) Blank= 14 (34.1%)
Q22 People on this campus often send me important information about support that is available on campus	Strgly Agree/Agree = 39 (68.4%) Neither = 2 (3.5%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 3 (5.2%) Blank=13 (22.8%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 31 (51.6%) Neither = 9 (15%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 3 (5%) Blank=17 (28.3%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 20 (48.7%) Neither =3 (7.3%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 3 (7.3%) Blank= 15 (36.5%)

information about new learning opportunities, the agree/disagree percentages were consistent across the three colleges: SCC (56.1%), WCC (48.3%), and ECC (51.2%). Regarding the item for receiving information about support that is available on campus, SCC had a noticeably higher ‘agree/strongly agree’ percentage (68.4%). The agree/strongly agree percentages were lower at WCC (51.6%) and ECC (48.7%).

Often when describing their college, the students in this study included the availability of people to guide and support them towards achieving their goals. Through student service offices or support programs, the colleges sought to create structures where students had access to people who could provide key information. The students described receiving large numbers of emails that provided information, though the messages were often not relevant to their interests, so they did not read them.

Overall the students described finding access to key information the result of a faculty member or advisor with whom they connected, via their student job working in a student

service office, or their participation in a student support program such as TRIO or a veteran's center. Participating in a one day or less orientation program generally provided information that was more logistically focused for a new student. Visiting an advising center was typically more transactional or registration focused.

Looking at the organizational cultures across the colleges, while they cared about student success, they fostered environments that were more transactional for the students. The colleges generally promoted an individualized and efficient approach to student success, with an expectation that the students seek out answers to their questions, assuming that they knew what to ask in advance. While such an approach may convey a value for student success, it does not promote a philosophy to encourage faculty and staff to proactively connect to students. Such an approach would align with the students' sense of community support as integral to their success, and more closely align with a collectivist orientation versus an individualistic, efficiency orientation.

Holistic support suggests that creating conditions where students are confident that they have at least one faculty or staff member who will provide support and accurate information, or will direct them to other people and resources, should foster success (Museus, 2014). The participant selection survey asked respondents if there was someone on campus whom they could trust to help them regardless of the matter (see Table 32). WCC had the

Table 32 Trusted Person on Campus for Help

Survey Item	SCC Total participants = 57	WCC Total participants = 60	ECC Total participants =41
Q23 There is someone on campus I can trust to help me, no matter what kind of support I need.	Strgly Agree/Agree = 24 (42.1%) Neither =15 (26.3%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 5 (8.7%) Blank= 13 (22.8%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 32 (53.3%) Neither = 8 (13.3%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 4 (6.6%) Blank= 16 (26.6%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 16 (39%) Neither = 5 (12.9%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 6 (14.6%) Blank= 14 (34.1%)

highest agree/strongly agree percentage (53.3%) for this survey item. The agree/strongly agree percentages were lower at SCC (42.1%) and ECC (39%). The survey results confirm the ad hoc manner in which diverse students were offered holistic support across the colleges.

Overall, SCC had the highest ‘agree/strongly agree’ percentages across multiple items in the participant selection survey. This college is focused on student success and has implemented high-impact practices to address achievement disparities. SCC is intentional in its efforts to support Hispanic student success as evidenced by the hiring of Latina/o, Spanish speaking support staff and the HSI designation. There is visible programming, staffing, and institutional messaging, as well as locating a campus in an urban area with a very high percentage of Latina/o communities. SCC is consistent in its messages of support for students and in particular for Hispanic students. However, for students who do not identify as Latina/o, support for their cultural identities was not as apparent to them.

WCC tended to fall in the middle of the ‘agree/strongly agree’ percentage responses on the survey. Interestingly WCC had the highest percentage in the orientation participation and career counseling items. This could be reflective of their efficiency value to support

students by providing an efficient and clear pathway to their next educational goal. Also, WCC had the highest participation percentages in diversity or global learning and community service. This result may reflect their institutional values of social responsibility and justice. Students appreciated the faculty and staff of color at WCC, which may inform their knowledge and participation in high-impact practices reflected by their ability to find someone on campus they can trust to help them.

ECC consistently had the lowest overall ‘agree/strongly agree’ percentage patterns in the survey responses across the three sites. The survey results reflected a campus culture that supports student success, but struggles to move beyond a naïve and global perspective of diversity. The students who responded to the survey reinforce the notion of a naiveté of diversity, as evidenced by the low percentage (26.8%) who agree/strongly agree that they had opportunities for meaningful discussions about race or ethnicity, coupled with low percentages (17%) who agree/strongly agree that their culture is valued at ECC. The discomfort up to and including the discrimination that they experience is reflected in the fact that only 31.7% of the respondents felt as though generally people at ECC help each other succeed.

Summary. The Culturally Engaging Campus Environment (CECE) framework provided one way to describe organizational culture in terms of characteristics that may influence racially and ethnically diverse student success. The three community colleges in this study had evidence of diversity as a central organizing principle and high impact practices. Yet based on data regarding how students of color experienced the organizational

culture at their college, the misalignment of the organizational cultures in actually fostering racially and ethnically diverse student success became evident.

The *cultural relevance and responsiveness* indicators of the CECE model together illuminate how an institution through its values and practices may or may not set up environments that support students of color. The students in this study deeply valued community support and at times experienced conditions that were more individually focused, leaving them either unaware or in search of information as they became aware of concerns or questions. Frequently, the students in this study leveraged their own cultural student networks as a means to gain access to what they perceived as accurate information, bypassing institutional practices. When students were able to make a meaningful connection to a faculty or staff member, it was positively described and appreciated. Yet, some students experienced environments that left them feeling uncomfortable, not like themselves, and discriminated against. The undercurrent of fear of diversity cannot be underestimated regardless of the ad hoc pockets of conditions that support racially and ethnically diverse student success.

Evidence suggests that the colleges were motivated to improve their student outcomes data, and their efficiency and timely degree completion values were reflected in the implementation of individualized and centralized services. The institutional emphasis on efficiency and completion values, however, minimized diversity, relegating it to a deficit that must be contended with and addressed. While the students described their colleges positively, their experiences with the organizational cultures illuminated a misalignment

between espoused institutional values and how the students experienced what their colleges actually valued.

As these three institutions responded to the college completion agenda, they designed and implemented HIPs as strategies to increase student success. The HIPs experienced by the students in this study were often implemented within a culture that was misaligned with the students' own definitions of success. Table 33 illustrates this cultural misalignment

Table 33 Cultural Misalignment

<u>CECE Cultural Relevance</u>	
Fear of Diversity <>	Cultural Familiarity
Lack of Diversity in the Curriculum <>	Culturally Relevant Knowledge
Low participation <>	Cultural Community Service
Occasional programs/discussions <>	Cultural Validation
Minimal if at all <>	Cross-cultural Engagement
<u>CECE Cultural Responsiveness</u>	
Individualistic practices <> Collectivist Orientation	
Efficiency emphasis <>	Humanized Cultural Environments = Student success programs
No person identified <> Proactive Philosophies = If identify a person	
No caring person <> Holistic Support = If identify a caring person	
Key: Alignment (=) or Misalignment (<>) with CECE	
Adapted from Museus, 2014	

through the nine CECE (Museus, 2014) cultural indicators by taking the cross-case cultural themes and analyzing them for alignment (=) or misalignment (<>) with CECE.

The colleges had structural racial and ethnic diversity of at least 25% in the student body. However, the notion of fear of diversity by White faculty and White students coupled with a lack of experience with diversity content by the faculty yielded an environment that did not foster a sense of belonging for students of color nor opportunities to connect with people who understood them (*cultural familiarity*). Furthermore, the lack of opportunities for racially and ethnically diverse students to learn about their cultural communities (*culturally relevant knowledge*) in spite of the colleges purporting that diversity was a central

organizing principle is evidence of a cultural misalignment in how the organizational culture is enacted in the curriculum.

In terms of high impact practices, few students described an opportunity to engage in community service at all, including opportunities to impact their communities (*cultural community service*). The colleges provided limited celebratory cultural events and occasionally meaningful programs with discussion about social justice and equity (*cultural validation*). Yet within the classroom, opportunities to engage in meaningful discussion across cultures were rare at best, and at times poorly facilitated (*cross-cultural engagement*). The broad and diluted definition of diversity, moving towards a global perspective at the colleges, did not serve to foster an organizational culture that was *culturally relevant* for students of color.

As mentioned previously, the students included community support as an element in their definition of student success. The colleges tended to message, through their values and practices, a reliance on more individualistic practices, thereby fostering conditions that were misaligned with the community and relationship based (*collectivist orientation*) values of the students. With their emphasis on efficient and timely degree completion, the colleges did not regularly provide opportunities for students to make connections or build relationships with faculty or staff who cared about their success (*humanized educational environments*). The colleges' targeted student success programs, such as TRIO, veteran's centers, and STEM programs, for example, provided opportunities for students to develop meaningful relationships with people who cared about their success (*humanized environments*).

However, these programs have limited scope and did not serve to inform practices across their colleges.

Across the colleges, information was shared in a variety of ways from a barrage of emails, an early alert system, a caring staff or faculty member, or a peer. Students who were able to identify a career or student success program benefited from getting important information proactively (*proactive philosophies*). Within these programs, some students were able to identify at least one caring and committed person who would guide them appropriately (*holistic support*).

It is within the complexities of organizational culture that high impact practices are enacted. The organizational culture manifests in the HIPs; culture shapes the HIPs. The community colleges in this study implemented HIPs intended to foster student success, but these practices may fall short and be less likely to engage students of color when they are enacted in organizational cultures that struggle to be culturally relevant and culturally responsive. The students of color were left to navigate organizational cultures where the espoused values and the enacted values and practices were misaligned, and did not align with their own definitions of success.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

This final chapter discusses the findings from this multi-site case study on how community college organizational cultures can support or hinder the success of racially and ethnically diverse students. This discussion highlights the study findings and explains how they fit within the existing literature. Specifically, the discussion addresses the main research question and three subsidiary questions that guided this study. It also presents the limitations of the study and a discussion of the study's key findings. Implications of the findings for future research and practice at institutions of higher education, in particular community colleges, are offered, followed by some concluding remarks.

This multi-site case study was guided by critical theory and theories of organizational culture and student success, as well as literature on community college teaching and learning environments, high impact practices, and diverse student experiences. Three community colleges were identified for this study through a multi-stage site selection process, and a participant selection survey was used to identify students for interviews at the three colleges. The unit of analysis for this study was the institution. The findings were derived from themes that emerged across the three cases and helped the researcher arrive at conclusions or "lesson learned" from the cases (Creswell, 2003, p. 182). The focus on the institution provided the context for analyzing the organizational culture in relation to the

students' experiences with high impact practices. Three organizational culture values emerged across the three cases: 1) valuing students, 2) being welcoming, and 3) valuing student success. Additionally, diversity as a cultural value at these colleges was expressed in four themes: 1) a global perspective, 2) structural representation, 3) diversity in the curriculum, and 4) through a deficit lens.

The voices of students of color were salient in this study, including their own definitions of student success, which were expressed by three key themes: 1) finishing and passing, 2) achieving academic goals, and 3) obtaining community support. These success themes illuminated the alignment or misalignment of the organizational cultures that the students experienced, including their classroom experiences and engagement with high impact practices.

The Research Question

What role does organizational culture play in fostering success for racially and ethnically diverse community college students? Organizational culture informs what is done, how it is done, and who does it within an institution (Geertz, 1973; Ibarra, 2001; Museum, 2014; Schein, 2004). Each community college selected for this study had evidence of diversity as a central organizing principle in its vision, mission, planning, structures, curriculum, and programs. Also, each community college had evidence of high impact practices intended to support student success. Across the three colleges, the organizational cultures shaped how the students experienced their institutions, pursued their education, and applied their understanding of student success.

Overall, the three colleges in this study communicated a value for diversity, but the enactment of diversity as a cultural value was generally based on a diluted global or global-marketplace understanding, as well as one that appreciated diversity as all-inclusive of the commonly understood protected categories in anti-discrimination policies. The global perspective aligned with an appreciation of cultural differences among people and groups; however, this perspective emphasized differences as a challenge for the dominant groups to decode and as a task for non-majority groups to learn how to become contributing members in the dominant culture.

A global perspective values diversity as a commodity that prepares students for a global workforce and marketplace (Cox & Saltee, 2018; Stein & de Oliveira Andreotti, 2017). With diversity valued mainly through a global perspective at the colleges, the organizational culture minimized the identities of students of color, failing to validate their lived experiences and contributions (Gorski, 2011; Yosso, 2005). Furthermore, diversity was engaged from an assistance and support perspective in response to changes in enrollment patterns and pressure to reduce achievement gaps between White students and students of color. A global perspective privileges a colorblind ideology and ignores issues of history, power, and privilege of some groups over others. In spite of the espoused institutional values of appreciating diversity, the colleges were characterized by a deficit lens of diversity including fear of diversity.

Diversity, specifically racial and ethnic diversity, was valued through an enrollment and support lens. While diversity was purported to be a central organizing principle, appreciated through a global perspective, embedded in the curriculum, and visible through

the structural diversity of the student body and some employee groups, diversity was still overwhelmingly engaged with through a deficit lens and was minimized in the curriculum. Reddy (2018) suggests that organizational cultural values and norms are taught to students by what is planned and included in curriculum; and what is left out of the curriculum is intentional and serves to silence and devalue those contributions. The students in this study reported that the absence or minimization of diversity content in the curriculum left them silenced, uncomfortable, or compelled to teach. This aligns with existing research on the experiences of students of color in college (Gonzalez, 2002; Harper, 2012a; Harper et al., 2011; Masta, 2018). Alongside the prevailing deficit perspective, the colleges enacted structural (admissions and enrollment) and strategic (plans, programs, and initiatives) approaches to diversity, rather than practices that recognize and enhance the educational benefits of diversity.

The misalignment between the espoused institutional values of these colleges and the organizational cultures that students of color experienced can be understood in Iverson's (2007) study of 21 diversity strategic plans at 20 land-grant universities. The Iverson study is important because it illuminates the subtext of diversity discourse found in institutional messages that tend to compartmentalize diversity into four categories: 1) as diversity as an access matter, 2) diverse people as disadvantaged, 3) diversity as an element of the marketplace, and 4) diversity as a democracy incentive to help those less fortunate. Iverson posits that when institutions present racially and ethnically diverse students as "outsiders, at-risk victims, commodities, and change agents" (p. 586), the institutions perpetuate racial inequality and fail to ask challenging questions about the student experience and what

practices may truly foster their success. The plans, Iverson suggests, worked against the goals of equality and inclusion when the discourse failed to challenge dominant ideologies and assumptions about people of color. On the surface, the plans conveyed support for diversity, but the reliance on White racial experiences as the standard for student success, and the use of language that advanced stereotypes about students of color as deficient outsiders resulted in preserving the status quo by not challenging why and how things are done. Instead Iverson found the plans reinforced policies and practices of conformity regarding diversity to support alignment with current institutional norms, and treated diversity as a commodity for the institutions to leverage given its market value in the business world.

Similar to Iverson's (2007) findings, in this study of community colleges, the institutional plans and statements were found to espouse a value for student success, but their enacted cultures at times minimized racially and ethnically diverse students' cultural identities and framed diversity from a deficit perspective. The deficit perspective was expressed through the assumption that communities of color bring with them social and academic deficiencies to be remediated by the colleges (Gorski, 2011; Museus et al., 2015; Yosso, 2005); and that diversity is a commodity that all community college students need to access in order to participate successfully in a global workforce and market (Cox & Sallee, 2018; Stein & de Oliveira Andreotti, 2017).

At the three community colleges in this study, the diversity as a deficit perspective was reflected in institutional decisions and choices made by the colleges resulting in programs and services to respond to enrollment needs and to the college completion agenda

(Complete College America, 2018; Gorski, 2011; Yosso, 2005) but not necessarily to an equity agenda (Center for Urban Education, 2017; Witham et al., 2015). The pressure to foster student success for all students resulted in the colleges being efficiency-oriented rather than equity-oriented, contributing to a diluted, global perspective of diversity that informed organizational cultures.

The importance of creating a campus culture that is inclusive, where students feel they belong, and are validated and valued by their faculty and peers is key to success for students of color (CCCSE, 2010; Clayton-Pederson & Musil, 2005; Hurtado, Alvarez,, Guillermo-Wann, Cuellar, & Arellano, 2012; Kuh et al., 2005; Kuh et al., 2006; McClenney & Green, 2005; Museus, 2014; Rutschow et al., 2011). Organizational culture reflects the values and ideology of its dominant groups (Ibarra, 2001; Schein, 2004). The organizational cultures of the colleges in this study reflected their institutional values and ideology including a deficit perspective of diversity and a belief that diversity is to be feared. In these conditions, the organizational cultures of these three colleges did not always foster the success of racially and ethnically diverse students.

Subsidiary Research Question One

How do racially and ethnically diverse students perceive the organizational cultures of community colleges that have diversity as a central organizing principle? The students of color in the study described their colleges and particular campuses as welcoming, valuing students, and valuing student success. They held their colleges in high regard, as they were the means for them to achieve student success. The institutions messaged to their students that they welcomed, accepted, and included everyone. The students perceived the

organizational cultures as enacted with supportive values and practices, yet they experienced the culture as lacking a deep understanding of diversity. The students' perceptions of organizational culture reflected a combination of the surface level values espoused by the institutions coupled with the enacted culture they experienced.

Structural diversity informed the practices of the institutions, and shaped the students' perceptions by representing who was a part of an institution as well as who was missing. Diverse employees in faculty, staff, and campus police roles provided students access to people they perceived to understand them, care about them, and who tried to help promote the value of diversity. Similarly, when the students saw other students of color on their campuses, it signaled to them that they must be valued by the institutions because there were racially and ethnically diverse peers studying beside them. Visible structural diversity at a campus provided a level of comfort for students who appreciated that there were opportunities to share with others.

When diversity was visibly limited on campus, in a classroom, or in the faculty and senior leadership at the college, the noticeable lack of representation led some diverse students to feel isolated or intimidated in predominantly White spaces (González, 2002; Harper, 2012a; Harper et al., 2011; Harper et al., 2018; Masta, 2018; Museus & Maramba, 2011). Structural diversity can positively impact community college climate through more cross-race interactions and therefore more opportunities for interactions with individuals of diverse identities, beliefs, and values (Jones, 2013); alone, however, structural diversity does not automatically create conditions for success for students of color. The students in this study still reported feelings of exclusion, discrimination, and bias (Cuellar & Johnson-

Ahorlu, 2016; Nguyen, Chan, Nguyen, & Teranishi, 2018). Thus, while structural diversity may have been more visible at some of the colleges in this study, structural diversity alone is insufficient. In this study, when a particular campus lacked structural diversity, it was perceived as being unwelcoming and students did not want to venture there unless they had to.

The students revealed that their experiences with the cultural values of the colleges were not always aligned with the stated values of the institutions, nor consistent with the students' own definitions of success. Creating organizational cultures that validate the racial and ethnic identities of students of color may be essential to fostering their success in college (Jayakumar & Museus, 2012; Hurtado et al., 1999; Hurtado & Ruiz Alvarado, 2015; Museus, 2014; Museus & Maramba, 2011; Rendón, 1994, 2000; Rendón Linares & Muñoz, 2011, Wood & Newman, 2017). Conversely, there is ample evidence in the research literature to illustrate the negative, racialized experiences of students of color in college (González, 2002; Harper, 2012a, 2012b; Harper et al., 2011; Masta, 2018; Museus & Maramba, 2018). There was a dearth of cultural validation experiences for the students of color at the community colleges in this study including limited opportunities to engage in community support practices and spaces that were culturally validating. Furthermore, the students reported feelings of isolation, discomfort, and the impact of negative stereotypes. The result was the colleges' stated values did not align with their enacted practices nor the students' success value of community support. When a college relies on a global perspective of diversity and fails to give voice to racial and ethnic diversity in the curriculum and classroom, it is not validating the identities of students of color and does not proactively foster their success

(Bush & Bush, 2010; Carnevale & Strohl, 2013; Harper et al., 2018; Museus, Ledesma & Parker, 2015; Rendón Linares & Muñoz, 2011; Wood & Newman, 2017).

Across the three colleges, the students respected and appreciated faculty, often finding them to be their favorite part of the classroom experience. A tension emerged for students of color, however, when faculty avoided addressing biases and/or negative stereotypes in class (Harper et al., 2018). The students in this study described faculty members who had a wide range of skills in terms of facilitating learning around diversity topics and in dealing with classroom interactions shaped by biases and stereotypes. Similarly, a national study of over 20,000 full-time faculty revealed that 80% of faculty felt that it is their responsibility to teach students the value of diversity and related content, yet more than 50% reported that they do not feel prepared to engage with the conflict that may arise in class, and only 30% indicated that they actually include diversity content in their courses (Stolzenberg et al., 2019). Furthermore, the students in this study described instances where faculty said that they treat all students in the same way, and that they do not focus on a student's race or ethnicity. Such comments from faculty reveal an endorsement of a colorblind ideology, which emphasizes equal treatment in the context of a meritocracy. However, research indicates that when faculty endorse a colorblind ideology, they are less likely to engage in inclusive teaching methods that include diversity content and that encourage student voices (Aragón et al., 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014; Paris, 2012).

Fear contradicted the notion of diversity as a cultural value when it permeated the classrooms via faculty who lacked diversity knowledge and skill in facilitating related discussions, often leaving the diverse students compelled to teach to fill in the gaps. When

the colleges viewed diversity as a deficit and relied on a global definition of diversity, they failed to validate the cultures of the diverse students (cultural validation). Such an approach failed to create cultural conditions that broadly foster diverse student success, nor create culturally engaging campus environments to foster their success.

At the institutional level, diversity was espoused as a cultural value through a theme of student support and through the representation of students of color within the student population. Diversity as a cultural value, however, was apparent to students only at a surface level. In other words, while the value of diversity was conveyed in institutional statements and was evident in enrollment patterns, diversity did not appear to shape the curriculum or permeate the student experience in the classroom. Instead diversity was something to be dealt with as a source of fear for the institutions as they struggled to critically include it within their established cultures. As a result, diversity was not a deep cultural value; instead, it was a structural and surface value, often focused on enrollment and support strategies as the drivers to reduce achievement gaps.

Across the colleges, there were misalignments between the organizational culture and racially and ethnically diverse student success that resulted in the students experiencing a tension between their understood definitions of success and their lived experiences on their campuses. This is consistent with previous research that found students of color navigate and experience the organizational cultures of their colleges differently, often in less than positive ways, than White students (González, 2002; Harper, 2012a; Harper et al., 2011, 2018; Hurtado et al., 1999; Jayakumar & Museus, 2012; Masta, 2018; Museus & Maramba, 2011). When the institutions in this study privileged a global perspective of diversity, it served as a

catalyst to create environments as if all students experience college in the same ways. This perspective and the associated institutional rhetoric oversimplified the complexity of diversity at the colleges, did not engage multiple perspectives, and privileged the status quo.

Subsidiary Research Question Two

How are “high impact practices” implemented at community colleges that have diversity as a central organizing principle, as perceived by racially and ethnically diverse students? The high-impact practices implemented at the colleges aligned with the organizational cultures on the surface to reflect valuing students and student success, but were often misaligned with diversity as a value, and were frequently inconsistent with the students’ definitions of success (finish/pass, achieve goals, community support). Even though each institution had evidence of diversity as a central organizing principle, students indicated that the colleges were characterized by an ad hoc or limited approach to diversity in the curriculum. Diversity was viewed through a deficit lens that included fear of diversity. These underlying cultural beliefs and assumptions manifested in how high impact practices were designed and implemented in ways that did not always value diversity nor align well with the students’ own definitions of success, and resulted in influencing their participation in HIPs.

At SCC, the organizational culture was perceived as welcoming and inclusive by the students interviewed. As a Hispanic serving institution, structural diversity was a compelling symbol in the culture. The implementation of high impact practices focused on providing programs and services to foster student success, remediate deficits, and reduce achievement gaps. However, fear of diversity emerged in the classroom environment, in particular during

group discussions. Curricular content pertaining to race or ethnicity was often avoided by the faculty, or they handled diversity discussions to minimize perceived White students' discomfort with the content.

At WCC, the organizational culture was perceived as welcoming, appreciating of all cultures, and focused on students efficiently completing their goals on a safe campus. The students in this study attended only the urban campus and avoided the suburban campus as it was not perceived similarly. Diversity was valued symbolically through a global perspective; and a value for diversity did not deeply permeate the ways in which high impact practices were carried out. The high impact practices were implemented with an efficiency lens intended to prevent wasting a student's time in achieving their goals. In the classroom environment, however, students reported that diversity was sometimes feared and that diversity was superficially included in the curriculum, if at all.

At ECC, the organizational culture was perceived as valuing all students and their academic work, engaging with diversity through themes of support and representation. A naivety about diversity, however, permeated the college, resulting in diversity being perceived through a deficit and fear lens. The high impact practices, implemented within this cultural context, yielded pockets of support, as well as experiences with marginalization for students. In the classroom environment, diversity was feared, demonstrated by faculty feedback (or lack thereof), diversity content avoidance, and lack of inclusion of racially and ethnically diverse perspectives.

The culture manifests in the design and implementation of high impact practices. The high impact practices were predominately implemented with an efficiency and support lens

with little regard to racial or ethnic cultural validation, thus reinforcing a strategic approach to diversity, ad hoc and superficial in nature. The practices were implemented with the underlying beliefs and assumptions of diversity as a deficit and something to be feared resulting in a more prescriptive path that valued efficiency. When students were required by the institution to participate in a high impact practice (orientation, advising), the students' experiences illustrate a misalignment between the values of the high impact practice (efficiency, completion) and elements of the students' own success definitions, particularly the notion of community support. Such practices were misaligned because they were mainly transactional, inaccurate, or created conditions where students did not feel as though they could be themselves (Hurtado & Ruiz Alvarado, 2015; Museus & Ravello, 2010; Sweat et al., 2013; Wood & Newman, 2015).

Intentionally creating communities of support has been shown to be an effective institutional strategy for student success (Kezar et al., 2017; Nitecki, 2011). When faculty and staff collaborate, break down organizational silos, and work together with students inside and outside the classroom, student outcomes are affected positively (Kezar et al., 2017). Specifically, Kezar et al. found that when institutional stakeholders create a unified community of support for underrepresented students in STEM, this community yields positive impacts on students' persistence and achievement, and produces greater understanding about students by faculty and staff. In a similar study of community college career programs, faculty and advisors intentionally broke down bureaucratic structures to provide course content, advising, and career information outside of centralized structures to create academic subcultures (Nitecki, 2011). The subcultures provided communities of

support and reconceptualized faculty academic work roles. Faculty worked shifted from one of isolation bounded by a department, to one of expanded collaboration with other STEM departments and student affairs departments as a means to share knowledge to improve curricular alignment, support learning, and better align student advising. The students in this study fostered their own communities of support by seeking out and participating in relevant HIPs. As these study findings show, simply implementing programs, without an intentional commitment to creating communities of support, does not ensure that students of color will engage with them nor positively influence their success (Finley & McNair, 2013; Kezar et al., 2017; Karp, 2011; Kuh, 2008).

The analysis for this study revealed that despite organizational cultures that valued students and their success, when diversity was valued mainly through structural and strategic lenses, an underlying deficit lens of diversity influenced the implementation of high impact practices as perceived by the students. Generally, the high impact practices were implemented to support all students, but lacked connections to diversity with the exception of focusing on the deficiencies of racially and ethnically diverse students. Furthermore, high impact practices were often implemented according to traditional notions of time and availability. HIPs were intended to be a springboard to efficiently help students finish and move on, thereby reducing achievement gap disparity statistics and supporting the colleges' enrollment goals. The high impact practices were implemented in cultures that focused on student success mainly through an efficiency and support lens.

Data from this study reveal low rates of participation in high impact practices for racially and ethnically diverse students. The findings suggest that when high impact

practices are established with primary values of degree completion and efficiency, those practices may attract only limited involvement from students of color, resulting in missed opportunities to make meaningful connections to the notion of community support as a critical element of student success. Prior research suggests that students of color value college environments that are culturally engaging (Museus et al., 2017, 2018; Museus & Maramba, 2011), validate their cultural identities (Andrade, 2019; Harper et al., 2018; Hurtado & Ruiz Alvarado, 2015; Kiyama, Museus, & Vega, 2015; Rendón Linares & Munoz, 2011), and provide communities of support (Kezar et al., 2017; Museus, 2014) including opportunities for faculty student engagement (Acevedo & Zerquera, 2016; Bauer, 2014; Bonet & Walters, 2016; Wood & Turner, 2011). When institutions value diversity structurally, however, they focus primarily on the numbers of racially and ethnically diverse students enrolled at their campuses, and their impact on enrollment patterns and student outcomes. Moreover, an institution that values diversity strategically creates top-down plans that tend to be superficial and ad hoc in nature, thus failing to value the contributions and perspectives of people of color.

Subsidiary Research Question Three

At community colleges that have diversity as a central organizing principle, how do “high impact practices” influence racially and ethnically diverse student success? The students in this study were mid-way through their academic programs, and they attributed their success to a combination of factors which included family and key connections to institutional agents who reflected their sense of community support (Gonzalez Quiroz & Garza, 2018; Topper, 2019). Conversely the institutions were promoting individualized

practices such as centralized advising services, academic maps, online resources, and self-help strategies to foster student success (Bailey et al., 2015; Hatch & Garcia, 2017; Lee, 2018). The students of color in this study did not overwhelmingly participate in the available high impact practices on their campuses as indicated in the interviews and in the survey results. These findings align with research that suggest that students of color participate in fewer HIPs than do White students (Finley & McNair, 2013; Kuh, 2008). The high impact practices that the students in this study did seek out (advising, student success programs, tutoring, faculty advising) aligned with their own definitions of student success, particularly in terms of community support. The literature suggests that successful community college students, those with clear goals and motivation, will bring with them and develop support systems once in college, yet they do not participate in academic services or extracurricular activities unless they are aligned with their own goals (Martin, Galentino, & Townsend, 2014; Topper, 2019).

The colleges responded to the deficit understanding of diversity by implementing a web of support programs and services to respond to changing demographics in enrollment and external performance pressures. The availability of high impact practices such as orientations, advising centers and staff, and academic support programs demonstrated a commitment to student success. However, the misalignment between the organizational culture and the students' own definitions of success emerged when students shared their experiences of receiving inaccurate information, as well as low expectations from advising staff and faculty (Harper et al., 2018; Lee, 2018). In the classroom, students reported discussions on diversity-related topics as poorly handled to non-existent by faculty (Harper et

al., 2018; Reddy, 2018; Sleeter, 2003; Stolzenberg et al., 2019; Sue, Torino, Capodilupo, Rivera, & Lin, 2009). At times, the classroom minimized diverse students' voices and contributions, and compelled them to teach diversity-related content and/or address negative stereotypes or discriminatory comments about their own identities (Harper et al., 2011; Masta, 2018). In contrast, advising that is culturally validating (Museus & Ravello, 2010) has been shown to positively impact student success (CCCSE, 2018; Hatch & Garcia, 2017; Young-Jones, Burt, Dixon, & Hawthorne., 2013). Furthermore, community college faculty have the ability to positively influence the success and persistence of students of color when they validate students' identities, and when they encourage diverse perspectives and voices in the classroom (Barnett, 2011; Rendón Linares & Muñoz, 2011).

When the prescribed path for success and engagement did not align with the students' own definitions of success, they tended not to engage with HIPs. Community support was a central concept in the students' definitions of success reflecting a collectivist orientation (Guiffrida et al., 2012). When the high impact practice did not create community support, as perceived by the students, then the practice resulted in the students minimally or not engaging with it (Lee, 2018; Martin et al., 2014). High impact practices have been connected to racial and ethnic student success (Kuh, 2008; Finley & McNair, 2013; Kezar et al., 2017; Museus, 2014). However, research also suggests that high impact practices may be implemented in ways that do not enhance the possibilities of success for students of color (Finley & McNair, 2013; Kuh, 2008).

This study found that in spite of a variety of available high impact practices at all three colleges, the students engaged mainly with those that they perceived to provide a sense

of community support, as well as cultural validation and a sense of belonging (Griffon & Museus, 2015; Hurtado & Ruiz Alvarado, 2015; Museus et al., 2016; Rendón Linares & Muñoz, 2011). The students interviewed for this study were nimble and through peer networks, and locating key programs and people on campus, they were able to establish community support, to finish and pass their classes, and to achieve their goals (Gonzalez Quiroz & Garza, 2018). Additionally, the students described why they did not engage with some practices and programs; reasons were related to the times they were offered, locations where they were offered, lack of confidence in the accuracy of the advice, and a perceived lack of alignment with their goals. This finding aligns with prior research that found that in addition to students of color participating in fewer HIPs than White students, students of color also lacked information about high impact practices and faced time constraints (Finley & McNair, 2013).

Across all three of the colleges, there were pockets of culturally engaging opportunities where students found faculty and staff who validated their identities and supported their academic goals through advice and tutoring. In programs that built communities of support led by caring faculty or staff, (e.g. STEM programs, TRIO programs, veterans centers, tutoring centers), students of color engaged with these practices because they were aligned with their own definitions of student success. These programs appeared to provide a refuge (Topper, 2019) for the students to find community support (Kezar et al., 2013). The importance of supporting collectivist orientations of students and providing community support is reflected in the manner in which they engaged with HIPs at their colleges. In contrast, high impact practices that are designed without an appreciation of the

perspectives and cultural values of students of color are unlikely to engage the students or positively influence their success.

Limitations

This study explored organizational culture within three community colleges. The researcher set out to understand how the organizational cultures of community colleges foster or hinder diverse student success. The study of organizational culture is complex as it is comprised of the values, beliefs, assumptions, and norms of an organization (Museus, 2014; Schein, 2004). The researcher intended to explore not only the surface level manifestations of the culture, but to delve critically into the culture through racially and ethnically diverse student voice. Several limitations must be considered when interpreting the results of this study.

First, the community colleges selected for this study were from one regional location. Regional influences, such as demographic population characteristics and state government policies regarding the achievement gap, may impact institutional practices and cultures.

Second, the sample size of racially and ethnically diverse students per community college varied due to the results of the participant selection survey and the participation yield. Study participant recruitment procedures resulted in a total of 25 students participating in focus groups/interviews across the three colleges. The original research design called for focus groups, but this proved difficult to achieve as students would either not attend scheduled appointments, or the researcher was able to schedule only one or two students in an available time slot. Therefore, this study resulted in data collection procedures that included three focus groups (with three or more students in each), five small group

interviews with two students in each, and four one-to-one interviews. At SCC, three focus groups were conducted, with three, six, and four students respectively in each group. At WCC, three small group interviews with two students per session and two one-to-one interviews were conducted. At ECC, one small group interview with two students and two one-to-one interviews were conducted. For consistency, the same interview guide was followed in all focus groups, small group interviews, and individual interviews. The small number of participants at ECC (n=4) is a limitation to the data collected there. However, the themes that emerged at ECC aligned with the other two colleges demonstrating common patterns in the culture.

Third, the study of organizational culture is complex. Culture is fluid and changes over time. This study focused on the student perspective as the means to understand how the organizational culture fosters or impedes racially and ethnically diverse student success. Having three cases provided the researcher the opportunity to triangulate the data by looking for meaning across the cases as a means to demonstrate commonality of emergent themes from data collected from student participants in interviews, as well as survey data, document analysis, and observations.

Fourth, the study includes only enrolled students who are in good academic standing. The study does not include students who have withdrawn from the institution; and does not include the voices of students who are not in good academic standing. This is a limitation because these voices would likely provide critical perspectives about student success and how these students experienced the culture. This could provide deep understanding into how organizational culture impacts student withdrawal decisions. The student perspective in this

study highlights the voices of students who were academically committed to their colleges. By including these experienced and successful students, they are able to provide a unique perspective about the colleges. Their experiences with the college culture and HIPs shift the research focus intentionally from a deficit perspective of racially and ethnically diverse students to a perspective that validates their voices and success.

Despite these limitations, this study makes a contribution to the bodies of research on organizational culture in higher education institutions, in particular community colleges and how they may foster diverse student success. The focus on racially and ethnically diverse student voice regarding student success distinguishes this study, as it provides insights into the influence of organizational culture in fostering success, as well as the implementation of high impact practices for racially and ethnically diverse students.

Key Findings

Four study findings deserve further attention in relation to the available literature on diverse student success in higher education. These four findings provide an overarching understanding of the results of this study.

First, *organizational culture is pervasive and impacts diverse student success*. This study provides insight into the pervasive role of organizational culture in fostering or hindering diverse student success (Arum & Roksa, 2011; Jenkins, 2007; McLennan & Jacobo, 2018; Museus, 2014). The colleges in this study, while having evidence of unique organizational cultures, also had evidence of common cultural values. The three common organizational cultural values identified by the students were: 1) valuing the students,

2) being welcoming, and 3) encouraging student success. Students generally described their community colleges positively despite also noting experiences that silenced or minimized them. This finding aligns with other research where students of color perceived their colleges positively yet also reported experiencing discrimination (Cuellar & Johnson-Ahorlu, 2016; McLennan & Jacobo, 2018). Latina/o students at an HSI community college were found to observe discrimination and bias on campus yet they perceived the climate both positively and negatively; while Asian students perceived more discrimination than other racial and ethnic groups (Cuellar & Johnson-Ahorlu, 2016). Their study found that simply having a critical mass of diverse students on campus does not automatically result in a positive campus climate for students of color. Further, the Diverse Learning Environments (DLE) survey, administered to over 17,000 college students, found that one in four students reported discrimination based on their race and/or ethnicity; and the students reported hearing discriminatory comments from students, faculty, and staff including hearing stereotypes from faculty in class (McLennan & Jacobo, 2018). The DLE results also revealed that over 80% of the students report feeling comfortable sharing in class; however, approximately 48% of Asian and Latina/o students, and 56% of Black students noted that in order to be perceived as a good student they had to work harder than others.

The literature suggests that college culture serves both a functional role that guides how the institution operates organizationally and an interpretative role that reflects institutional ideology through its behaviors and values (Levin, 1997; Museus, 2014). Ibarra (2001) suggests that scholars can explore how culture may perpetuate exclusion and oppression via dominant ideologies, as well as how it may support inclusive practices that

give voice to all members of the academy. Yosso (2005) expands the critical perspective to explain that without the acknowledgement of the strengths or cultural wealth that students of color bring and contribute to their institutions, institutions will continue to perceive students of color as outsiders in the academy who arrive disadvantaged, lacking the ability to contribute without the institution's assistance. Furthermore, Iverson (2007) suggests that institutions frequently mask their "diversity as deficit" ideology in their diversity plans and policies by using language and strategies that purport to support diversity, but actually reinforce the minimization and inequity of students of color. Iverson's study revealed how institutional rhetoric appears to welcome students of color as outsiders who are invited into a space that privileges White racial identity as the insider group. Diversity plans may characterize students of color as disadvantaged and at risk even before they enroll, according to Iverson.

In this study, several cultural misalignments became evident that illustrate culture's pervasive and influential impact on students. There were misalignments between organizational culture and students' definitions of success that created challenging conditions for the students. First was the misalignment of the organizational culture as fostering a more individualized approach to student success versus one based on the diverse students' definitions of success that included community support and a more collectivist perspective. In previous research by Stephens et al. (2012) that surveyed administrators and students at top tier universities and liberal arts colleges, and at second tier universities and liberal arts colleges, the authors found a mismatch between university cultures that are based on middle and upper class norms of independence and the first-generation and/or working class students

who value interdependence. This cultural misalignment undermines the success of first generation students and suggests that higher education in the United States maintains social class inequality through its perpetuation of the norms of independence over interdependence (Stephens et al., 2012). Similarly in this study, while the community college students had individual goals, they sought to enact their success within a community of support context. When the colleges created learning environments and implemented high impact practices with an individual emphasis, these institutional efforts did not always foster the community support that was part of the diverse students' definitions of success. This notion was reinforced by Museus (2014) in the CECE cultural responsiveness indicator for collectivist cultural orientations. A collectivist cultural orientation emphasizes teamwork and a sense of mutual success, as opposed to an individualistic and competitive focus. Collectivist orientations were found to foster students' sense of belonging, an indicator of success (Museus et al., 2017).

The second cultural misalignment in this study is that these colleges did not appear to create culturally engaging campus environments that were culturally relevant and responsive (Museus, 2014). Research has shown that organizational cultures that are culturally relevant tend to intentionally include the cultural backgrounds, communities, and identities of racially and ethnically diverse college students, thereby fostering their success (Museus et al., 2015; Museus et al., 2017). When the racial and ethnic cultural identities of the students in this study were minimized in the curriculum, the colleges were not providing cultural conditions that validated the students' background, prior knowledge, or identities beyond a superficial perspective.

Generally, the students experienced organizational cultures that on the surface messaged valuing them and their success. When the colleges were successful in fostering a collectivist orientation, such as in some academic and student success programs, these spaces did foster student success. Yet in some environments, student experiences did not align with the espoused values of the college. In this study, the organizational culture did play a role in fostering racially and ethnically diverse student success, yet it also played a role in hindering their success through missed learning opportunities and missed relationships with faculty and staff.

These cultural misalignments resulted in students of color experiencing a tension between their understood definitions of student success and their lived experiences on their campuses. On the one hand, they generally saw the colleges in a very positive light, yet they experienced episodes of marginalization and isolation as well. The notion that the colleges' cultures can reinforce a racialized culture and racist systems is troubling, though consistent with history (Museus et al., 2015) and the ways that students of color experience college environments as racialized and isolating (González, 2002; Harper, 2012a, 2012b; Harper et al., 2011; Harper et al., 2018; Masta, 2018; McLennan & Jacobo, 2018; Museus & Maramba, 2011).

The colleges in this study engaged with diversity as an outsider notion (Yosso, 2005) that informed the culture and yielded a primarily structural and strategic response to diversity. The structural approach to diversity is conveyed through the representation and composition of groups (Cox, 1994; Hurtado et al., 1999; Milem, 2003; Milem et al., 2005). The strategic approach to diversity is enacted through top-down college-wide plans; yet the

plans often do not result in deep institutional culture change (Cox, 1994, 2001; Hurtado et al., 1999; Kuh et al., 2005). The strategic approach falls short due to its superficial and ad hoc nature, often lacking the college-wide support needed to deeply impact classrooms, faculty, and instruction. These structural and strategic approaches to diversity are associated with the reality of national demographics and external accountability pressures regarding student success and the college completion agenda (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Complete College America, 2018). However, relying only on structural and strategic approaches to diversity can yield an organizational culture that does not deeply value diversity, as this study found.

Second, *the default definition of diversity is diluted through a global and all-inclusive perspective*. Diversity was understood and appreciated from a global perspective at all the community colleges. The colleges used terms such as “global awareness,” “global citizenship,” “global context,” or “our increasingly global and diverse world” in their diversity statements. All three community colleges in this study developed artifacts and documents in which diversity was defined as a global and all-inclusive construct. At WCC, for example, documents described diversity as linked to caring and inclusion with references to student access, respect, global citizenship, and social responsibility. At ECC, similarly, diversity was connected to a global society, and non-discrimination, access, reducing achievement gaps, and civility. At SCC, a Hispanic serving institution, diversity was linked to pluralism, inclusion, and global awareness. Across the colleges, questions about courageous conversations that challenged current systems or considered how communities of color strengthen institutions were not evident with the

exception to ensure compliance with nondiscrimination policies, goals to increase the racial and ethnic diversity in their workforces, and goals to reduce achievement gaps.

Generally absent from the students' observations were references to how their racially and ethnically diverse cultural identities were included as a value or an asset to the college community in college practices, artifacts, and culture – with the exception of SCC to some degree. At SCC, a Hispanic serving institution, the students who identified as Latina/o noted the positive opportunities to engage with staff who were bilingual or to participate in cultural programs and celebrations that reflected their cultural identity. At WCC, students noticed the portraits of WCC alumni that included racially and ethnically diverse identities that lined the main hall at the urban campus. However, at all three colleges, the emphasis on diversity tended to focus on a general understanding to include all people and identities.

The reliance on a diluted definition of diversity that focused on a global and all-inclusive perspective falls short in creating an organizational culture that fosters success for racially and ethnically diverse students. Such a perspective does not validate the racial and ethnic identities of the students nor does it acknowledge the contributions and knowledge that communities of color bring with them to college. At the three colleges, institutional rhetoric regarding diversity oversimplified the complexity of diversity on campus, resulting in more narrow, hierarchical interpretations of diversity that did not fully engage multiple perspectives, and instead privileged those in the majority and in power (Witham et al., 2015; Yosso, 2005). From the global language found in institutional statements and documents, to the minimization or absence of diversity in the curriculum, the colleges persisted in engaging

with students of color as deficient outsiders, and as an enrollment and institutional outcomes matter.

Prior research has shown that institutions typically default to structural and strategic responses to diversity. To make diversity an institutional commitment, Hurtado et al. (1999) propose that institutions need to critically examine their historical legacy, structural diversity, psychological climate, and behavioral patterns. Doing so can challenge assumptions of power and privilege among stakeholder groups and can establish an institutional shift towards equity (Witham et al., 2015) and equitable outcomes.

The colleges in this study leveraged a global perspective or global marketplace as a catalyst for students to be aware of diversity, thus leveraging diversity as a commodity of value to dominant groups. The colleges engaged with diversity through enrollment strategies, it was barely included in the curriculum, yet it was valued as a skill set needed by dominant groups. This finding aligned with Iverson's (2007) study of university diversity plans and policies that found that institutions default to a global perspective of diversity as a means to maintain student enrollments, and to provide students with exposure to diverse communities as a skill set necessary to be competitive in the workforce.

Third, *racially and ethnically diverse students engage with high impact practices that align with their definitions of student success*. High impact practices are strategically designed and intended to foster student success (CCCSE, 2012). The idea that HIPs are strategically designed implies that values and choices inform their design. The direct connection to organizational values is essential in understanding the ways in which organizational culture manifests in HIPs. At the colleges in this study, when high impact

practices aligned with the students' own definitions of success, the students appeared to be more likely to engage with those practices and find them worthwhile. However, when students described high impact practices that were enacted with an underlying assumption of diversity as a deficit or something to be feared, then the students felt marginalized, uncomfortable, and isolated. Previous studies have explored how campus cultures impact students of color to feel as though they are culturally starved (González, 2002), experience “onlyness” within the academic community (Harper, 2012), or must commit cultural suicide in order to fit in (Museus & Maramba, 2011). Harper et al. (2018) found that the lack of spaces that validated Black university students' identities and cultures coupled with their classroom experiences of racism and discrimination signaled to the students that their institution did not value them nor wish to invest in them.

The students in this study tended to engage with high impact practices that were aligned with their definitions of student success. Prior research has shown that making connections with a key faculty or staff member can occur for students of color in the context of participating in high impact practices (Acevedo & Zerquera, 2016; Bauer, 2014; Bonet & Walters, 2016; Wood & Turner, 2011). Likewise, programs that provided spaces for community support through peers or staff were identified by the students in this study as important elements of the high impact practices in which they engaged. HIPs that were designed to be culturally relevant to the populations they serve, such as the summer STEM bridge program for Latina/o students that was offered at SCC, and the summer STEM bridge at ECC, have been shown to positively impact retention and academic success (Gonzalez Quiroz & Garza, 2018). In fact, when these high impact practices reflected a “pedagogy of

inclusion” (Ybarra, 2004b) or were “culturally sustaining” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014; Paris, 2012), then there was an emphasis on diversity rather than assimilation. Similarly, when pedagogy intentionally connects cultural differences and leverages the cultural perspectives of students of color in the classroom, these practices support equity and resist assimilation (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014; Museus, 2014; Paris, 2012; Ybarra, 2004b).

As Finley and McNair (2013) and Kuh (2008) found, students of color participate in fewer high impact practices than White students, bringing into question the manner in which these practices are implemented. Furthermore, not all high impact practices have been shown to positively impact all students, and all students do not engage with all HIPs in the same way. The different ways that racial and ethnic groups of students engage and benefit from HIPs is important to consider. For example, diversity related course content has been shown to positively impact engagement for students of color (Sweat et al., 2013), while the absence of diversity content has been shown to negatively impact students of color (Harper et al., 2018). This study found that regardless of the menu of available high impact practices, if they are implemented in ways that do not align with racially and ethnically diverse student success definitions, then the students did not broadly participate in them. The role of organizational culture in shaping how HIPs are designed, enacted, and engaged with is important to consider, as the research suggests that the more frequently a student engages with HIPs, the greater the positive impact on student outcomes (Finley & McNair, 2013; Kuh, 2008; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Saenz et al., 2011).

Conversely, researchers are questioning the effectiveness of high impact practices in terms of their ability to positively impact student success (Bailey et al., 2015; Finley &

McNair, 2013). Johnson and Stage (2018) found in large, less selective institutions, that undergraduate research experiences had a slightly positive impact on graduation rates, but overall, high impact practices tended to have limited impact on graduation rates at all institutional types. Finley and McNair's (2013) study found that White students participated in more high impact practices than students of color at the universities in the study; however, all racial and ethnic groups benefitted from participation with the benefits generally increasing the more practices students participated in. However, students of color participated in fewer high impact practices, and thus tended not to obtain the positive cumulative effects of multiple participations. The students in the Finley and McNair study also revealed that their reasons for low participation in high impact practices were due to "a lack of advising or guidance about what high-impact practices are or why they are important, and an inability to commit time to these experiences due to the constraints of busy lives" (p. 29). Bailey et al. (2015) suggest that community colleges need to re-conceptualize how they connect and support students to move away from an ad hoc system of support, and instead move towards guided pathways and support services that connect with students initially to identify academic goals. Kilgo et al. (2005) concurs that HIPs positively impact student success and suggests, "Institutions should therefore be intentional about incorporating good practices into the facilitation of high-impact practices to promote maximal student learning" (p. 523). The idea of being intentional, however, is a value laden proposition, and one that generally privileges the status quo within an institution and does not always include diverse perspectives. In contrast, an equity-minded perspective insists that diverse voices are included in planning and decision-making practices (Witham et al., 2015).

The idea of what constitutes a “good” high impact practice remains inconclusive. There continues to be an emphasis in the literature about the importance of diversity when implementing high impact practices (Finley & McNair, 2013; Hurtado et al., 2012; Lee, 2018; Museus, 2014; Museus et al., 2017, 2018). Researchers continue to try to determine which HIPs are effective and for whom (Bailey et al., 2015; Finley & McNair, 2013; Tinto, 2012; Waiwaiole et al., 2016). The students in this study engaged with HIPs that aligned with their own definitions of success within organizational cultures that both valued students and their success while also framing diversity as a deficit and as something to be feared. This misalignment of the students’ success values (finishing/passing, achieving goals, and community support) with the organizational culture resulted in opportunities where the culture either fostered their student success in spaces that aligned with their values, or hindered success in spaces where there was misalignment, particularly in classrooms where diversity content was minimized or ignored.

The idea of intentionally creating spaces for refuge (Topper, 2019) and communities of support (Kezar et al., 2013; Nikecki, 2011) to foster the success of community college students of color aligns with elements of the CECE model, which suggests that organizational cultures that are both culturally relevant and culturally responsive to the identities of students of color can foster success of racially and ethnically diverse students (Museus, 2014). The design and enactment of high impact practices to intentionally value and validate diverse identities and establish structures and practices that align with racially and ethnically diverse students’ definitions of success (Museus, 2014; Museus et al., 2017, 2018) have the potential to positively impact the success of students of color. This study

found that when HIPs are designed to both align with racially and ethnically diverse students' definitions of success and validate their racial and ethnic identities, these practices have the potential as evidenced by the students in this study to positively impact student outcomes.

Fourth, *the educational benefits of diversity are constrained when the organizational culture assumes diversity to be a deficit with an underlying assumption of fear.* The educational benefits of diversity have been understood as positively impacting students' openness and ability to work well with people of diverse backgrounds and identities (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Chang et al., 2006; Hurtado, 2001; Pascarella et al., 1996), critical thinking (Pascarella et al., 2001), engagement and retention (Chang, 1999; Gurin et al., 2002), and academic self-confidence and achievement (Denson & Chang, 2015). When diversity is a deep rather than superficial institutional value, the culture of the institution encourages the inclusion of voices that have not been historically included into the life and ideology of the institution (CCCSE, 2010; Hurtado, 1999; Ibarra, 2001; Iverson, 2007; Kuh et al., 2006; Matias, 2013; Rendón, 2000). When diversity and excellence are conceptualized as deeply connected and valued by an institution, it is expressed at the institutional level through a focus on student and intellectual development, creation of environments that promote learning and inclusion, acknowledging and responding to the cultural differences of learners, and via efforts to involve college-wide participation of multiple stakeholders and viewpoints (Clayton-Pederson & Musil, 2005). At the institutional level, an institution with diversity as deep, authentic value will express it in the arenas of leadership, curriculum, pedagogy, and program practices (CCCSE, 2010; Kuh et al., 2005; Museus, 2014; Yosso, 2005).

In this study, diversity was found to be valued as a deficit and something to be feared. This cultural perspective of diversity hinders the opportunity for all students to gain the educational benefits of diversity. Even with a critical mass of racially and ethnically diverse students at each of the community colleges in this study, the colleges still failed to validate the racial and ethnic diversity of the students they enrolled and appeared to set Whiteness as the organizational norm and diversity as a deficit to be feared.

While the research suggests that White students gain more benefits from cross-race interactions on campus than students of color (Chun & Evans, 2015), such interactions are conditional on having a positive campus racial climate (Jayakumar, 2008) and the students perceive that the institution values diversity (Denson & Chang, 2015). Thus, the colleges in this study were less apt to have their students gain the educational benefits of diversity due to the manner in which diversity shaped their cultures, including in the classroom.

All three colleges in this study espoused diversity as a value in the curriculum via intentional content or as an add-on in class through historical, contemporary, or current issues. However, diversity was not broadly or deeply infused in the curriculum or the co-curriculum. Instead, diversity was located primarily in the humanities and the social science disciplines and in some co-curricular programs. This finding is consistent with research that describes the curriculum as the reflection of the dominant institutional ideology (Rhoads, 1995; Salazar et al., 2004; Sleeter, 2003) and efforts to change it will typically be resisted (Freire, 1979) as it is predominantly a faculty domain (Tierney, 1995).

In this study, the students of color observed class discussions on diversity as limited due to faculty fears of offending someone. In these cases, students observed that the

environment was handled by faculty to control the level of engagement with the topic. This finding aligns with prior research that indicates that faculty are often reluctant to include diversity content because they are not willing or do not feel able to address the conflicts that may arise in class (Reddy, 2018; Sleeter, 2003; Stolzenberg et al., 2019; Sue et al., 2009). The students in this study described faculty who ensured that there was no more than a surface level discussion of diversity in order to minimize White students' discomfort with the discussion or the faculty member's own discomfort. The students in this study questioned the level of faculty knowledge and skill with diversity content. The students' perceptions about faculty align with research on how White faculty anticipate that discussions on race will be difficult and that they fear losing control or fear facing their own biases (Sue et al., 2009). Faculty in general are reluctant to teach diversity content due to the belief that they are not prepared to handle conflict that may arise (Stolzenberg et al., 2019). When White faculty mitigate their fear of diversity content and when they perceive that their White students are uncomfortable with diversity content, the faculty reinforce diversity as a deficit; and exempt their White students from experiencing racial dissonance, a critical part of learning about their own racial identities and the history and impact of racism (Cabrera, Franklin, & Watson, 2017; Jayakumar & Adamian, 2017). Such strategies result in silencing race and perpetuating the status quo, thus reinforcing systemic racism (Cabrera et al., 2017; Jayakumar & Adamian, 2017; Museus et al., 2015).

Furthermore, when students of color are deemed outsiders or at risk before they enter the institutions (Harper et al., 2018; Iverson, 2007; Witham et al., 2015; Yosso, 2005), faculty are not encouraged to learn new ways to engage with them and to explore their own

biases. Sleeter (2017) suggests that teacher education program faculty are predominantly White and their students are predominantly White, which perpetuates the notion that the inclusion of diverse perspectives in teaching is a footnote versus a core value to teaching. According to Aragón et al. (2017), faculty who prefer a colorblind ideology (one that minimizes differences) were found to be less willing to utilize inclusive teaching practices, thereby limiting opportunities to engage in experiences that are culturally validating and ultimately foster success for students of color.

Diversity through a deficit lens shaped the organizational culture for diverse students and limited the educational benefits of diversity. When diversity was minimized in the curriculum, it served to ignore the cultural wealth that students of color bring to their campuses. Cultural wealth, according to Yosso (2005), includes the community strengths, knowledge, and skills that students of color bring to campus and draw upon.

The students in this study described their urban campuses as being more racially diverse. At ECC, a student described how as the students moved from the urban campus to the main rural campus, there were fewer students of color in their classes. At WCC's urban campus, the police office was positioned in the main entry way, in effect messaging that this racially and ethnically diverse campus was to be feared. Dache-Gerbino and White (2016) found that the urban campuses of community colleges were more structurally diverse than those in the suburbs, leading to racially segregated campuses and to having a highly visible security or police presence at their entry ways. These practices represent the manner in which fear of diversity was prevalent across the colleges. Fear contradicted the notion of diversity as a cultural value and organizational asset.

Implications for Future Research

A benefit of this study was the opportunity to explore how the role of community college organizational cultures shape high impact practices and foster or hinder diverse student success. As a study of organizational culture at the institutional level, student voice provided the lens through which to understand the relationship between organizational culture and student success. Future research should continue to explore the degree of alignment of students' own definitions of success with the organizational culture at community colleges. In particular, students of color can be included in the discourse about curriculum, programs, and practices designed and implemented to foster their success. Future research could explore diverse student experiences with the organizational culture at different points of time, including as they enter and exit the colleges. A study that explores definitions of success over time can help better understand the role organizational culture may have on shaping their definitions of success or not. The students in this study had demonstrated success as they were at the mid-way point in their academic programs. This could indicate that they had already figured out how to navigate the culture to achieve student success.

A deeper look at community college's organizational culture could include more voices in the study such as faculty, staff, and administrators, as well as student voice as a means to identify possible incongruences that result in conditions that do not foster racially and ethnically diverse student success. Existing research tends to explore the impact of organizational culture on students with the focus on the student experience and outcome measures of retention, persistence, and graduation. Research at the institutional level can

provide deeper understanding of the power and privilege structures in place that impact valuing the educational benefits of diversity, closing achievement gaps, and empowering diverse students. Looking at the messages of cultural artifacts that appear on the surface to value diversity, but tend to mask ideologies of sameness and disadvantage for students of color, may be useful to provoke discourse at the colleges. A study that examines these artifacts and the understanding of them by institutional leaders can help to better understand how organizational cultures reinforce messages or reveal inconsistencies that foster unintended outcomes.

Overall, future research can explore how organizational culture is enacted at community colleges as they have the highest proportion of racially and ethnically diverse student enrollments. How do existing student success frameworks in place at campuses reinforce the status quo of a culture, including racism? A study that examines the values that drive student success frameworks and the strategies that are enacted may reveal practices that do not foster the success of students of color. How do student success frameworks challenge new ways of thinking about equity at community colleges? Such a study can help identify practices that foster equitable outcomes and help develop an understanding of what that may look like at a community college.

Furthermore, what high impact practices do students choose? This area merits more attention to provide better understanding about how and why students are selecting HIPs; and to disaggregate this information to deepen understanding about how the organizational culture manifests in the design and delivery of them. Are the definitions of what is deemed high impact maintaining the status quo and perpetuating systemic racism; or are there

practices that matter to students of color that are unidentified or underdeveloped by institutions that merit further attention? It is imperative, moreover, to explore how stated values and practices about diversity are often only symbolic, surface level, and fail to create the conditions for success for diverse students. As this research showed, when diversity is valued through a global and deficit-based lens, organizational culture may hinder the success of diverse students.

Implications for Practice

This study illustrated the role of organizational culture in fostering the success of racially and ethnically diverse students. The organizational culture shaped the manner in which high impact practices were designed and enacted. The findings of this study suggest that what an institution values influences how its institutional agents and students engage with it. A cultural misalignment emerged when the institutions' espoused cultural values differed from those that were enacted and experienced by the students in this study. Cultural beliefs that diversity reflects a deficit to fix or that diversity is to be feared were particularly evident in the classroom environment, which negatively impacted the experiences of students of color. This resulted in students of color potentially missing opportunities to engage with diversity in the curriculum and co-curriculum, including through high impact practices.

This study has shown the critical relationship between the alignments of organizational culture, racially and ethnically diverse students' definitions of success, and the design and implementation of high impact practices intended to foster their success. Given the known contributions of high impact practices and the salient role of culturally engaging organizational cultures (Museus, 2014) as a means to support the educational benefits of

diversity, one could expect that such research-based practices could reduce achievement disparities based on race and ethnicity, thus illustrating the compelling need for institutional leaders to fearlessly, intentionally, and honestly examine their organizational cultures.

As the national discourse continues to ponder the persistent achievement gaps between White and racially and ethnically diverse students, the role of organizational culture as a factor should be considered as salient. Current calls for colleges to be equity-minded should include an examination of their organizational cultures and the ways in which they manifest in patterns of inclusion and success, or marginalization and oppression based on a history of societal racism that informs structures, policies, and practices (Cabrera et al., 2017; Museus et al., 2015; Witham et al., 2015). The following are recommendations for practice based on this study's findings.

First, college presidents and top-level leaders can be fearless in efforts to create spaces and conditions for a critical analysis of organizational culture, so they can fully understand how it is enacted and how it aligns with expressed organizational values. A critical first step is to articulate this goal as a top, long-term priority that is a shared responsibility and not a quick fix or fad. With that foundation, the work must be supported with space, time, and resources provided for critical analysis and equity work, beginning with organizational culture. The establishment of cross-functional teams to address matters of diversity and equity can model equitable practices, and value the contributions of communities of color. Leaders can communicate that this work must be visible and sustainable, embedded throughout the college versus centralized. This is not a simple task as it requires willingness to examine institutional data beyond the usual methods of

disaggregation of admission, enrollment, persistence, retention, and graduation. It requires the willingness to ask courageous questions about why policies and practices exist; and whether or not they align with the definitions of success of their racially and ethnically diverse students. It also requires examining organizational structures and resources to see if they focus mainly on efficiency without an alignment of efforts to intentionally create communities of support for students of color. Finally, it requires a willingness by senior leaders to listen and be bold as they discover new knowledge about their institutions and envision their colleges not just as accessible, but also as equitable.

Second, administrators such as Deans of Institutional Effectiveness or Institutional Research can partner with Academic and Student Affairs to engage racially and ethnically diverse student voices to better understand how students of color experience the community college culture. The inclusion of student voices should not rely solely on surveys and ad hoc data from already highly-engaged students of whom college leaders may already be aware. Instead, student voice should come from a variety of student profiles such as prospective, early career, mid-career, late career, post grad, and those who transfer or drop out. Surveys should be combined with qualitative data such as focus groups or interviews to inform discussion, decisions, and resource allocation.

This type of data collection should seek to understand how students of color experience their college, how they define student success, and how they make sense of the organizational culture. The disaggregation of data by race and ethnicity can reveal disparities. Student focus groups can ask how students of color experienced the campus culture, including students who do not persist. If colleges do not ask such questions, then

they default to an understanding of their students of color that is incomplete. Such incomplete data yields inaccurate perspectives and perpetuates the status quo. This will not help to foster the success of students of color nor reduce achievement gaps. The resultant data, a college's data story, is evidence of disparities as well as its progress, and this should be shared regularly with institutional stakeholders to inform their practices and to celebrate their progress.

Third, administrators such as Directors of Professional Development should be cognizant of the organizational culture and understand the experiences of students of color at their colleges. It is important to identify sources of professional development that challenge deficit perspectives of diversity and infuse it in all areas and levels of the college regularly. Professional development can be holistically developed with a short-term and a long-term plan to 1) develop an individual's understanding of their own racial and ethnic identity and its role in their practice as a teacher or staff member and on their views towards other racial and ethnic groups; 2) develop an understanding of the history of education and the manner in which education has and continues to exclude people of color through structures and pedagogy including curriculum; and 3) explore and identify culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012) where teaching practices and content intentionally include diverse perspectives and validate the identities of students of color. This work should be done collaboratively in partnership with faculty and staff, with an overarching commitment to challenge deficit perspectives and infuse diversity in all areas of teaching and learning.

Fourth, academic deans who are responsible for faculty and the curriculum can provide time and resources to faculty who seek to develop more inclusive pedagogies and

diverse content. Such work should be supported and lauded as integral to the success of the college and students. Diversifying the curriculum can be infused in the structure of academic work as a standing topic at division and department meetings. In an efficiency focused environment, diversity may default to a global perspective to address workforce needs. Such a perspective does not validate students of color or foster their success. Therefore, the assessment of diversity content and its impact on student outcomes will need to be studied. A partnership with institutional research is warranted in this work.

Fifth, administrators such as Deans and Directors of Student Success can think critically about the design and implementation of high impact practices to ensure that they are doing so in a manner that is culturally relevant and culturally responsive (Museus, 2014). The design of high impact practices can be informed by students' own definitions of success, including community support as an essential element. Organizational culture manifests in the design and implementation of HIPs. This is important as HIPs have the capacity to reinforce the existing organizational culture which may negatively impact students of color.

However, HIPs enacted with culturally validating and sustaining pedagogy, have the potential to be alternative spaces for students of color to thrive. Studying the participation of students of color in HIPs is essential to inform future HIP designs. Such practices can reduce tendencies to rely on the status quo that perpetuate low participation by students of color which in turn limits their chances to receive the benefits of HIPs. Further, if the organizational culture is relevant and responsive to students of color, when the culture manifests in the HIPs' design and implementation, different more equitable outcomes and experiences for students of color may emerge.

Finally, the study findings suggest that practitioners should rethink contemporary community colleges in order to create colleges that are equity-minded (Witham et al., 2015). This rethinking of the community college may require challenging assumptions and deficit perspectives about communities of color in order to more effectively address achievement gaps between White students and students of color.

The following are further recommendations of how a community college can enact and sustain an organizational culture that fosters the success of students of color. All community college policy makers, senior leaders, faculty and staff should reflect deeply and develop their knowledge, skills and abilities to better understand their diverse students' experiences and definitions of success. They also can examine and address any persistent fear of diversity if it is found individually and/or institutionally.

It is time to rethink community college faculty work by creating hybrid faculty roles that reduce teaching loads and increase their advising and mentoring. Over time, full-time community college teaching loads have increased. While advising and service are built into their faculty roles, the increased teaching loads limit their available time for advising and student engagement. The community college mission is focused on teaching and service, and reclaiming that must include re-conceptualizing the role of faculty in the success of racially and ethnically diverse students' communities of support.

Community colleges may also need to think differently about space and how students of color use space to create community support. Where faculty offices and support services are located can foster or hinder students engaging with them. The current models of centralized services may be efficient for the colleges, yet there may be alternative ways to

conceptualize them. By moving faculty offices closer to support services or by embedding advisors with faculty or in academic departments, communities of support can emerge and foster an academic identity for students. Locating faculty offices near the classrooms in which they teach, rather than away in separate areas, can create conditions that intentionally foster faculty-student interactions. Embedding tutoring in library spaces to create communities of support may provide students with opportunities to engage with knowledgeable faculty, staff, and tutors.

Diversifying the community college workforce to include racially and ethnically diverse people at all levels is imperative. The colleges are hobbled when they lack diversity in the administration, faculty and staff. A diverse workforce across all levels of the institution provides opportunities to foster new perspective and insights.

Proposals to advance equity in community colleges might be met with a cautious response of, “We’re not ready yet.” There will be doubters who have not considered their roles in enacting the organization cultures of their colleges. There will be people who are content with the way things are. There will be those who understand diversity as a deficit and believe that communities of color bring little with them to community colleges and may even fear diversity. While the recommendations for practice offered in this chapter may be perceived as a tall order, they are based on the findings of this study and related research with a goal of enacting organizational cultures that foster the success of racially and ethnically diverse community college students.

Conclusion

Organizational culture was found to have an important role in fostering and/or hindering racially and ethnically diverse student success. Organizational culture is pervasive, and it shapes what community colleges value and therefore how students experience the culture when they engage with it. The colleges had evidence of diversity as a central organizing principle and acknowledged the structural diversity in their student bodies. They leveraged an enrollment and retention perspective to develop marketing messages and retention strategies including one college becoming a Hispanic serving institution. Their emphasis on efficiency and individual success shaped the students' experiences.

The students had a range of experiences when engaging with diversity. There were pockets of excellence where faculty and staff created conditions for students to be culturally validated and to have opportunities for meaningful interactions. More often though there was an absence of diversity in the curriculum or in programming. Frequently, the students experienced a culture where fear of diversity permeated the colleges. These experiences left students of color feeling uncomfortable or compelled to teach diversity content to address biases, myths, and stereotypes. Fear of diversity runs counter to an organizational culture that fosters diverse student success. This finding provided evidence of a misalignment of organizational cultures, which on the surface valued diversity, yet in organizational practices created conditions that did not.

Examining the organizational cultures of these community colleges through the Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) model (Museus, 2014) shed light on how organizational cultures have the potential to foster diverse student success in ways that

are culturally relevant and culturally responsive. The colleges through their structures and practices including roles, programs, and centers did show some evidence of being culturally responsive through the enactment of humanized cultural environments, proactive philosophies, holistic support, and of being culturally relevant through the collectivist orientations of select programs and centers (Museus, 2014). The TRIO programs, veteran's centers, and STEM programs generally provided students with community support. Unfortunately, not all students had access to these programs and people, making their impact ad hoc versus embedded as organizational practice.

Each college in this study had multiple campuses. The colleges had campus cultures that were perceived as welcoming and students felt comfortable based on their experiences, relationships with faculty or staff, some visible artifacts that validated their identities, and the learning they acquired in the classroom. However, the branch or satellite campuses that had minimal visible diversity in the student and/or employee populations also had few if any artifacts that messaged diversity as a value.

Diversity was viewed more as a deficit to remediate via high impact practices than as an educational asset for the colleges. Therefore, the diverse students in this study created student driven communities of support and information networks, where they could ask questions and validate their perceptions of a campus experience. The students in this study described the organizational cultures as being welcoming, valuing all students, and valuing their success. The students spoke positively about their colleges when describing them in general terms. Yet they also noticed when institutions had a visible lack of structural diversity in the faculty or senior administrative leadership versus mainly in staff roles or

campus police. They noticed that diversity was frequently feared in the classroom environment, and they sought strategies and practices that aligned with their own definitions of student success.

Across the institutions, students of color noted that their colleges engaged with diversity mainly from an assistance and support theme, which did not lend itself to valuing diversity as an educational asset. There was an intentionality by the colleges to support students' degree completion and entry into the workforce or transfer to a bachelor's degree program in a timely manner. To that end, support and assistance were provided to efficiently promote equitable outcomes for diverse students. Yet the notion of diversity through a deficit lens played out in the minimization of diversity in the curriculum, the fear of diversity that students witnessed and experienced in class, and a dearth of visible diversity in the faculty and senior leadership roles. Due to external accountability pressures to address achievement disparities between students of color and White students, diversity was valued from an enrollment and retention perspective, and not as a deep cultural value to guide the educational experiences of students at these institutions.

Moving forward, community colleges will benefit by committing to understand how their racially and ethnically diverse students actually experience their organizational cultures, and how students of color define student success. With this information in hand, then they can more effectively align resources and design high impact practices to purposefully address the persistent achievement gaps between White students and students of color.

Appendix A
SITE SELECTION WORKSHEET

Institution: _____

Structural Diversity Rank: _____

Diversity Organizing Principle Rank: _____ HIP Rank : _____

Document Analysis:

Table 2: Campus Evidence of **Diversity** as a Central Organizing Principle

Yes/No	Campuses will be rank ordered to prioritize those with the most evidence that diversity permeates campus practices.
	1. Diversity is mentioned prominently in the vision statement.
	2. Diversity is mentioned prominently in the mission statement.
	3. Diversity is in the institutional strategic plan.
	4. There is a Diversity Strategic Plan.
	5. Diversity is reflected in the curriculum as a key learning outcome or value.
	6. Diversity is represented in campus programming.
	7. Diversity is represented in the organizational structure.

Table 3: Campus Evidence of the Three Strands of **High Impact Practices** (CCSSE, 2012)

Campuses will rank ordered; selected campuses will be prioritized based on those with the most evidence of these practices.		Yes/No
Planning for Success Strand	Available preparatory sessions for students prior to taking the placement tests	
	Orientation programs for new or transfer students	
	Advising to set academic goals and planning	
	Restrictive late registration policies	
Initiating Success Strand	First-year experiences	
	Student success courses	
	Accelerated developmental education	
	Robust tutoring services and supplemental instruction	
	Learning communities that link big questions across courses	
Sustaining Success Strand	Undergraduate research experiences to involve students in systematic research and investigation	
	Diversity/global learning that help explore perspectives different from one's own	
	Service learning program to provide direct opportunities to both apply what's being studied and to reflect upon the service in class	
	Internships that provide direct work experience related to career interest	
	Early alert and intervention systems designed to address problems quickly	
	Formal mentoring programs	

Appendix B
PARTICIPANT SELECTION SURVEY CONSENT FORM
Study Name: Organizational culture in community colleges – Making connections to diverse student success

University of Massachusetts Boston
College of Education and Human Development
100 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02155-3393

Dear [insert student's first and last name]:

Introduction and Contact Information

You are being asked to take part in a research project about the role of organizational culture on diverse student success. My name is Darcy Orellana and I am the researcher conducting this study as a graduate student in Department of Education at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Please read this form and feel free to ask questions. If you have any questions about this study that involves research or this questionnaire specifically, please contact Darcy Orellana. The academic advisor for this study is Professor Jay Dee, PhD.

Description of the Project

The purpose of this study is to understand the role organizational culture plays in fostering success for racial and ethnic diverse community college students. Darcy Orellana hopes that the results of this study will help community college educators understand how their campus cultures support diverse student success and improve the success of all students. If you agree to participate in this study, you are agreeing to complete this questionnaire, which will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. This questionnaire will ask you for background information, for information about your participation in college programs and services, and your sense of the campus culture at your community college. There is no financial incentive to complete this questionnaire.

Not all participants who complete this questionnaire will be selected to participate in a follow-up group interview. If you are selected to participate in a 90 minute group interview, then you will be contacted by Darcy Orellana at a later date to schedule the group interview and to review a separate consent form prior to participation in the group interview. However if you are selected as a participant in a group interview, you will receive a small monetary gift card valued at no more than \$10 upon completing the group interview.

Risks or Discomforts

The primary risk associated with this study is the emergence of negative or distressful feelings in answering the questionnaire or, if selected, participating in a group interview. Participation by completing this questionnaire is associated with minimal risk. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to and you may stop filling out the questionnaire and stop participating at any time. You may speak with Darcy Orellana to discuss any issues related to study participation.

Confidentiality

Your participation in this study is confidential. If you choose to participate, you will be asked to provide your name and birth date so that questionnaire and, if selected, group interview information can be linked to the records one year in the future. The information gathered for this study will not be published or presented in a way that would allow anyone to identify you. Only the researcher, Darcy Orellana, will know about your participation and information you share. After data are collected, they will be stored on a password-protected computer. In one year all identifiers (e.g. names) will be removed from the data.

Information gathered for this project will be stored in a locked file cabinet or on a password-protected computer and only the researcher, Darcy Orellana, will have access to the data. If necessary, legally authorized agencies, including the University of Massachusetts –Boston Education and Human Development Program, have the right to review research records.

Voluntary Participation: The decision whether or not to take part in this study is voluntary. If you do decide to take part in this study, you may terminate at any time without consequence. If you wish to terminate participation, you should call Darcy Orellana immediately. Whatever you decide will in no way result in negative consequences or penalize your status as a student.

Rights

You have the right to ask questions about this research before you sign this form and at any time during the study. You can reach Darcy Orellana, the researcher, at and Professor Jay Dee, the research advisor, at. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact a representative of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), at the University of Massachusetts-Boston, which oversees research involving human participants.

Signatures

I HAVE READ THE CONSENT FORM. MY QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED. MY SIGNATURE ON THIS FORM MEANS THAT I CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY. I ALSO CERTIFY THAT I AM 18 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER.

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Researcher

Printed Name of Participant

Typed/Printed Name of Researcher

Appendix C
PARTICIPANT SELECTION SURVEY

Organizational culture in community colleges – Making connections to diverse student success

1. What community college are you currently attending?

Please indicate which programs, services or classes you participated in and your level of participation while a student at your current community college:

Programs (check all that you've participated in)

2. Preparatory sessions for students prior to taking the college placement test (Accuplacer/CPT):

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Math Review workshop or class | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Review workshop or class |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing Review workshop or class | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify: |

3. Orientation programs:

- ☐ For All New Freshmen, First-time Students
- ☐ For Transfer In Students
- ☐ For Students of Color (New and/or Transfer) - specify the identity group(s):
- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| ___Asian | ___American Indian/Alaska Native |
| ___Black or African American | ___Hispanic or Latino/a |
| ___Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | |
| ___Two or more races | ___Other Identity Group, specify: |

4. Summer, Winter Intercession or Spring Break Programs:

- ☐ Summer Bridge Programs ☐ University partnership workshops
- ☐ STEM skills workshop
- ☐ Alternative Spring Break programs
- (describe): _____

5. Have you participated in undergraduate research experiences (REU)? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, how many REUs? ☐ 1 REU ☐ 2 REUs ☐ 3 REUs ☐ 4 or more REUs

6. Diversity or global learning opportunities:

☐ My class(es) focused on this. How many classes have you taken or are you taking that focus on diversity or global learning? _____

☐ I attended lectures, programs, films, etc. that focused on diversity and global learning. How many have you attended? _____

☐ I participated in an international fellowship or study abroad opportunity while a student here.

7. Have you participated in service learning or community service? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, how have you participated in Service learning or community service (check all that you've participated in and include the frequency of your participation).

☐ a single volunteer opportunity offered through the College: ☐ 1 time, ☐ 2 times, ☐ 3 or more times

☐ as part of my class: ☐ 1 time, ☐ 2 times, ☐ 3 or more times

☐ as part of my co-curricular club activities: ☐ 1 time, ☐ 2 times, ☐ 3 or more times

8. Have you participated in an internship? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, was it:

☐ part of a class, ☐ part of being in a particular program or major, ☐ a degree requirement

9. Mentoring programs

☐ I have had a peer mentor assigned to me. ☐ I have had a 'professional' mentor assigned to me.

☐ I have been trained to be a mentor.

☐ Other, please specify: _____

10. Services (Check all that you've participated in and include the frequency of your participation.)

☐ Academic Advising ☐ 1 time, ☐ 2 times, ☐ 3 times, ☐ or 4 or more times

☐ Early Alert Interventions ☐ 1 time, ☐ 2 times, ☐ 3 times, ☐ or 4 or more times

☐ Career Counseling ☐ 1 time, ☐ 2 times, ☐ 3 times, ☐ or 4 or more times

☐ Tutoring ☐ 1 time, ☐ 2 times, ☐ 3 times, ☐ or 4 or more times

☐ Supplemental Instruction (SI) ☐ 1 time, ☐ 2 times, ☐ 3 times, ☐ or 4 or more times

☐ Other, please specify: _____

11. Classes (Check all that you've participated in.)

- ☐ First Year Experience Course (FYE)
- ☐ Student Success Course
- ☐ Learning Community Courses – two courses connected and taught around a common theme.
- ☐ Accelerated Developmental courses (pre-college level courses in math, writing or reading)
- ☐ Honors course(s)

When you think about the activities you listed previously above, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:

12. On campus, there is sufficient space for me to connect with people from my community.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither Disagree nor
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

13. On campus, there are enough opportunities to learn about the culture of my own community.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither Disagree nor
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

14. At my institution, there are enough opportunities (research, community service projects, etc.) to give back to my cultural community.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither Disagree nor
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

15. On campus, there are enough opportunities to have meaningful discussions about racial and ethnic issues.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither Disagree nor
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

16. In general, people on this campus help each other succeed.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither Disagree nor
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

17. In general, my culture is valued on campus.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither Disagree nor
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

18. It is easy to find people on campus with similar backgrounds as me.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither Disagree nor
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

19. In general, faculty on campus are committed to my success.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither Disagree nor
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

20. In general, staff on campus are committed to my success.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither Disagree nor
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

21. People on this campus often send me important information about new learning opportunities.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither Disagree nor
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

22. People on this campus often send me important information about support that is available on campus.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree

- ☐ Neither Disagree nor
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

23. There is someone on campus I can trust to help me, no matter what kind of support I need.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither Disagree nor
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

24. Background Information (Please Print)

First Name: _____ **Last Name:** _____

Preferred Phone Number (w/area code): _____

Primary Email Address: _____

Home City or Town: _____

State: _____

Age: _____

Date of Birth (month/date/year): _____

Please indicate your gender/gender identity, race and/or ethnicity.

Gender: ☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Other _____

Race/Ethnicity: (check all that apply)

☐ Asian ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native ☐ Black or African American

☐ Hispanic or Latino/a ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

☐ Non-Hispanic White ☐ Multiracial ☐ Other, specify: _____

Thank you for your support and time. I will contact you if you are selected to participate in a group interview on campus.

Darcy Orellana

Appendix D
STUDENT GROUP INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Study Name: Organizational culture in community colleges – Making connections to diverse student success

University of Massachusetts Boston
College of Education and Human Development
100 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02155-3393

Introduction and Contact Information

You are being asked to take part in a research project about the role of organizational culture on diverse student success. My name is Darcy Orellana and I am the researcher conducting this study as a graduate student in Department of Education at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Please read this form and feel free to ask questions. If you have any questions about this study that involves research or this questionnaire specifically, please contact Darcy Orellana. The academic advisor for this study is Professor Jay Dee, PhD.

Description of the Project

The purpose of this study is to understand the role organizational culture plays in fostering success for racial and ethnic diverse community college students. Darcy Orellana hopes that the results of this study will help community college educators understand how their campus cultures support diverse student success and improve the success of all students. If you agree to participate in this study, you are agreeing to participate in a 90 minute group interview. This interview will ask you for background information, for information about your participation in college programs and services, and your sense of the campus culture at your community college. At the end of the group interview, you will receive a small monetary gift card valued at no more than \$10 upon completing the group interview.

Risks or Discomforts

The primary risk associated with this study is the emergence of negative or distressful feelings in participating in a group interview. Participation by completing the group interview is associated with minimal risk. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to and you may stop participating at any time. You may speak with Darcy Orellana to discuss any issues related to study participation.

Confidentiality

Your participation in this study is confidential. If you choose to participate, you will be asked to provide your name and birth date so the questionnaire and group interview information can be linked to the records one year in the future. The information gathered for this study will not be published or presented in a way that would allow anyone to identify you. Only the researcher, Darcy Orellana, will know about your participation and information you share. After data are collected, they will be stored on a password-protected computer. In one year all identifiers (e.g. names) will be removed from the data. Information gathered for this project will be stored in a locked file cabinet or on a password-protected computer and only the researcher, Darcy Orellana, will have access to the data. If necessary, legally authorized

agencies, including the University of Massachusetts–Boston Education and Human Development Program, have the right to review research records.

Voluntary Participation: The decision whether or not to take part in this study is voluntary. If you do decide to take part in this study, you may terminate at any time without consequence. If you wish to terminate participation, you should tell Darcy Orellana immediately. Whatever you decide will in no way result in negative consequences or penalize your status as a student.

Rights

You have the right to ask questions about this research before you sign this form and at any time during the study. You can reach Darcy Orellana, the researcher and Professor Jay Dee, the research advisor. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact a representative of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), at the University of Massachusetts-Boston, which oversees research involving human participants.

Signatures

I HAVE READ THE CONSENT FORM. MY QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED. MY SIGNATURE ON THIS FORM MEANS THAT I CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY. I ALSO CERTIFY THAT I AM 18 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER.

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Researcher

Printed Name of Participant

Typed/Printed Name of Researcher

Appendix E
CONSENT TO AUDIOTAPING & TRANSCRIPTION

Study Name: Organizational culture in community colleges – Making connections to diverse student success

Researcher: Darcy Orellana

University of Massachusetts Boston
College of Education and Human Development
100 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02155-3393

Introduction and Contact Information

You are being asked to take part in a research project about the role of organizational culture on diverse student success. My name is Darcy Orellana and I am the researcher conducting this study as a graduate student in Department of Education at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Please read this form and feel free to ask questions. If you have any questions about this study that involves research or this questionnaire specifically, please contact Darcy Orellana. The academic advisor for this study is Professor Jay Dee,

This study involves the audio taping of your interview with the researcher. Neither your name nor any other identifying information will be associated with the audiotape or the transcript. Only the researcher team will be able to listen to the tapes. The tapes will be transcribed by the researcher and erased once the transcriptions are checked for accuracy. Transcripts of your interview may be reproduced in whole or in part for use in presentations or written products that result from this study. Neither your name nor any other identifying information (such as your voice or picture) will be used in presentations or in written products resulting from the study.

Immediately following the interview, you will be given the opportunity to have the tape erased if you wish to withdraw your consent to taping or participation in this study.

By signing this form you are consenting to :

- ☐ having your interview audiotaped;
- ☐ to having the tape transcribed;
- ☐ use of the written transcript in presentations and written products.

By checking the box in front of each item above, you are consenting to participate in that procedure.

This consent for taping is effective until the following date: _____. On or before that date, the tapes will be destroyed

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Researcher

Printed Name of Participant

Typed/Printed Name of Researcher

Appendix F

GROUP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL AND QUESTIONS

The Researcher will audiotape each group interview and take notes. Notes will be taken on the location, date, time, events, physical appearance of the location, subjects' appearance, demeanor, interruptions or interactions with others during the interview.

The Researcher will introduce the study to the participants as follows:

1. Introduction:

- Thank the subjects for agreeing to participate in the study
- Review the purpose of the study and the format of the group interview
- Distribute the two consent forms.
- Review the elements of informed consent and confirm the subjects agree with participation and recording and transcribing the interview.
- Collect the signed consent forms: 1) Participation in the Group Interview and 2) Audiotaping & Transcription.
- Clarify the definition high impact practices so we are speaking about the same things.
- Ask participants to define student success for themselves. Then introduce the definition of student success for this study.

2. Start with a brief summary about what I know about the college based on IPEDS' student data and that I found evidence of diversity as a central organizing principle and operationalized high impact practices.

3. Present the research questions that inform the interview question: What role does organizational culture play in fostering success for racial and ethnic diverse community college students?

4. The Interview Questions:

Student Group Interview Research Questions

Research Questions	Interview Questions
1. How do racially and ethnically diverse students perceive the organizational cultures of community colleges that have diversity as a central organizing principle?	<p>1. How would you describe the campus here to someone who isn't familiar with it?</p> <p>2. How would you describe what it's like to be a student here to a group of prospective diverse students like yourselves? What will it feel like for them to come here?</p> <p>3. When do you feel most like you can be yourself here? When do you feel most like you cannot be yourself?</p> <p>4. Where do you go to relax or hang out, if at all, on campus? Why? Are there spaces for you to connect with faculty, staff and peers from your cultural community? Where are these spaces?</p>

	<p>5. Are there any places that you do not go to on campus? Why?</p> <p>6. Is your culture valued on campus? How do you know this?</p> <p>7. What does this college value the most? Can you describe how you know this? In general do people on this campus work together toward a common goal?</p> <p>8. Describe the college's current commitment to diversity. Where do you see evidence of this?</p> <p>9. Where are people on campus talking about diversity? Who is talking about it?</p>
2. How are "high impact practices" implemented at community colleges that have diversity as a central organizing principle, as perceived by racially and ethnically diverse students?	<p>10. What classes have you taken that you feel really helped you succeed? What might not have been helpful?</p> <p>11. Have you encountered obstacles or challenges in classes or activities? How did you overcome them? Who helped you overcome them?</p> <p>12. What opportunities are there for you to learn about the culture of your own community?</p> <p>13. Are there any classes or activities that weren't helpful to your success? Are there things that the college does that you think interfere with the success of diverse students?</p> <p>14. Describe the ways in which diversity is represented in your classes (the curriculum) and in the programs/activities (co-curricular). How widespread is diversity in classes and programs at the college? Are there enough opportunities (research, community service projects, etc.) to positively impact your cultural community?</p> <p>15. Where or to whom do you go to learn about what's going on or what you need to do here as a student? Why?</p>
3. At community colleges that have diversity as a central organizing principle, how do "high impact practices" influence success for racially and ethnically diverse students?	<p>16. If you had a problem or need support, where do you go? Do you have a person to go to? Do faculty and/or staff here care about their students and your success? How do you know this?</p> <p>17. Can you describe specific practices or programs that are designed to promote diverse student success?</p> <p>18. What program, class or person has been the most important to you as a student? Why?</p> <p>19. What programs (services and opportunities to learn or connect outside of the classroom such as orientation, tutoring, service learning) have you been a part of that you think really help you succeed?</p> <p>20. Are there enough opportunities to have meaningful interactions with people from other cultural backgrounds? Please give me an example.</p>

	21. Are there things that the college does that you think really help our diverse students succeed? Are there policies that you think really help our diverse students on campus succeed?
--	---

Additional Information they'd like to share:

- Is there anything else that you'd like to share or that you think I should know?
- Are there any documents I should be aware of?
- Are there any programs that I should be aware of?

Closing:

- Thank them for their time. Let them know this was very helpful in beginning to understand their campus's organizational culture.
- Confirm artifacts they've suggested.
- Distribute gift card.
- Send a follow-up email thanking them.

Appendix G
PARTICIPANT SELECTION SURVEY RESPONSE SUMMARY

Survey Item	SCC Total participants = 57	WCC Total participants = 60	ECC Total participants =41
Q 2 Preparatory sessions for students prior to taking the college placement test (AccuPlacer/CPT)	Yes = 9 (15.7%) No = 41 (82.4 %) Blank = 7 (12.2%)	Yes =9 (15%) No = 47 (78.3 %) Blank =4 (6.6 %)	Yes = 9 (21.9%) No = 26 (63.4 %) Blank =6 (14.6%)
Q 3 Participated in Orientation Programs	Yes = 29 (50.8%) No = 21 (36.8%) Blank=7 (12.2%)	Yes = 35 (58.3%) No = 2 (35%) Blank =4 (6.6%)	Yes =22 (53.6%) No = 12 (29.2%) Blank =7(17 %)
Q 6 Participated in diversity or global learning opportunities	Yes = 6 (10.5%) No = 43 (75.4 %) Blank = 8 (14%)	Yes = 7 (11.6%) No = 47 (78.3%) Blank = 6 (10%)	Yes = 1 (2.4%) No = 32 (78%) Blank = 8 (19.5%)
Q 7 Have you participated in service learning or community service?	Yes = 11 (19.2%) No = 37 (64.9%) Blank = 9 (15.7%)	Yes = 21(35%) No = 33 (55%) Blank =6 (10 %)	Yes = 7(17%) No = 25 (60.9 %) Blank = 9 (21.9%)
Q 10 Have you participated in academic advising?	Yes = 23 (40.3%) No = 16 (28 %) Blank =18 (31.6%)	Yes =25 (41.6%) No = 15 (25%) Blank =20 (33.3%)	Yes =17 (41.4%) No = 10 (24.3%) Blank =14 (34.1%)
Q10 Have you participated in career counseling?	Yes =8 (14%) No = 25 (43.8%) Blank = 24 (42.1%)	Yes = 10 (16.6%) No = 24 (40%) Blank = 26 (43.3%)	Yes =2 (4.8%) No = 19 (46.3%) Blank =20 (48.7%)
Q 10 Have you participated in Tutoring?	Yes =19 (33.3%) No = 19 (33.3 %) Blank =19 (33.3%)	Yes = 12 (20%) No = 19 (31.6%) Blank =29 (48.3%)	Yes =10 (24.3%) No = 13 (31.7 %) Blank =18 (43.9%)
Q 12 Sufficient space to connect with people from my community?	Strgly Agree/Agree = 28 (49.1%) Neither = 8 (14%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 17 (29.8%) Blank=14 (24.5%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 27 (45%) Neither =11 (18.3%) Disagree/strongly disagree=6 (10%) Blank=16 (26.7%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 19 (46.3%) Neither = 4 (9.8%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 4 (9.8%) Blank=14 (34.1%)
Q 13 Opportunities to learn about culture of my own community?	Strgly Agree/Agree = 28 (49.1%) Neither = 10 (17.5%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 22 (36.6%) Neither = 12 (20%) Disagree/strongly	Strgly Agree/Agree = 12 (29.2%) Neither = 9 (21.9%)

	Disagree/strongly disagree= 10 (17.5%) Blank=9 (15.7%)	disagree= 10 (16.6%) Blank=16 (26.6%)	Disagree/strongly disagree= 6 (14.6%) Blank= 14 34.1%)
Q 14 Enough opportunities to give back to my cultural community?	Strgly Agree/Agree = 27 (47.3%) Neither =8 (14%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 8 (14%) Blank=13 (24.5%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 20 (33.3%) Neither =15 (25%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 9 (15%) Blank=16 (26.6%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 13 (31.7%) Neither=11 (26.8%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 3 (7.3%) Blank=14 (34.1%)
Q 15 Opportunities for meaningful discussion re: racial & ethnic issues?	Strgly Agree/Agree = 25 (43.8%) Neither = 10 (17.5%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 9 (15.7%) Blank=13 (22.8%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 22 (36.6%) Neither = 12 (20%) Disagree/strongly disagree=10 (16.6%) Blank=16 (26.6%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 11 (26.8%) Neither = 10 (24.3%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 6 (14.6%) Blank=14 (34.1%)
Q 16 In general people on this campus help each other succeed?	Strgly Agree/Agree = 35 (61.4%) Neither = 4 (7%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 7 (12.2%) Blank= 11 (19.2%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 28 (46.6%) Neither= 11(18.3%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 4 (6.6%) Blank=17 (28.3%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 13 (31.7%) Neither =12 (38.7 %) Disagree/strongly disagree= 2 (4.8%) Blank= 14 (34.1%)
Q 17 My culture is valued?	Strgly Agree/Agree = 21 (36.8%) Neither = 20 (35.1%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 3 (5.3%) Blank=13 (22.8%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 21 (35%) Neither = 20 (33.4%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 3 (5%) Blank=16 (26.6%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 7 (17%) Neither = 17 (41.5%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 3 (7.3%) Blank=14 (34.1%)
Q 18 Easy to find people with similar backgrounds as me?	Strgly Agree/Agree = 28 (49.1%) Neither = 5 (8.8%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 11 (19.3%) Blank= 13 (22.8%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 26 (43.3%) Neither = 12 (20%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 6 (10%) Blank= 16 (26.6%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 13 (31.7%) Neither = 8 (19.5%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 6 (14.6%) Blank= 14 (34.1%)
Q 19 In general, faculty on campus are committed to	Strgly Agree/Agree = 37 (64.9%) Neither = 5 (8.4%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 34 (61.6%) Neither =9 (15 %)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 20 (43.7%) Neither = 7 (17 %)

my success?	Disagree/strongly disagree= 2 (3.5%) Blank= 13 (22.8%)	Disagree/strongly disagree= 1 (1.6%) Blank= 16 (26.6%)	Disagree/strongly disagree= 1 (2.4%) Blank= 14 (34.1%)
Q 20 In general, staff on campus are committed to my success?	Strgly Agree/Agree = 38 (66.6%) Neither = 4 (7 %) Disagree/strongly disagree= 2 (3.5%) Blank= 13 (22.8%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 36 (60%) Neither = 6 (10%) Disagree/strongly disagree=2 (3.3%) Blank= 16 (26.6 %)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 20 (48.7%) Neither = 5 (12.1%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 2 (4.8 %) Blank= 14 (34.1%)
Q 21 People on this campus often send me important information about new learning opportunities?	Strgly Agree/Agree = 32 (56.1%) Neither =4 (7%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 7 (12.%) Blank= 14 (24.5%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 29 (48.3%) Neither = 9 (15%) Disagree/strongly disagree=6 (10%) Blank= 16 (26.6%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 21 (51.2%) Neither = 4 (9.7%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 2 (4.8%) Blank= 14 (34.1%)
Q 22 People on this campus often send me important information about support that is available on campus?	Strgly Agree/Agree = 39 (68.4%) Neither = 2 (3.5%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 3 (5.2%) Blank=13 (22.8%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 31 (51.6%) Neither = 9 (15%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 3 (5%) Blank=17 (28.3%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 20 (48.7%) Neither =3 (7.3%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 3 (7.3%) Blank= 15 (36.5%)
Q 23 There is someone on campus I can trust to help me know matter what kind of support I need?	Strgly Agree/Agree = 24 (42.1%) Neither =15 (26.3%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 5 (8.7%) Blank= 13 (22.8%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 32 (53.3%) Neither = 8 (13.3%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 4 (6.6%) Blank= 16 (26.6%)	Strgly Agree/Agree = 16 (39.%) Neither = 5 (12.9%) Disagree/strongly disagree= 6 (14.6%) Blank= 14 (34.1%)

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