

Building Campus Communities to Support Student Engagement



Tom Brown
California Classified Senate
Leadership Institute
June 4, 2015



Thomas Brown & Associates

Leveraging Knowledge, Change, and Diversity
www.tbrownassociates.com

Increasing Student Engagement & Success: It Takes YOU!!



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Major conference themes

- Highlight the vital role that Classified Staff play to increase success for students and colleges and why professional development is essential;
- Consider issues of equity and the needs of today's increasingly diverse community college students;
- Address issues of Leadership and Change.
- Solve the Mideast Crisis!

Reexamine the unique mission and distinctive challenges facing community colleges.



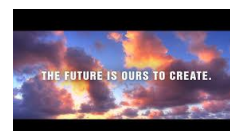
If you don't know
where you're going,
you might end up
somewhere else....



Mission



Answers the question:
Why do California Community Colleges
exist?



Mission of California Community Colleges

- The **primary purpose** of a California Community College is to **foster student learning and student achievement**.
- **Resources, programs, and services**, whenever, wherever, and however delivered, **[must] support student learning and achievement**.

Association of California Community and Junior Colleges

Colleges are in the dream and future business...



The American formula for success consists of five pillars:

The first pillar is providing public education for more Americans.

That Used to Be Us
Tom Friedman & Michael Mandelbaum, 2011

The Challenge

The United States, long ranked first worldwide, now ranks 10th in the percentage of young adults who hold a college degree.

Source: <http://www.higheredinfo.org>

If current trends hold, the current generation of college-age Americans will be less educated than their parents for the first time in US history.

Source: <http://www.oecd.org>

Education → National Security

Education is an economic issue...

We know beyond a shadow of a doubt that countries that out-educate us today will out-compete us tomorrow.

President Barack Obama
U of Texas, August 2010



Community colleges are being challenged to play a key role in the nation's efforts to double the number of college graduates in the next 10 years.





Community colleges have gone from being the stepchild to being the golden child...

Dr. Frank Chong, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Community Colleges, 2011 President, Santa Rosa Junior College

In the 1960s one in five discontinued his or her studies.

Today, one in three Americans drops out of college.



US Census Bureau

Completion Trends 1983–2014* Community Colleges

Highest	Lowest	Current
38% ('89)	21.9% ('14)	21.9%

*graduation in three years or less

Source: ACT 2014 Institutional Data File
http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/14retain_trends.pdf

The Challenge

Community colleges have a more complicated and more difficult retention pathway because they are likely to attract students who are less-college ready than those who attend the four-year sector....

Linda Serra Hagedorn, President
Iowa Association for the Study of Higher Education, 2010

Community colleges are on the front lines of American higher education in providing increased opportunities for students who otherwise would be denied access....

Tom Brown & Mario Rivas
New Directions for Community Colleges, 1993



Community colleges make winners out of ordinary people....

They are Democracy's Colleges



CLI 2015 Conference Strand:

Asking Ourselves "Why on Earth are We Here:" Our Role in Student Success...



Investing in Staff for Student Retention (Education Support Professionals-ESPs)

ESPs—technical, clerical, skilled crafts, service, and maintenance workers—work closely with students and postsecondary institutions must invest in staff development to enhance student retention.

Patricia Farrell, 2008

Increasing student persistence is a continuing concern in higher education...



Retention Matters

It's time for the federal government to impose some thresholds for retention and graduation that colleges and universities would have to meet to keep their eligibility for financial aid....

Senator Tom Harkin
New York Times, April 14, 2013

Student Success→Funding??

Governor Jerry Brown proposes to fund colleges based on graduation rates, rather than enrollments...

Los Angeles Time, April 2013

Retention→Funding→Campus Jobs

Three types of attrition

- Expected and justified
- Stopping out
- Unnecessary and preventable by institutional interventions

Three terms used interchangeably

- RETENTION
- ATTRITION
- PERSISTENCE

RETENTION

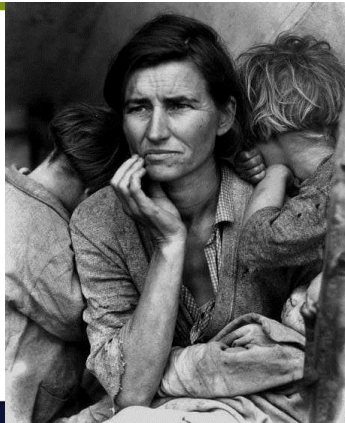


The process of holding or keeping in one's possession.

ATTRITION

The process or state of being gradually worn down....

Migrant Mother, Dorothea Lange
Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division
[reproduction number LC-USF34-9058-C]



PERSISTENCE



To continue to exist or prevail, especially where others have not



Colleges are more likely to blame student attrition on students....

What Works in Student Retention, 2004, 2010

- ✓ We build beautiful campuses,
- ✓ We hire excellent faculty and staff,
- ✓ We develop a challenging curriculum...

then the "wrong" students show up!



Usual Theories of Student Departure

Psychological: It's something about them.

Environmental: It's about social, economic, and other forces, (e.g., race, SES, opportunity structures).

Organizational: What about us?!
What about me?

Why do students leave college?

Incongruence

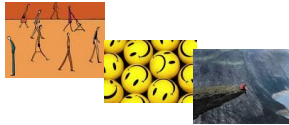


"What I experienced is not what I expected...."



Why do students leave college?

Isolation



Inability to connect with significant members of the campus community....



The Key Point

What happens to students after they enroll frequently has a more powerful impact on whether they stay and achieve their goals or leave.

Leaving College
Vincent Tinto 1987, 1993

It takes a campus community to support student success....



YOU influence student success

When you simply smile during a seemingly unimportant interaction, you are influencing a student's likelihood to succeed.



When we asked students to think of a specific critical incident or moment that had changed them profoundly, four-fifths of them chose a situation or event outside the classroom.

Richard Light, Harvard University
Making the Most of College, 2001

Community College Student Priorities 2013

(Noel-Levitz)

192,000 students from 192 community colleges

Instructional effectiveness	6.22
Registration effectiveness	6.20
Academic Advising/Counseling	6.18
Concern for the individual	6.12
Academic services	6.09
Admissions and financial aid	6.09
Safety and security	6.05
Student centeredness	6.02
Campus climate	6.01
Service excellence	6.00
Campus Support Services	5.51

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A Culture of Success: The Importance of Support Staff

The reality is that support staff is one of the primary cornerstones when building a culture of success.

Any support staff position that interfaces with the public becomes the organization.

Don Kottick, 11/23/08

YOU
are your college!!



Students don't have interactions with a college, they have encounters and interactions with **YOU**.





CLI 2015 Conference Strand:

Addressing Equity: The Changing Face of Our Campus



We must understand who our students are today....



The American college campus is one of the very few places on earth where people from so many diverse backgrounds come together for a common purpose.



The other is the American workplace.

Community College Diversity and Access

- 60% Part time, 40% fulltime
- 57% are women
- 59% of Native Americans
- 56% Latino/a students
- 48% of Black Americans
- 40+% are first-generation to attend college
- 17% are single parents
- 12% students with disabilities
- 4% Veterans

First enroll in community colleges

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2014

Treating students the same may be equal treatment,
but it is not equitable treatment.



Human beings seek to economize on the energy required to make distinctions.



Most houseplants die because we treat them all the same.



Some at-risk groups in education

- First-generation/Low SES students
- Adult and re-entry students
- Student with disabilities
- Student-Athletes
- First-year students
- Undecided students
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, students
- Students of Color/Multicultural
- Underprepared students
- Distance Learners
- Veterans
- Foster youth
- Undocumented students
- Rural students

Multiple issues

- First-generation/Low SES **AND Also...**
- Adult and re-entry
- Student with disabilities
- Student-Athlete
- First-year
- Undecided
- LGBTQ
- Student of Color/Multicultural
- Underprepared
- Veteran
- Foster youth
- Undocumented
- Rural



40% of first-generation students leave college without a degree....
they are more likely to come from low income families.

US Department of Education

A widening gap

No matter how bright, low-income students are increasingly unlikely to make it through college.

“What we’re talking about is a threat to the American Dream....”

Sean Reardon, Stanford University

The Lack of “Cultural Capital”

Cultural capital is the key factor shaping the experience of first generation students.

Their parents do not possess

information

familiarity

jargon

cultural understanding

experiences

emotional bearings

students need to effectively tackle the challenges of college.

It is the college’s duty to help them succeed...

Ward, Siegel, & Davenport, 2012.



Returning Veterans



- Veterans hope college will ease their discomfort, but on top of the usual new student fears, they may also have a spouse or young family to care for, or learning difficulties, PTSD, and other challenges
- **A supportive and informed staff and faculty are the key to these veterans’ success.**

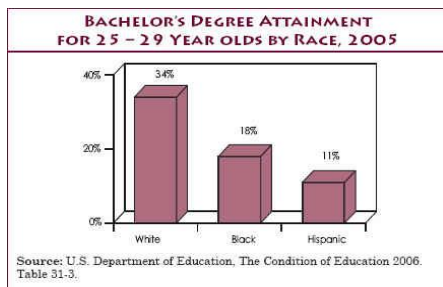
LGBTQ: A Hostile Campus Climate

Students, staff, professors, or administrators who identify as LGBT report significant harassment at their colleges and discomfort with the overall campus climate....

Chronicle of Higher Education, 9/14/2010



Some Americans Are Much Less Likely to Graduate From College



Their enrollment rate clearly demonstrates the high value Latino/as place on higher education. *Most of the Latino achievement gap is the result of what happens after they begin college....*



*Latinos in Higher Education:
Many Enroll, Too Few Graduate*
PEW Hispanic Trust



Black and Latino male students enter community colleges with higher aspirations than those of their white peers, white men are six times as likely to graduate in three years with a certificate or degree.

Aspirations to Achievement: Men of Color and Community College, University of Texas, 2014



Transforming Students Through Validation

Success appears to be contingent on whether faculty and staff can validate students in an academic or interpersonal way.

Laura Rendon, 1994, 2001



Increasing opportunities for multicultural students is not a minority, or "special interest" issue.

It's an American issue....

The Fiscal Benefits of Inclusion

If the gap between Latino and Black students and White students had narrowed, U.S. GDP would have been up to \$525 billion higher in 2008.

Economic Impact of the Achievement Gap in America's Schools
McKinsey & Company Consultants, 2009

Power of Validation

I scored 700 on my SATs and I have a Ph.D. in Biology from the University of California, Davis....



Dr. Robert Uretcho, Dean
College of the Sequoias

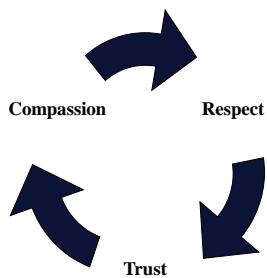


The more education any one of us gets the better off we all are.

"The American Community College:
From Access to Success"
George Boggs, President, AACC, 2011



Increasing student success



The simplest and least expensive way to retain students of all backgrounds?

Provide them with compassion, dignity, and the knowledge that, if they are drowning, someone will throw them a life jacket....



Professor Monica Kluszkowski,
University of North Georgia
Chronicle of Higher Education, 5.10.14



CLI 2015 Conference Strand:
Office Climates and How to Thrive

- Leadership
- Communication--collaboration



Leadership

Leadership is an interactive activity: leaders depend on followers and vice versa.

Followership

The willingness to

- Cooperate in working toward the accomplishment of the institutional mission,
- Demonstrate a high degree of teamwork,
- Build cohesion among the group.

Leadership & Followership

Without followers, would there be leaders?
Who would they lead? Who would become
leaders if they were not first followers?

Boatman, 1997; Gini, 1997

In the African Centered Leadership-Followership construct, neither leader (*seshemu*) nor follower (*shemsu*) is superior to the other; they are opposite sides of the same coin.

Uhuru Hotep, 2010

Leadership & Followership

Effective followers can be more effective to an organization's success than leaders.

Bennis, 1994; Kelly, 1992



Members of the campus community must always remember that they are members of a proverbial village....

Increasing Persistence

Habley, Bloom, Robbins, 2012



A Community College

A College Community



We cannot provide an environment that engages students unless we are engaged with each other as colleagues.

Moises Almendariz, Dean
Mountain View College (TX)
Director of HSI Initiatives, Hartnell College

Critical Issues for Classified Professionals

- Lack of respect
- Too many responsibilities
- Inability to focus on our work



What Staff Need from Leaders

#1 Feel Valued and Respected

- Fair compensation
- No unconscious bias allowed
- Transparent relationship
- Freedom to share opinions and differing points of view.

"6 Most Important Things Employees Need From Leaders to Reach High Potential," Glenn Llopis, *Forbes*, 9/30/13



Respect

Latin root: "spec": to see...

Respect: a feeling or **understanding that someone is important**, serious, etc., and **should be treated in an appropriate way.**

Merrriam-Webster Dictionary

Self-Validation

Getting validation from others is only one part of the equation. **We also need to be able to validate, support, and help ourselves.**



Self-Validation

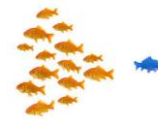
- Before seeking external validation, ask yourself, "What do I hope this person tells me?" Then tell it to yourself.
- **When you regularly praise yourself, self-validation becomes a habit you can depend on when you need it the most.**

The Tiny Buddha's Guide to Loving Yourself
Lori Deschene

Self-Validation

When you're different, sometimes you don't see the millions of people who accept you for what you are. All you notice is the person who doesn't.

Jodi Picoult, *Change of Heart*



Self-Validation

An amazing thing happens when you stop seeking approval and validation: You find it.

People are naturally drawn like magnets to those who know who they are and cannot be shaken!"

Mandy Hale, *The Single Woman: Life, Love & A Dash of Sass*



Learn to be your own cheerleader....



CLI 2015 Conference Strand:
Office Climates and How to Thrive

- **The Elements of Change**



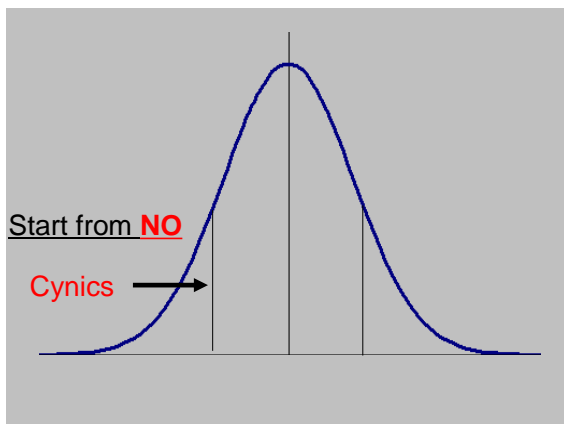
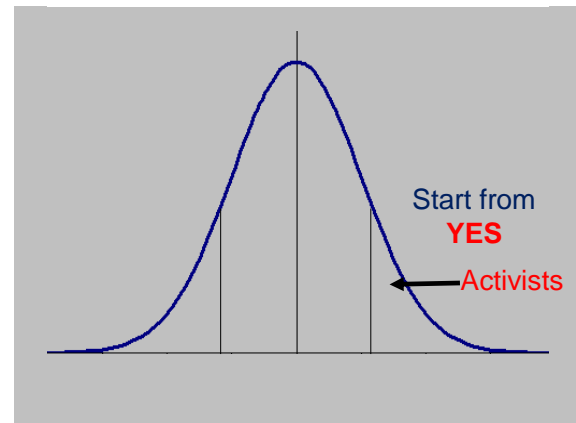
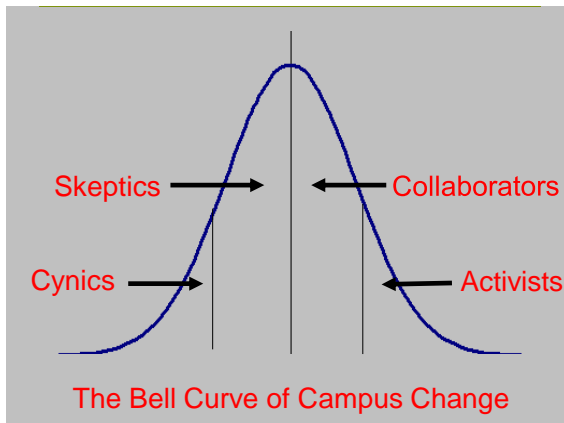
Trying to change a college is like trying to move a cemetery...



- You have to move a lot of dirt;
- Know where the skeletons are buried;
- You don't get much internal support.



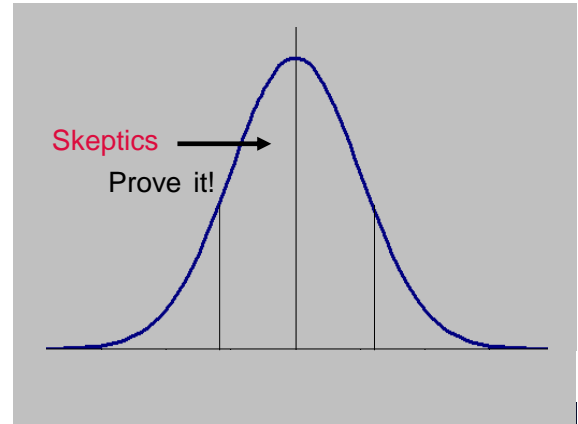
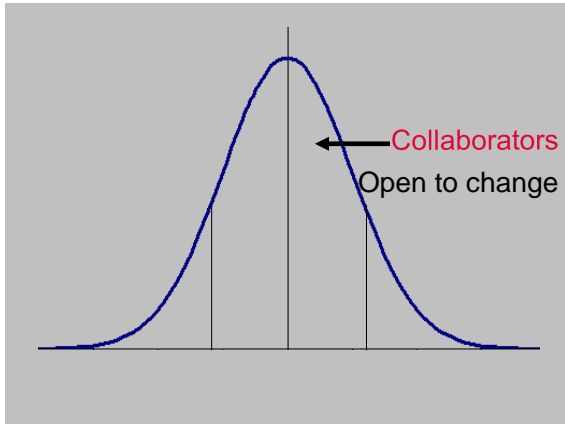
The Bell Curve of Campus Change



A **cynic** is a person who, when s/he smells flowers, looks around for a coffin.



H.L. Mencken



Where to focus?

Skeptics are often devil's advocates, who may be **collaborators in disguise or in the making**...



Sometimes a journey of 1000 miles begins with...

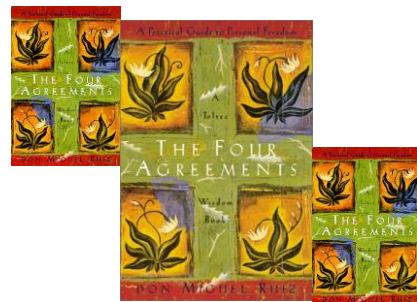
A flat tire and a blown radiator.

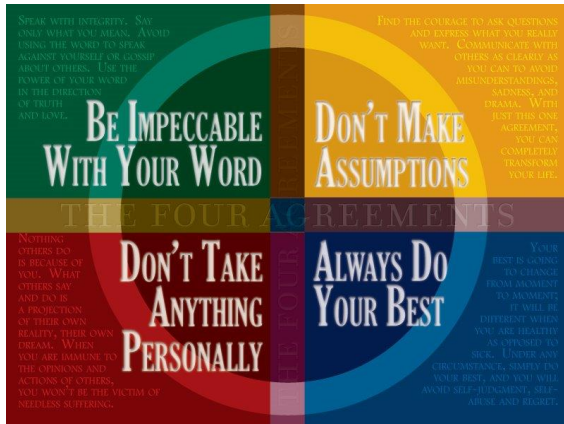


In order to care for others, you must first take care for yourself!



The Four Agreements
Don Miguel Ruiz





Be Impeccable With Your Word

- Speak with integrity
- Say what you mean
- Avoid speaking against yourself or to gossip about others
- Use the power of the word in the direction of truth and love

Is what I am about to say going to bring me closer to this person or push us farther apart?

Take Nothing Personally

- Nothing others say and do is because of you.
- When you are immune to the opinions and actions of others, you won't be the victim of needless suffering.

Your opinion of me is none of my business...
Les Brown

Make No Assumptions

- Find the courage to ask questions and to express what you really want.
- Communicate with others clearly to avoid misunderstandings, sadness, and drama.

Ask for what you want and need....

Do the Best You Can

- Your best is going to change from moment to moment; it will be different when you are healthy as opposed to sick.
- Under any circumstance, simply do your best and you will avoid self judgment, self-abuse, and regret.

No matter how many mistakes you make, or how slow you progress, you are still way ahead of everyone who isn't trying....

Tony Robbins

Institutions can't change....

Institutions change when individuals create change in their spheres of influence, wherever those might be.



We need to be the change
we want to see happen.

M. Gandhi



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