

Democracy's College, Episode 71

The Importance of Culturally Responsive Curriculum in Higher Education and Broader Challenges

With guests Ginny Boss, Lauren Contreras, Tiffany Davis, and Rick Rantz

Sal Nudo: Welcome to the Democracy's College podcast series. This podcast focuses on educational equity, justice, and excellence for all students in the P-20 educational pathways. This podcast is a product of the Office of Community College Research and Leadership, or OCCRL, at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Learn more about OCCRL at occrl.illinois.edu.

In this episode, OCCRL Associate Director Gianina Baker talks with Drs. Rick Rantz and Lauren Contreras about the book *Developing Culturally Responsive Curriculum in Higher Education*. The scholars describe the origins of the book, rooted in concerns about student retention, curriculum relevance, and the absence of higher education-specific tools for assessing cultural responsiveness. They highlight how faculty engagement, institutional context, and student demographics shaped their work, emphasizing the importance of representation, relationship-building, and action-oriented pedagogy.

As the discussion expands, Drs. Tiffany Davis and Ginny Boss connect culturally responsive curriculum to broader challenges in higher education, including political pressures, DEI debates, and shifting student needs. Collectively, the speakers frame culturally responsive curriculum not as an optional add-on but as essential, holistic, and urgent, impacting teaching practices, institutional culture, student belonging, and educational equity.

Gianina Baker: Welcome to today's Democracy's College podcast episode, where we explore the evolving landscape of higher education. I'm your host, Gianina Baker, and I'm thrilled to be joined by four scholars for a conversation on culturally responsive curriculum. We'll begin with Dr. Rick Rantz and Dr. Lauren Contreras, co-authors and editors of the book *Developing Culturally Responsive Curriculum in Higher Education*.

And later, we'll hear from Dr. Tiffany J. Davis and Dr. Ginny Boss, co-editors of Dr. Rantz's upcoming volume, who will help us reflect where this work is headed next. So, let's dive in.

Welcome, everyone, to Democracy's College podcast. And I'd like to pose the first question to Dr. Rantz and Dr. Contreras and ask: What inspired you to write *Developing Culturally Responsive Curriculum in Higher Education* and what gaps were you hoping to address in current curriculum practices?

Rick Rantz: Thank you for inviting me to today's podcast. I've been following the work that you do at the University of Illinois, and I've listened to some of the Democracy's College podcasts. And so I'm really honored to be part of today's podcast.

Gianina Baker: What inspired you to write this book?

Rick Rantz: Really, the emphasis for this entire book started way before COVID. So my co-editor, Dr. LeeAnne McNulty, is director of institutional grants at Allan Hancock College. So we were examining a grant somewhere, I think it was about 2019. And we were looking at a grant that we actually submitted to the National Endowment of the Humanities, because we were sitting around her office looking at the data, and even though Allan Hancock College had been named in the top five community colleges in California by the Aspen Institute, our retention and persistence rate really were pretty dismal. And so, I just posed a question: How relevant is our curriculum to our student body that we serve? Because Allan Hancock College has about 70% Hispanic students. So I'm going, do these students even *relate* to what we're trying to teach them? I go, 'Let's try to find out how culturally responsive our curriculum is.'

At that point, there was no kind of assessment tool available except at the K-12 level, basically at the K-6 level. So, I decided to do a curriculum audit because I was a dean over most of the humanity courses at the college. So, I decided to do a curriculum audit because I had access to all of the syllabi. I reviewed (laughs) almost 500 syllabi and looked at the required reading list and the suggested reading list. And out of all of those, despite our student body, there were only five authors that had Hispanic last names. So that started me to wonder, I go, 'Wow, we need to dig deeper into this and really examine our curriculum to see if our student body even relates to what we're trying to teach them.'

We started looking for an assessment tool, and we came across one at the K-12 level but really nothing at the higher education level. We formed a partnership with New York University. They helped us develop a draft of an assessment tool, which we called the Culturally Responsive Curriculum Assessment Tool in Higher Education. We've included it as a chapter in our book. At that point, we were going, okay, how do we get our faculty on board with actually assessing their curriculum? That's when I started to reach out to scholars. We had conversations with a lot of individuals. This was researchers before COVID. I was familiar with the University of Houston because that's where I did my doctoral

work. I contacted Dr. Davis and she suggested that we bring in Dr. Jones Boss, and they helped to design a formative assessment to see if our faculty was even ready to approach this.

They came up with some really interesting findings as they helped us. They came in and did a series of conversations with faculty, conversations with students. And so students, they said, we're sure that our instructors would include culturally responsive material if only they had time. And then the faculty, they perceive culturally responsive curriculum as an add-on. They go, 'If we had time and space within the curriculum, we would, of course, be willing to learn more and utilize culturally responsive curriculum.' What we decided to do, because Dr. McNulty and I were both administrators, and so getting faculty on board, we're going, how are we going to do this?

What we decided to do is take the rough draft of our assessment tool and invite a wide spectrum of faculty across campus to actually review it. And we actually paid them to participate. And they reviewed the assessment tool and made some really great recommendations on how to improve it. And I think involving them at a very early stage was really important because when we decided to roll out a professional development series focusing on the assessment tool and training faculty on how to use it, we sent out the e-mail announcing our professional development series, and all of the space is filled overnight. And so we decided we needed to add even more training.

What was really interesting, back to that grant that we wrote, we asked for comments. We didn't get the grant. And we asked for comments, and one of the reviewers said, 'You will *never* get faculty on board with this effort.' That person was totally wrong. At Allan Hancock College, we trained over half of our faculty. With part-time and full-time faculty, there's about 700 faculty members. We've trained over half of them in culturally responsive curriculum.

At that time, there was very little literature at the higher education level. Of course, there was the foundational pieces from Ladson-Billings and Geneva Gay and even going back to James Banks with multicultural education. But really, there was a void in the literature at the higher education level. Dr. McNulty and I felt that it was really important to try to put together literature that would help higher education faculty adopt culturally responsive curriculum and assist them in embracing it.

Gianina Baker: Thank you for that origin story. And who better to write a book than one that's doing this in practice? So that's an incredible story that leads me to Dr. Contreras. You know, what helped with your inspiration and what gaps were you hoping to address in current curriculum practices.

Lauren Contreras: Yeah, it's great to hear Dr. Rantz in the background of the development of the book because I was just relatively new faculty member in my first year at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, Arizona. And I just, you know, see this call for chapter authors about working with culturally responsive curriculum. It's something that I have really tried to dedicate my career now to. I previously have worked in higher education as a practitioner, working with historically marginalized student populations, more so on the advising and mentoring and program coordination side, but as I transitioned into faculty, just seeing how much time that faculty spend with students and the impact that we can have on our students by creating a space and environment where they can see themselves and feel validated and affirmed through curriculum and pedagogy.

Being at Northern Arizona University, when I got hired, we recently had become a Hispanic-serving institution at 25%. And then we're also situated near 22 tribal lands. We are also a Native American-serving nontribal institution—emerging, we're not quite there yet, but we have about 8% Native American and Indigenous student population. So, coming to work here, seeing a diverse group of students in our classrooms and wanting to ensure that they're served and that their voices are heard and that they feel affirmed. My colleagues and I at NAU, who are also new scholars, are new faculty, we're trying to bring in new approaches to make sure that our students were feeling successful and supported.

Also knowing that these student populations, even though coming to NAU, were not persisting and graduating at the same rate as other students as Dr. Rantz mentioned also at Allan Hancock College. So that was something that we wanted to address and just to be able to help other faculty think about ways that they can relate to their students and support their students and bring in their culture and validate them through these different practices. That's really what has inspired me to keep going in this work and seeking other ways to inspire faculty to do the same.

Gianina Baker: As you both talk a bit about culturally responsive curriculum, I'm wondering if you might, for our listeners, help define culturally responsive curriculum in the context of higher education. And with that, are there any theoretical or pedagogical foundations, Dr. Rantz, you talked a little bit earlier about Drs. Ladson-Billings and Gay that helped guide the development of this book. Anything you would add in terms of defining the term?

Lauren Contreras: Yes, I'm definitely also influenced by Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings, of course, and the work that she has done with culturally relevant pedagogy. And, you know, she has these three different pillars that she thinks about in terms of culturally responsive pedagogy, and that's having high expectations for students, relating to their culture, understanding culture and bringing in culture, and then helping students to develop a

critical consciousness. I like how she calls it, like, the so what, why are we, you know, in education, why are we learning what we're learning and how are we going to apply it and bring it back to our communities and our society? And so I really try to focus on that critical consciousness piece and, like, how do we help students think about their learning and make an impact within their communities. And so that's one part that I think about.

And then I'm also influenced by Funds of Knowledge, which was developed by Luis Moll and now has been translated into higher education more recently. My own doctoral advisor, Dr. Judy Marquez Kiyama brought a lot of that into the higher education space as well. And so that's really thinking about how can we connect to our students' backgrounds and build relationships with them? And so that's what I also think about [with] culturally responsive curriculum. Like, how can we create this curriculum without knowing our students? We really have to develop relationships and get to know them and their backgrounds, where they're coming from, where they live, their neighborhoods, their families, and how can we bring that into the classroom environment so that it doesn't feel so separated, like you have to leave behind your family and your culture and assimilate into a higher education context that is different from your own background. I feel like the two should be seamless and integrated and we should value our students' knowledge and backgrounds in everything that we do and see that as valid knowledge.

When I think about culturally responsive curriculum, I think about how can we develop curriculum that is related to their background, whether it's bringing in authors and readings and as Dr. Rantz mentioned as well, like, looking at your readings that you're offering, looking at the topics that you're talking about in class. Are they relating to the community that you're teaching? Those are things that I really think about, but I think before we can do that we have to develop relationships with our students and understand where we are and where we're situated so that we can make those connections.

Gianina Baker: Great points. Dr. Rantz, do you want to ... ?

Rick Rantz: Yeah, as we developed our assessment tool, Dr. McNulty and I, we felt that it was really important to really focus on action. It's one thing to develop curriculum that students can relate to, they can see themselves in the curriculum. But going beyond that, we felt it was important to include an action piece. In fact, in the book, I wrote a chapter on activism, training students to be advocates of the curriculum also; extend that into their communities across the campus. That's sort of an extension of culturally responsive curriculum that I think is really important, taking it into action, because otherwise I don't think it has the kind of meaning for students that's required for them to really embrace it themselves. It's one thing to see yourself in what's being taught, but if you can extend that into some kind of action, I think it's more meaningful for students.

Gianina Baker: I'm excited that you both were talking about this because right before this, I got a text from my freshman in college that's like, 'This search class is about to make me crash out. I don't understand the purpose.' And I'm like, 'Oh, I can't wait. We're going to have a *great* conversation later about this.'

What you both are saying, I think is important, connecting the literature. You know, there's a reason why you're doing it. And it's not just to be busy. There's purpose behind it. And especially if you've been very intentional, ensuring that your course, your program, the entire piece of that is culturally responsive. There's a purpose to it, and we just have to help students find it.

Dr. Rantz, I want to kind of push on what you said. You know, is there a key framework or concept from the book that you believe is maybe the most transformative for faculty, institutions, even students that you kind of talked about earlier?

Rick Rantz: It's really difficult to pinpoint just one or two frameworks or theories in the book, the most important. It's interesting because when we started putting together the volume, we didn't have a publisher. We actually began working with the Teachers College Press. I had invited James Banks to write a chapter, and he sent a message back and he goes, 'Well, I want to examine it for publication at the Teachers College Press, which is really fantastic, but we had already accepted, like, 24 chapters for the book, and we felt that they were all really good. And they wanted to narrow it down to only eight chapters. And we're going, oh, my gosh, we can't do that. So we began looking for another publisher, and as soon as IGI Global—I sent them a synopsis of the book—and they immediately said, 'Yes, we want to publish it.' So, we had to pull out a Teachers College Press, which is disappointing, but Dr. Banks totally understood. So that's awesome.

Gianina Baker: Dr. Contreras, do you want to share some of the chapters or even some that were key? But obviously you wrote a chapter and full disclaimer, I did as well [laughs]. So, any concepts you want to share from the book for the listeners to learn about?

Lauren Contreras: Yeah, so I wrote a couple of chapters. The first one, actually, was when we were working with Teachers College Press, and that was actually a few years back [laughs]. And that was more about using culturally relevant pedagogy and critical race curriculum within online learning, thinking about when we were going through, like, [the] COVID-19 pandemic and then racial injustice that was occurring at the same time as we were making those shifts into online learning and understanding that historically marginalized populations were the ones most at risk of not having access to technology and internet and space to be able to learn in that. So that chapter focuses on thinking about ways to connect with students through an online space and how to engage them

through that space and how that can be a little more difficult, but also important, especially now as *after* COVID, a lot more programs and classes have gone online. I know the program I work in, our master's program is completely online. So, you know, I'm glad that I started thinking about that then, because now I'm really putting that into practice.

And then my other chapter, as I mentioned, was thinking about working with Latine and Native American Indigenous students. And we talk about several different frameworks within that one, Funds of Knowledge being one, community cultural wealth developed by YOSO, red pedagogy, culturally relevant pedagogy, and senti-pensante, which I think is also a really important one, thinking about when we work with students to focus on their whole person and well-being and knowing that they're coming into our classrooms with all of these different experiences and different emotions and feelings and things like that. And so, to be able to utilize our teaching for wholeness and healing as much as we can.

I've also had the opportunity to read a few other chapters as I was putting together a conference proposal, too, and invited some authors. And so, reading those has been really inspiring as well and just learning how faculty from all different backgrounds in all different fields, ethnic studies, STEM fields are thinking about approaching this work. And I think a lot of it goes back to thinking about who you are as a faculty member and reflecting on your own identity and experiences and trying to get to see how you can utilize that to connect with your students. And then also, what do you need to learn [laughs] to be able to connect with students, too? What don't you know? How can you better inform yourself to connect with your students that might have backgrounds and identities different from yourself. And also just thinking about how to build those relationships with students, I think was something key that I saw in a lot of the different chapters. So, it's a really great book to be a part of, and I'll have to check out your chapter as well [laughs].

Gianina Baker: [Laughs] Both of you, I think, have kind of hit on this, whether it's through the origin story or, as you've talked about, some of the concepts. And before I invite both Drs. Davis and Boss into the conversation, I wonder if you'll help answer: Why is the work urgent now?

Rick Rantz: I think if you look at our political climate across the United States, it really stands out as something just really important to try to counter some of that narrative that you hear currently.

It's interesting because Dr. McNulty and I, we've presented at national conferences across the United States. And we were in Texas for a presentation [that] was really well received. But people came up and they go, 'Well, we can't even mention the word[s] culturally responsive or diversity or DEI.' And they're going, 'What advice do you have for us?' Our

advice was just do it. Do it and even if you call it something else. You know, it's just good teaching. It really boils down to being really good teaching. And so, I think that's the way that you continue to do this work despite all of the political rhetoric and everything that you hear nowadays. Our students are still going to be there. They're still going to be sitting in the classroom or online. Our advice was just ignore everything and go about your day being a good teacher.

Gianina Baker: Dr. Contreras, anything you might add?

Lauren Contreras: Yeah, I would completely agree with that. I mean, I think it's a really tough time politically, as we know. We know that the demographics of our colleges are changing and increasing and more ethnically and racially diverse and then other diversity as well, not just racial and ethnic.

And I think when I sit with students and I am teaching them, they *want* this material and they respond well to it. And even despite everything in the outside noise, they do really respond well. And students want to feel heard and validated and seen and affirmed for who they are. And I think it does contribute to them doing better academically in the classroom as well. Like, I've seen that firsthand as I get to know students and I bring in activities that they can relate to. It helps them to understand the topics at hand better because they can relate to it. Then we see those academic outcomes increase as well, as well as the personal outcomes to the person, and hopefully the inspiration for them to also go out and make a difference in their communities. So, I think it's important to keep doing.

Another thing within higher ed right now is we're seeing a lot more students with mental health concerns too. And I think by having a faculty member, instructor that demonstrates care and concern for who you are as a person and your culture and your community, like, that can really make a difference as well.

So, I think we just have to keep doing it, even though it might become more challenging. I think also finding community of support like this group here [laughs] and I have a great group of faculty as well at NAU that are doing similar work and sharing ideas with each other, and things like that can help sustain you and keep you motivated even in the discouraging times.

Gianina Baker: With that, I'd like to welcome in both Drs. Davis and Boss into this conversation as I pose the next question: How do you see culturally responsive curriculum intersecting with current challenges in higher education, whether it's political pressures, conversations around diversity, equity, and inclusion, or even shifting student demographics? Dr. Boss, what are some of your thoughts?

Ginny Boss: Yeah, I'm happy to jump in here. I think that, Dr. Contreras and Dr. Rantz had some really great things to say. One of the things that I think really resonates in me, kind of in response to this question and building on what's already been shared is that Dr. Rantz talked about this idea of this is just good teaching. And I think I agree with that. And I think even more when you cast it out to the language of thinking, not just about culturally responsive and culturally relevant pedagogy, but thinking about culturally responsive curriculum is really about thinking even outside of individual classrooms. Because I think a lot of times, we talk about and we give examples and it's helpful. That's incredibly helpful for us to think about that. But also thinking how we're thinking across the curriculum *holistically* and thinking about just good higher education practice and how higher education becomes this vehicle for how we think and how we know and how we learn.

I think when we think about the current moment that we're in, the political pressures that we face as faculty and administrators, because there's a mix of that here, and all these conversations around, like, DEI and justice and even sometimes belonging gets cut in there because of how we intertwine all of those different ideas and concepts. The way I see this intersecting is I think that what it helps us to understand is that we *really* have to approach the way that we go about doing higher education in a much more expansive way about how we honor the fuller and more accurate representation of, like, what human knowledge is, recognizing what *counts* as legitimized knowledge. Because for a lot of the history of higher education, I actually am teaching a History of Higher Education class *this* semester, so this is *very* like in my mind right now in conversations that I'm having with my students in my class. But it has been very narrowly defined, right? There have been a lot of meta-narratives that get kind of highlighted and lifted as kind of the way that we go about knowing and the information that we need to have. And I think what culturally responsive curriculum does, particularly in this moment in time, is that it helps to remind us that the story is much fuller than that, and it *needs* to be much fuller than that.

I see this as a way of us continuing to do the good work in our individual classrooms, but also across the curriculum, helping to make sure that we're not just honoring the cultural experiences of the students who are in our classrooms, but also helping them understand how they're part of a larger fabric of society, right? And I think they know that, especially students who are coming from marginalized backgrounds because they've had to live in a world where they have to live under the meta-narrative and hold that, right, intention with their own experiences. But I think introducing into the classroom how all of these things kind of weave together for this kind of tapestry of learning and understanding and knowledge and then how that then goes beyond, right, the campuses that we're on is really important.

And then the last thing I'll say, and I'll pass it along to my dear colleague, Dr. Davis, is that it's an invitation, right? It's an invitation to our students. It's an invitation to us as faculty to even do our own work. I think Dr. Contreras talked about this, right? Like, and understanding what we don't know and what we need to learn. And I think in some ways for us, understanding what we have to *unlearn*. I went through a whole kind of K-12 system, and really, honestly, if I talk about my undergraduate experiences as well, I didn't learn a lot about native and Indigenous ways of knowing. You know, we go through a whole system like that, and I had to unlearn all these meta-narratives, and the little bit that was taught to me that was inaccurate. So, there was a lot of unlearning and unpacking I had to do even to approach this well. And I think that's true for all of us. And, you know, I'm a person who has minoritized identities, and yet that doesn't mean that I don't have unlearning to do for myself as well. And so I think in that way, it becomes an invitation for all of us, like as educators, to really examine kind of what we know, how we were socialized to know, and how that shows up in our teaching and our pedagogy and how we think across the curriculum.

Gianina Baker: Thank you for being so reflective. That, I think, will resonate with *many* people listening.

Dr. Davis, anything you wanted to add to that conversation?

Tiffany Davis: I want to take a moment to kind of extend what Dr. Boss has said, as well as Dr. Contreras around, first, that what curriculum is. You asked the question, like, how does culturally responsive curriculum? And so often we *do* think of curriculum as just merely *content* and what people are learning, but I want to expand that to also include the *hidden* curriculum, and that we know that the hidden curriculum and Jackson's kind of formulation of that is that this is all the things that we are taught, but by our regular everyday experiences and navigation of the world. And so, when we think about curriculum and how it's intersecting right now, curriculum in this text, as well as in the broader sense, is connected to not only the content, but also the strategies and the pedagogies that we use to do that, as well as the *environments* that are created.

And I want to tap into the institutional perspective as I was trained as a student-affairs administrator and started my career there and became a faculty member. And now as an associate dean and as an academic administrator, as much as I love my [laughs] disciplinary home of student affairs, and will say that we are the people [laughs] that are making colleges college, what I have come to understand even more is that there are so many students that will never interact meaningfully with a student-affairs unit. And so even though we still need to work on that, because that is the part of the college experience in ways that complement the work in the classroom, working with faculty and looking at

what's happening *inside of* the classroom will touch *every* individual student that is coming to be on our campuses.

And so from an institutional perspective, as Dr. Rantz talked about, he wondered, why do we not have the persistence and the retention rates, and looking at the curriculum, well, there's a *body* of research of scholars who have looked at and have confirmed over and over again that when we are making our curriculum more relevant, more responsive to students, their cultural identities, that motivation increases, that academic outcomes. So persistence, graduation, things that universities and institutions are concerned about right now. We are looking at what is our retention rate? What is our graduation rate? How do we increase student success when students are concerned about the value of a college degree or how long it's taking them to get there?

And so, we *have* to look at all of these folks and say, hey, well, you know, Rendon's validation theory, or maybe it's Museus's theories, or community and cultural wealth, or Terrell Strayhorn and his work in student belonging, or even EAB and their five components of student belonging. All of these models and frameworks and research help us to know that when students feel a sense of belonging, a way of *connecting* to the course content in order to *learn it*, they are more likely to be engaged, they're more likely to stay in college, they're more likely to graduate in what we would call quote unquote “timely academic progression.”

And so all of that is really important. And that's what's intersecting for me is that even if we say that we don't want to use the words of DEI or equity or any of these pieces, at the end of the day, colleges and universities exist to help ensure that students are being successful, that we are educating a citizenry, and that we are preparing leaders and thinkers and change agents for our communities, as well as all of the personal things that have connection to the work, the personal outcomes of going to college and the outcomes that we know about well-being and financial security and all of the things that we know that the value of a college degree. And so, all of these things really do connect to make sure that as we look at curriculum, that it's inclusive, that it's transforming, and that's really *empowering* for not only individuals, but also for our workforce.

Ginny Boss: One quick thing that I will add, because as I was listening to Dr. Davis, it kind of made me think about this to the question, right, of the intersection of this is that Dr. Davis really pointed out that all of this matters, right, to student success, which are metrics that the institution cares about and that we care about too. We want students to be successful. And I think in a lot of ways, what culturally responsive curriculum helps us to do is, one, it helps us to understand this moment in time that we're in. So I see that as a big intersection because as we're bringing in and we are considering more kind of cultural

perspectives, again, in ways of knowing and ways of engaging with knowledge, it helps us to understand how do we get to this moment in time in the U.S. in this kind of political landscape, and why there is the kind of response to it that we're having.

I think in the same way, it helps us to understand why we are having to fight against those things that have maybe been causing issues around retention, progression, graduation for students because we think about the fact that we have institutions that were not built for today's students. And this is one of the reasons that there are a number of barriers in their way. It doesn't have anything to do with the capacity of the students, but it has everything to do with the fact that we've built a system that wasn't expansive enough for the students who are coming to our campuses and that are gaining more access to our campuses.

And then as Dr. Davis said so eloquently, so I won't reiterate the whole point, is that one of the ways that this intersects and one of the ways that we think about it is that, again, regardless of the language, and I do think language matters, that's a whole conversation for another day, but regardless of the language, this work is what helps us to counteract a lot of that, or at least to kind of build more capacity for supporting students meaningfully.

Tiffany Davis: And just to jump in, Dr. Boss, is like what you're saying is also around how culturally responsive in curriculum and stuff, sometimes people think of it from a deficit perspective, but what you're saying and what you're adding is that these approaches really add on and give us an asset-focused way and lens to do the work that we need to do to see cultural strengths as something that we should be amplifying to see the ways that other scholars and people and individuals because we also know that knowledge is just not in the academy. And so expanding even the *types* of knowledge that are brought in and connected with students is really helpful for higher education to be responding to the challenges of our time.

Gianina Baker: This is such a *great* conversation, Dr. Rantz, excellent job in thinking of who might join this conversation. I'm *loving* this and hoping that those of you listening are just in a space where you can reflect, right, on your own practice and hopefully take something from this conversation.

You all have kind of talked a bit about some strategies. Dr. Rantz, I know you talked a little bit earlier about the curriculum audit, the culturally responsive curriculum audit, that you even have a chapter in the book on. And so I'm wondering, what are some practical strategies or examples from the book that faculty can use to make their curriculum more culturally responsive, *especially* in disciplines that may not traditionally focus on culture or identity?

Rick Rantz: You know, it's really interesting because when we began working with our own faculty, at the beginning some of the most resistant faculty members were in the STEM

areas. And after we invited some of those to our workshops, they became the biggest advocates for culturally responsive curriculum. They just didn't know how to bring in concepts that related to the students in their class. And once we gave them some examples on how to do that, they became real champions for the whole effort.

Specifically, I think going back to some earlier conversation, getting to know who your students are in class and taking their *own* interest and developing your curriculum around that is so important. There's thousands and thousands of ways to do it. It's just being really encouraging faculty to be creative, reach out and embrace things. Try things. As educators, we all know we try things that don't work. So what? Try something different. You're going to find something that students relate to, something that they embrace, and keep those good things that you try and just toss the other ones to the side.

Gianina Baker: I think, as you said earlier, you just have to do it. You *just* have to do it. That's a great point.

Dr. Contreras, what might you add?

Lauren Contreras: Yeah, I think sometimes it can be difficult for faculty with time and feeling like you have so many things you have to fit in your lessons and things like that. But I do think it's worth it. And I think with *all classes*, regardless of what the subject is, community building is so important because you're going to work in groups a lot of times in your classroom experience, especially in the STEM fields. There's labs where you work and collaborate on together with people from different backgrounds and perspectives.

So, I always take a lot of time, especially towards the beginning of the semester, but even throughout the semester, where we just do these check-ins with each other to get to know each other, whatever that may be. What led you to this field? I do an activity with my graduate students. I teach in a higher education program, so I ask them to bring in an artifact at the beginning of the semester that represents why they're in the study of higher education. You can do that in a STEM field, too. You could be like, why are you in biology? What does that connect to? And I think you'll see a lot of times students will say, 'Oh, because somebody in my family is struggling with this, and I want to be able to come up with a cure for this disease' or something like that; or 'I'm really concerned about the environment or what's going on, and I want to understand science better so I can address that concern.' So, I think doing those community building is important to get to better understand your students and then help them connect who they are to what they're learning.

I did some training with some graduate assistants last year in the STEM field, in biology in particular, because they were really hungry for this knowledge as well. And they were

working with first-year biology students coming in and large classes, large labs, and how can they get those students engaged, help them feel excited about science. And so we talked a lot about how can they tailor the labs to things that are of interest to the students, concerns that they have within their own communities, things that are going on, you know, locally, regionally in this area and just really tailoring it to that.

Gianina Baker: Dr. Davis, anything you might add as well?

Tiffany Davis: I want to say that I love this question, number one, because I am currently serving as a research consultant for a scholar, Dr. Brit Williams from the University of Vermont, who has a Spencer Foundation racial equity grant, and it's specifically around citational equity and justice. And so, when I think about practical strategies, one of the things that Dr. Williams' work is looking at is one of the easiest ways to think about this is what are we doing to approach representation in our classroom? And we can start with the sources. So, we can think about, are they multi-generational? Whose contributions and voices are we amplifying? Are they early-career scholars? Are they mid-career scholars? Are they senior experts? What do we classify as foundational knowledge? Do they represent the different racial, cultural, gender, other cultural experiences and expectations? Because oftentimes, when people think about culturally responsive and culturally relevant curriculum, sometimes the community-building is so essential just to have a caring classroom to connect with issues of mental health and wellness and academic motivations and getting to know your students. But at the end of the day, the academic curriculum is based on disciplinary content, expertise, and knowledge and developing that and deepening that and broadening that.

And so we have to, as faculty members in the classroom, look at who's being cited and who's not being cited. Why are we amplifying and privileging certain voices and not? How does the choices of content of the language that we use, even the pictures in terms of when we're doing it and when we say scholars' names, what genders are we ascribing to them? Do we actually know?

There was a class that I had when I was in graduate school, and they showed pictures of all the scholars. And I was like, oh, I'm misgendering some people. I didn't know who these folks look like, what their politics were, and how I am replicating those in the classroom. And so, I think the work that Dr. Williams is doing and that I'm assisting within that space is going to be amazing. Look for us in a later publication presentation [laughs]. But also I think the work is so important because this connects to how do we then contribute to the curriculum.

And then even off of that, Dr. Boss and I did a study and looking at around like liberatory educational practice and looking at syllabi and looking at using Muhammad's cultivating genius framework and looking at all of these things around epistemic credibility and looking at agitation, literacy, and all these different things that Dr. Rantz has talked about. Like, how are we having folks look at the curriculum and think about what does it mean for today's time?

So, we're still doing the discipline, but we're looking at what are the disciplinary issues and how do we think about it for now and for future? And how are we expanding the people's voices that are then going to be represented that we can talk about and reference in our classrooms?

Gianina Baker: I have so many more things I want to read now from what you just said. So appreciate it! Dr. Boss.

Ginny Boss: Yeah, so I hope to not take us too [much] on a left term. It's related, for sure. So, one arm of kind of my work and my research is looking at what about the workers? What about the faculty? What about the student-affairs professionals who are serving students? Because I mean, we're talking about it as vehicles of this work. And we talk about talking to our students, understanding what's important to them, understanding their culture and all of that. But also, I think sometimes we don't pay enough attention to answering that question, I think, like, what about the workers?

So, I think a couple of things that really came up for me as folks were sharing was that this is daunting work. There's a time aspect of this that can feel really daunting for faculty to take on, for sure, because there are lots of competing demands. We're always in this do less with more kind of environment. But I think there's also a kind of mental and emotional part of it too, that I don't know that we always talk about well. And I think to Dr. Contreras's point, this is where having a good community of practice is really important, but also to, like, the self-work that we have to do. Like, you know, I talked, I think a little bit earlier about this idea of like unlearning, and I think how overwhelming it can feel. So, it feels overwhelming for me as a person who I feel like is *very* entrenched in the work of thinking about cultural relevance, cultural responsiveness, making sure that I am diversifying, you know, kind of the readings and the visuals that I'm putting in front of students. But I think for many of us, as you go through life, you realize the more you learn, the more you know you don't know. For me, sometimes I even have that overwhelming feeling of, you know, what am I missing? You know, are there big thinkers in my field that I just haven't had the privilege of coming across? Are there places that I'm not able to highlight? And obviously you can't do all things for all people. You can't know all the things. So this is not a, how do we find a way to know all the things? It's just not going to be possible, right?

But I do think that it is important to acknowledge the importance of the self-worth that comes as a part of this too, and also the need for community care and support that is folded into this work. Because I think that that's really important. And I think a lot of times we focus a lot on the students because, yes, right, like the students are so important. And also, you can't pour from an empty cup, right [laughs]? Like, so how do we think about how we make sure that we have the kinds of supports that we need to engage with this work, that we have a community that can help us to dig more deeply and maybe show us where there may be spots that we're missing pieces, and also just to sometimes be able to talk through the hardness of this work, especially, I think, just the work in and of itself, particularly to the [laughs] previous question of in this moment in time, certainly adds another layer to that.

Gianina Baker: Dr. Contreras, I think you wanted to pull in a point?

Lauren Contreras: Yeah, I just wanted to circle back to a point that Dr. Davis made about it's one thing to, like, introduce scholars into the curriculum and things like that and bring in diverse voices. You know, one thing I found, especially working with undergrads, we've had reading from, like, James Baldwin or something like that. I'm like, 'Oh, what do you know about James Baldwin?' And that, you know, they read the thing, but they're like [laughs], 'Oh, I don't know.' You know, like they didn't look up who he was or, like, his contributions or things like that. And so, something I would always do would be like, okay, we're going to spend a little bit talking about *who* we're reading from. Like, this is James Baldwin. He's a queer black man. You know, this is the perspective that he's writing from. It's in the 1960s. You know, this is what was going on during that time as well. So a little historical lesson as well [laughs], but just so they can understand where these perspectives are coming from and who we're centering and why we're centering these voices and why they're important. So that's something that I've tried to do in my classes, all classes, but especially with undergrads, because I remember as an undergrad, I would read things and I wouldn't ever think to look up who was writing it or whose perspective I was reading from.

And then that helps you as a faculty member too, like, thinking about, like, who *am I* sharing [laughs] articles from and, like, and kind of doing that audit on yourself of, like, whose perspectives am I sharing and also being intentional about that, too.

I heard from a queer student and we had talked about Audre Lorde and talked about her identity as a woman, a black woman, and that sort of thing, but didn't really talk about her queerness and that identity and how that was missing from the conversation. And so also thinking about these people as intersectional beings as well and all of their different identities and how that's important to students as well.

Gianina Baker: Dr. Davis, you wanted to add a sentence?

Tiffany Davis: Absolutely. And what this does, I'm going to always probably come back to the students part [laughs] because of where I am in my role now. But what that does is it also presents students with possibility models and for them to think of *themselves* as scholars, as leaders, as thinkers, of doers in variety, because sometimes we don't know about these folks' lives. You *think* these have to be a certain type of person because you know their name, but you don't know, and you're like, wow, they also came from a lower socioeconomic background or, oh, wow, they also are LGBTQ or they came from foster care or they are a veteran or they are a person with disabilities. Like, all of these things create an opportunity for students to see their lived experience represented, and also to see that things are possible for them and their communities and their families. And so, I think that is another part when we're looking at who we bring into the classroom.

Gianina Baker: Dr. Boss, I know you wanted to add something as well.

Ginny Boss: Yes, I just want to plug, again, just a scholar that Dr. Davis mentioned that we used on a project of ours who I think really provides a lot of good support around this and that's Ghody Muhammad. And a lot of her work shows up in the kind of P-12 space that she writes about but translates incredibly well to higher education around this idea of, you know, exploring the culture and history of different disciplines. And it's really great because she gives examples of cutting across a lot of different disciplines, even ones where people might think are not traditionally, like, culture and history are relevant, even though they're relevant to all of them. But I think she does a really nice job of presenting some of those ideas for folks who are interested. And we can send along some of that.

What really activated this for me is that, you know, Dr. Davis talked about her other work and working on kind of like citational politics. And I think it's important and a lot of people have raised some really great scholars here. And I just wanted to reintroduce that name into the space because I think she's done some incredible work there that we could all benefit from.

Gianina Baker: Great. I'm glad you emphasized that. You're absolutely right. She absolutely has done some great work. And if you haven't read any of her work, I invite you to do so.

Dr. Boss, I want to stick with you for a moment because I think you highlighted the question: What about the workers? I wonder, you know, what are some of the most common barriers that faculty face when trying to implement culturally responsive practices and how can institutions better support them?

Ginny Boss: You know, some of those have been mentioned here, but I think one of the biggest barriers is that this misconception that culturally responsive teaching is about

inserting political statements. I don't think any of us on this call necessarily believe that, right? I mean, there is a political element to it that I won't go in a whole soapbox about that, but I think in the way that the term is thrown out in the zeitgeist here is a little bit different.

One of the big barriers is, like, missing the piece of expanding access to knowledge. Another barrier that may be in place for faculty and other folks engaged in this work, it may just be a lack of knowledge about cultural history that is present in their discipline. And they may feel that they don't have the expertise to do this work. I've heard, you know, colleagues express that, you know, like, I just don't feel that I have the, you know, kind of knowledge and skillset to do this well. And so they're worried about doing it poorly. And I think that can definitely be a barrier for some faculty to really engage in a way that is meaningful.

Time was mentioned. Time is always a very real constraint. I am facing that on the daily, certainly in my own working life as a faculty member.

And then I think also there are, like, institutional pieces of this as well, in addition to what we're seeing in this particular moment in time where there are some institutions that are very *explicitly* kind of like banning the use of the language or disappearing in syllabi. And even in recent cases that we've seen where people are losing their jobs for, you know, things that are happening *in the classroom*. I mean, like, this is happening *right now*, you know, so there are those pieces that are obvious barriers there as well. And so, it's not an easy landscape to navigate. It's an important and necessary one to navigate, but there are a number of barriers that are there.

But I think there are a number of opportunities, as well. And I think there's some institutional supports that are a piece of this, and I'd be happy to talk a little bit about that. But I think also we have to think beyond the institution when we think about doing this work. To Dr. Contreras's point around communities of practice, like, not relying on our institutions to be the sole place where we find those communities of practice. It'd be great if we had lots of colleagues who were super supportive of us and within our own campuses to do that. But I think we have to look outside of that. I've certainly have had to do that and have benefited a lot from it, whether it's been through my national kind of, like, field or discipline, or, you know, just kind of other communities that I've amassed over time, whether it's consulting work or just, you know, however that might organically have happened. But we *need* that, we need to have a collective around us to explore strategies to share materials, to get feedback without fear of judgment is really important because we need to have spaces that are safe for us to grow and to learn and to do this work and to find rest I think is really important in all of that. And then I think there are a number of things that

institutions *can* be doing, but also a lot of that support is dictated by the kind of institution and what's available there as well.

Gianina Baker: Again, important points to note. And throughout the book, I'm *sure* there are ideas and thoughts of not just talking about the barriers that exist, but again, how to overcome some of those, whether it's in your classroom, out of the classroom, within the institution. I love the idea of pushing on the notion of the supports that are outside of the institution.

I want to switch gears a bit and talk to the two of you, Dr. Boss and Dr. Davis, around being co-editors of the upcoming book, *Rethinking General Education in Higher Education*, and ask a couple of questions. First, how does this next volume build on this burst around developing culturally responsive curriculum? And what new voices or perspectives are being centered? And how should institutions prepare to engage with this next phase of work? Dr. Davis, might you start?

Tiffany Davis: Absolutely. I'll kind of start with, you know, how does this build upon the work that Dr. Rantz and Dr. McNulty already did? What I see is that the CRC, culturally responsive curriculum, book really focuses on the *how*. Like, with the curriculum, that's what Dr. Contreras has contributed as well as some other authors. And so, what rethinking general education and higher education is really going to focus on is the *what*. What *should* students gain from general education to be prepared for life and work? And so, this book is going to explore where are we now? What do we think? Because what we've taught is the general education curriculum, like, do you have to have two years of foreign language? Do you have to have this many math, this many science? What constitutes a Bachelor of Science? What constitutes a Bachelor of Art? What are the disciplines that we should be concerned with? We're going to take that up.

Where I see the general education, a lot of different, I would say, either states are looking at this, districts, institutions are looking at the idea around employability. And so looking at what are our graduates prepared and able to do? What are the advances in globalization, technological advances?

One of the things that I've been particularly interested in are these ideas around wicked problems. And that's where a lot of different industries and professions are saying wicked problems are where we are now, where we have these ill-defined issues that are happening in society, in the world: poverty, climate change, equity, justice, technology. We see it with the whole movement around generative AI and AI in general. There are these complex problems. There are multiple stakeholders. There's lots of different people having varying perspectives and ideas on how do we solve it. And *if* we even have a solution. How do we

solve and explore these societal challenges? And what is the education *needed* for folks who come to college? And also we're at a place where we now know that individuals say college is not the only method of education. And so we're looking at not just the traditional environment of colleges and universities, but also looking at online education, also looking at adult education. We're looking at what does it mean to start in high schools.

Also, there's different pathways to education and knowledge and the learning spaces that people are engaging in. And so how do we create *people* that can respond to the times? And so *that's* what our book is going to do is culturally responsive curriculum is *one* of the answers to *how* do we do it, but this book will really look at what are we doing and showcasing the existence *between* and among disciplines.

And so Dr. Boss may have a little bit more to add around setting the foundation and how we're going to include the voices, the second part of your question.

Ginny Boss: Yeah, so I'll jump in there and say, you know, one of the things that we're particularly excited about with this volume, and CRC did some of this, but we're trying to also cast an even broader net in terms of including voices across a broad range of disciplines, institution types, geographic context, particularly bringing in even more international scholars. So thinking about how general education is being engaged *globally* and not just in a U.S. context, being able to offer models that extend beyond kind of a North American westernized context and providing readers insight about how different systems approach general education and how they kind of conceptualize it in the ways that Dr. Davis was talking about in terms of what general education may offer to students for, you know, kind of whatever is on the other side of their college-going journeys.

Because we are inviting more kind of, like, global input and scholars, you know, this is going to be grounded in comparative research context. There will be inclusion of institutional case studies and strategies that are being used in real classrooms, again, globally. It's important for *us*, as we think about kind of cultivating and bringing all of these scholars together in the volume, about connecting approaches. As Dr. Davis mentioned, with life beyond college, preparing students for citizenship and knowing that citizenship is going to look very different and be more diversely defined across the global context and for the skills that they'll need to thrive in the world beyond college, whether that's going into the workforce or wherever their journeys take them beyond the collegiate context.

Gianina Baker: We need this book now. So, wrap it up. Let's go!

To the both of you, what do you hope our listeners, whether they're faculty, administrators, even students, take away from this conversation, from the book, and imply in their own educational spaces?

Ginny Boss: Yeah, I'll jump in here first. And I'll kind of bring us back to something that Dr. Rantz mentioned before. And I think that it's this idea that culturally responsive curriculum approaches to general education in ways that are culturally responsive, thinking globally and including voices and ideas from a global aspect is simply good practice for preparing students for a complex world, and that everyone that is in the kind of enterprise of higher education—faculty, administration, students, other stakeholders—has a role to play in making this learning more expansive and making it more representative and making it more meaningful for, again, whatever journeys students are going to go on post-college.

What I hope folks take away from this conversation is that, you know, when we broaden who our knowers are and what knowledge counts and what knowledge needs to be legitimized, we strengthen our curriculum, we strengthen our college, and we strengthen our communities. And I think that that's really important for folks to connect to what we've talked about today.

Gianina Baker: Thank you, Dr. Boss. Dr. Davis.

Tiffany Davis: I agree with *everything* that my wonderful colleague Dr. Boss said. And I would add that what I hope some folks will take away from this is that there are actionable insights. And so, the theoretical and all of the, oh, here's the reason why, but I hope they understand that there are places, there are resources, there are people that can help them on this journey. There are books that they can read, there are communities of practice that can join. There are resources and trainings that you can get people to come in and help you do this work. It's not going to be easy work, but it is going to be meaningful and difference-making work. If people just have the conversation, it's not going to be enough. We have to have the action. And as Dr. Rantz said was one of the impetuses for the book is that there has to be an action component.

The other piece of that, what I've been learning and doing some of the research, like I said, with Dr. Williams, is that so many faculty, when we've been doing focus groups and such, they talk about there wasn't a socialization to culturally responsive curriculum and citational politics and ethics and all of that stuff. So again, even if we just say we're not going to be perfect *tomorrow*, but what we can do *today* is start *preparing* and *socializing* undergraduate students, as Dr. Contreras had said, that she's been doing in her classrooms, the work that some of us on this are doing in terms of doing research projects that look at how do we unframe different things. How do we unlearn? How do we look at these projects? And then we have all of these case studies and such that we can start today so that *tomorrow* we can be doing the work. And so we have to take action because the times demand it.

Gianina Baker: Absolutely. And you lead right into the last question perfectly. I've heard from Dr. Rantz earlier that the one actionable step: Start looking through the syllabi. *Five hundred* is what I heard. And that led you to, again, a *great* product deliverable, right? And not just the book, but there's so many practices uncovered. And so, I wonder if each of you might share *one* actionable step for faculty or administrators to take tomorrow toward more culturally responsive teaching, curriculum learning. What would it be?

Rick Rantz: Something we didn't focus on in today's conversation is how do faculty members go about assessing knowledge? Dr. Baker, I think you'll relate to this with your student-outcomes projects. But at Allan Hancock College, we've moved from training our faculty to become more culturally responsive but now received a couple of major grants that we sort of raided the funding together. But we're really putting an emphasis on culturally responsive assessment and how some of our assessment practices are actually really detrimental to students, especially minoritized students.

I would encourage all faculty members to learn more about culturally responsive assessment and to embrace some of those ideas. And I certainly was guilty of it when I was an instructor. I attended a couple of workshops on assessment, and I just go, 'Oh my gosh, I've damaged so many students [laughs].' So, I just encourage everybody to learn more about culturally responsive assessment and really embrace it because it's going to make a big impact on students and learning.

Gianina Baker: Dr. Contreras.

Lauren Contreras: Yes, I can jump in. Yeah, totally agree. And just loving the conversation today. I'll just [laughs] affirm that and everything that's said. So many great points made.

And I think for me, as a faculty member myself and as I was being trained to become a faculty member in higher education and seeking out that knowledge, I think that's where it really starts is just like looking into yourself and doing that interpersonal awareness and, like, understanding your own biases and background and identities. And I think Dr. Boss said it earlier, even as a person that holds minoritized identities, there's a lot of things that I had to unlearn, biases that I had to unpack, unconscious biases, things like that, that we all have. And it's just the way that our school system has been set up to focus on certain perspectives and ideas. And, you know, when we're not often exposed to these different perspectives, even though we may be interested and *want* to know more. So, I think just reflecting on yourself and seeking out information that's out there, reading some of the scholars that have been doing this work for a long time and thinking about how that connects with your ideas and how you can integrate that into your own class.

For me, also, it always goes back to students, too, and really developing relationships with students and getting to know them and who they are as whole people, not just a student in your classroom but as somebody with a culture and an identity and a background and an experience and valuing that and bringing that into the classroom in ways that you can connect activities, whatever it is, and also looking at your own syllabus, readings, things that you're doing, and ensure you're representing diverse voices that are reflective of students you're teaching and communities that you're in.

Gianina Baker: Dr. Boss.

Ginny Boss: Yeah, I would say build community, start building community. I know that that's easier said than done. You know, some of us work at institutions where we feel in isolation and we *are* in isolation. It's not just that we feel it. We are in isolation for a number of different reasons. And so I would say start to build community.

Now, Dr. Davis is a person who is very skilled at being a connector. That is not my skillset. *But* what I will say is that if there are folks who are listening to this and they're thinking, I *want* community, but I don't know where to start to get community, I'd be happy to be a first point of contact, whether it's other folks, you know, reaching out and me connecting folks. I'm happy to be a first point of contact for community of people.

It is so important to me to see, again, what about the workers? I care about the workers. I want you to be able to thrive because I know that that's going to filter down to your students and the good work that I know folks want to do, but sometimes just may feel overwhelmed and needing to accompany for the journey to do that work. And so, I think that that is a place also to start along with all the other great suggestions that have been made so far.

Gianina Baker: Dr. Davis, last words?

Tiffany Davis: Wow, Dr. Boss took my answer. And so I'm going to spin it though, right, and give a combination because I was thinking about my own faith tradition and there's kind of two phrases that come up to mind is, like, faith without works is dead and your prayers need a partner.

And so what I was going to say is that if you are interested, the next step is to find an accountability buddy. So even extending the idea of community, that's it, but someone that's going to hold you accountable to do this work with you. Because I, left to my own devices, I am left to my own devices, and so I always have to have [laughs] an accountability partner when I'm making commitments at this level because it does take time. We talked about the barriers. And so, you want to not just say, oh, I would really love to be more culturally responsive in my curriculum development or all of that—and that's faith, uh-huh—but you got to do the work, and the work is best done when you are in

community with others and when you can have someone that's going to hold you accountable and they can provide good, honest feedback because even with the culturally responsive curriculum assessment tool, it's some self-reflection that happens in reviewing the syllabi, but there's also where, give it to someone else and say, hey, will *you* go through my syllabi with this framework and lens in mind? And so that would be my addition as well as do the work, find the community, but find the accountability within that.

Gianina Baker: Well, I have found a new community today. And while this is my first time meeting all of you, I hope it's not the last time. And I will be looking out for all of your good work because we are very much aligned in this space. And I feel even more connected from today's conversation.

I hope that the listeners to this podcast understood a little bit about how we've gotten to at least the first book and a little bit about understanding where the times that we're in and how some of the resources that you all have shared today can help us learn and unlearn things that we might have thought that we knew and help situate what we're experiencing.

Dr. Rantz, I thank for the reminder that culturally responsive curriculum is just good teaching, right? Good teaching, good learning practices.

If anything, I will take from this conversation is that our students are in such good hands with each of you at the helm, our colleges and universities, and want to thank you for the *care* that you put, not just in developing your curriculum, but into the classrooms. And I *know* that students feel that, and that's *exactly* what we need as we develop this educated society that's needed to go through the daily challenges that we all seem to face.

So, thank you to our guests for sharing their insights and experiences. If you're interested in learning more, please read *Developing Culturally Responsive Curriculum in Higher Education*, available through IGI Global Publishing. And stay tuned for the upcoming volume titled *Rethinking General Education in Higher Education*. We hope that today's conversation sparks new ideas and actions in your own educational spaces. And until next time, thanks for listening.

Sal Nudo: Tune in to the next Democracy's College podcast when H.M. Kuneyl, a senior research assistant at OCCRL, talks with Dr. Sheila Quirk-Bailey as part of OCCRL's podcast series on the Illinois Community College Leadership Institute. Dr. Quirk-Bailey is the former president of Illinois Central College with over 25 years of community college experience.

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