

Inclusive and Equitable Pedagogy/Pathways and Wraparound Support Services for Students of Color



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Gianina Baker: Thank you for joining us today to listen in on this four-part podcast series highlighting culturally sustaining practices and Guided Pathways. Today I have some podcasters joining me, Gianina Baker, Associate Director at the Office of Community College Research and Leadership, to discuss inclusive and equitable pedagogy and pathways, as well as wrap around support services for students of color. These podcasts are just one resource available to our partners within the REACH collaborative. The REACH collaborative brings together a network of teams from six states, California, Colorado, New York, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. Along with coaches, equity champions, and a host of intermediary partners to strengthen credential pathways with the supports and curricular alignment that post-traditional adult learners of color ages 25 through 64 need to reskill or recover from the pandemic. The coordination of the REACH collaborative is led by the Education Strategy Group, or ESG, in partnership with the Office of Community College Research and Leadership (OCCRL) at the University of Illinois and along with the University of Pittsburgh, with generous support from the Lumina Foundation. In collaboration with our learning partner DBP Praxis, the REACH Collaborative helps to build the capacity and tools for equitable system change and improved adult student outcomes, hopefully resulting in a 2% increase in credential attainment across 130+ community colleges through its intentional framework for developing academic pathways for racially minoritized adult learners focused on three main pillars: credential student degree pathways, bundled and sequence supports, and culturally sustaining practices. In this series, we invited our equity champion consultants to talk with us more about culturally sustaining practices and guided pathways.

Our panelists today include Dr. Reyna Anaya, who joined the Community College of Aurora in July of 2018 as the Dean of Students and in November of 2021 was promoted as the Senior Student Affairs Officer and Dean of Student Success, reporting directly to the president. In her role, Dr. Anaya directly oversees student service programs including the Aspen Institute Accelerated Partnership Grant, Care and Compliance Team, Colorado Scholarship Opportunity Initiative Grants, mental health and counseling services, student advocacy services, student life and the Truth Initiative Grant. Prior to her role at CCA, Dr. Anaya served as an Assistant Director of Community Standards in Conflict Resolution at the University of Northern Colorado from 2013 to 2018. Dr. Anaya also served as a faculty fellow and faculty member for the Association for Student Conduct

Administrators [inaudible] Academy and currently sits on the ASCA board as a director at large for community colleges. In addition, she's also been the past president for the Colorado Coalition for the Educational Advancement of Latinxs, a coalition of post-secondary and professional educators devoted to the educational success of the state's Latinx population. Dr. Anaya received her PhD in Higher Education in Student Affairs leadership program from UNC in 2019, her Master of Arts and Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from UNC in 2009, and a Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Studies from Colorado State University in 2007. She's also published scholar with works focused on intersectionality theory and Graduate Student Mothers of Color, Self-Care and Student Conduct in Higher Education. Last and most importantly, Dr. Anaya is a mom of three to Ayana, Mateo, and Antonio.

Our second panelist includes Dr. Denise Henning, who has a career in higher education that's spanned 23 years in both the US and Canada, as well as working as graduate faculty in New Zealand. Denise has served as President and CEO at Medicine Hat College, President and CEO of Northwest Community College, President and Vice Chancellor for University College of The North, and Vice President of Academic and Research at First Nations University of Canada. Denise is a proud Cherokee, Choctaw, British woman born in Creek County in Oklahoma. Most recently, Dr. Henning developed and now serves as CEO of the Collaborative of Keona, Oxendine, and Associates, LLC, which works with women who aspire to be tenured faculty and administrators in both higher education and K-12 school districts. Dr. Henning serves as the Director and Professor of Practice at the University of North Carolina-Wilmington and the Higher Education Leadership Community College Leadership graduate program. Dr. Henning believes in the principles of appreciative inquiry, asking the right questions and being part of the solution. She has earned a reputation for cultivating and sustaining positive relationships, building collaborative teams and energizing people in ways that foster their innovative spirit through an appreciative environment. Her approach to leadership is valued by those who have had the good fortune to work with her. Graduates from the National Education Leadership Institute for Potential Vice Presidents, VP Nelly [sp?] and the Cherd [sp] Women's Leadership Institute value her authentic and real approach. Her passion for employee wellness and strong focus on the needs and inclusivity of students, communities, economic and social development has earned Dr. Henning a reputation for being a holistic and visionary leader.

Last but not least is Dr. Mara Lazda. As an Associate Professor of History at Bronx Community College City University of New York and where she's also

worked as a faculty co-coordinator of the first-year seminar program from 2017 to 2019. Dr. Lazda serves on BCC's Senate Committee for Diversity and Inclusion, believing that community colleges have a particular role in fostering social justice. Dr. Lazda has co-organized over 30 campus community conversations and is a member of the executive board of the BCC Social Justice Network. In fall of 2021 Lazda helped design the BCC Social Justice Student Leadership certificate series. These BCC programs aim to provide student centered forums of civic engagement, emphasizing the links between classroom learning, professional development and students' personal goals and experiences.

What amazing resumes. I am so grateful and excited to have each of you on today to help discuss inclusive and equitable pedagogy and pathways and wrap around support services for students of color. And so, we're just going to go ahead and jump right in and get started, and I want to ask you all this first question, and we'll start with Dr. Anaya, then move to Dr. Henny, then Dr. Lazda. From your perspective in the roles you've had that I've shared with everyone, what is inclusive and equitable pedagogy and what does it look like in practice? Dr. Anaya.

Dr. Reyna Anaya: Thanks, Gianna. I think this is such an important question to start the conversation with today. For me, it's always valuable that we start at the foundation of practice and how we evolve in our work, and for me, simply put, equitable and inclusive practice and pedagogy looks like essentially being student centered and focused on serving students and their individual needs, their social identities and their experiences that they bring to the table. And so, that concept of one size fits all goes out the window, right? It's about shifting the experience to the needs of the students in the classroom, the needs of the students that you're serving, your support services, and being able to holistically tailor that to individual needs. That's really getting at the concept of equity and then making sure to ultimately create this space where you're mindful and intentional about the various experiences, cultural identities, values that are being ingrained into the student experience and how they potentially will navigate your institution or organization. In terms of practice, I always see it as threefold as a practitioner myself, I think it's very valuable for me to make sure that I understand what that process means, what those values mean to me and how I integrate it into my work and the work that I've done individually to be able to serve students. So, where have I dug deep into my areas of privilege and marginalization and how power situates itself all around that, and then how do I use that to move about and engage with my organization? And then ultimately, using that leadership and that positionality to then be able to engage students in that process as well, because they are our why, and what we work towards to make sure that their success is equity minded, that it's inclusive,

and it's one of the most critical pieces of the puzzle when we think about equitable and inclusive pedagogy.

Gianina Baker: Thank you. Dr. Henning

Dr. Denise Henning: Thank you. That's an amazing question and I really appreciate Dr. Anaya's answer because it's very similar to mine as well, probably to many of us that do this work. I simply put it that inclusive pedagogy and practice and wrap around services, all of this makes room and space for everyone's worldview. At the end of the day, how many times have we as underrepresented groups of people gone into learning environments and kind of walked out of that experience feeling as if this really didn't pertain to me? Or how I felt excluded from the conversation because it wasn't my history? So for me, as an indigenous person, I think it's important for every student regardless of what their background is, regardless of what their belief system is, to be acknowledged as a vibrant part of the learning environment and learning community that we're creating and how many times when we reflect back on our own experiences did we not have that feeling?

So, I'm going to give you an example because I really do practice high impact practices as well as practices that include something for everyone. If I were to say as an indigenous person, if you think about the Cartesian theory, which was basically I think, therefore I am. So that Cartesian theory, if you turn it on its head for indigenous ways of knowing and learning, it really says we are, therefore I am. And that's the subtle difference between the ways in which people of color, adult learners, other individuals that have not been seen or heard in this environment, it makes space and place for them to have their worldview, to have their own perspectives, to be respected, and to be honored in that place and space in that learning environment, and creating a learning community is very different. We always have to ask our question just because teaching is going on does that mean learning is happening? And it doesn't get asked, I don't think often enough. So, not much more to build on from Dr. Anaya's answer, but I'm sure Dr. Lazda has an amazing response as well.

Dr. Mara Lazda: I have the good position of being inspired by my co-podcast conversationalists here. And yes, I agree, I think the key word here is student centered. But I think also what I have learned, when we think about pedagogy often the conversation has been, how am I teaching? How am I reaching students? But really, I think what we also have to be truly inclusive and equitable is say what

am I teaching? This is to the earlier points, what am I teaching? Does everyone feel seen, does everyone feel connected? Or am I just replicating the hierarchical or racist inequitable curriculum. So, I think we're thinking about pedagogy, we don't want to think just about how we are teaching but what we are teaching and why we are teaching it? And so, that has fundamentally shifted, I think, how I enter the classroom, in thinking in practice then and doing much more listening. And not feeling that I have to do all the talking, but really how are students processing what we as a whole are talking about? So that's one just, maybe prioritizing, listening I think over delivering.

Another point of how that looks in practice is thinking about pedagogy, not again in delivery of some kind of material, but in every contact that student has with me, with the classroom, with their classmates, and with the campus. And I think so recognizing where, you know, is accessing the class equitable? Is accessing the materials equitable? How is every interaction they have one that they find supportive. Doesn't mean that they'll always be comfortable because part of learning is being uncomfortable and learning how to deal with that. But that every point in pedagogy is going to be a way in which to reinforce, to engage that student in a way that they see is inclusive.

Gianina Baker: I want to stay here for a minute and perhaps, Mara if you might even expand, and we'll bring in Reyna as well. Why is inclusive and equitable pedagogy integral to student success? You kind of touched on it in your answer before, but I wonder if there's anything you want to push on there or emphasize.

Dr. Mara Lazda: I think it's integral to student success because were the aim of education is to help students succeed, I think in their own goals, in their own – to attain why they come to the campus. But I think it's not limited just to the students. I think more broadly in society and here I think equitable pedagogy is so important because it reminds us of the community in community colleges. That this is a way in which we are building our relationships to communities that I think, sometimes there's too much of a campus community divide, and so if we continue to think about that student as a representative of, as a link to, as someone who will go back. Building our relationships with community, I think, is one of the main reasons, I think, valuing and centering the experience that the student brings in our pedagogy, I think, that's something that I try to keep in mind that if we're seeing one person, we're really part of a larger community.

Dr. Reyna Anaya: For me, I'll use my institution as an example. Our mission, there's two components of our mission where it talks about providing high quality instruction and student support services, and then our vision really focuses in on being the college where every student can succeed. And if we have barriers in place for students to gain access to high quality instruction, to access student support services, ultimately, we are buying into systems of oppression that have only allowed certain students to succeed in the past. And we have to be courageous enough to break down those barriers, reduce those barriers, eliminate those barriers. And to do that, we have to have this lens of inclusive and inclusivity, equity, and ultimately to take that and apply it to our practices.

I think about kind of the common phrase of, we've always done it that way, and it's like why? Has anyone ever evaluated the practice? Has anyone ever talked to students about how this contributes to their success or [inaudible] puts a roadblock a to them moving forward? And so, I think we sometimes have to take that mirror and turn it on ourselves, which is why I named at the top like a threefold approach. It's the individual kind of philosophy of how you think about equitable and inclusive pedagogy and practice and how you then encourage your organization to engage with that as well and turn that mirror, as we think about developing policies and practices, and then of course making sure the students are a part of that. And so, I use that as a piece of, as an example I guess to really illustrate that, but you've got to have that courage, like I said, to flip that mirror to say if we're really about student success, how do we turn that back on us and to be student ready, not have them be ready for us?

Gianina Baker: I appreciate this conversation, and as I think about the topic, inclusive and inequitable pedagogy and thinking about it in terms of pathways, students perhaps is missing from being in the title of it itself, but as you all are speaking, you can't have those without talking to students, without having student voice and it's something that's just ringing across all three of you as you continue to speak, really emphasizing where student voice is or how you're focusing on students. And so, in helping us think through not just the pedagogy piece but the supports, right? We know that students require different and varied services and supports, how do we actually ensure that students of color are receiving the specific wrap around services and supports that they need as opposed to the services and supports that it's assumed that they need? And for this one I'll ask Dr. Henning and Dr. Anaya, would you maybe expand on how you think, or if you've seen any at your institutions, what are those wrap around supports that they need as opposed to the assumptions?

Dr. Denise Henning: That is an amazing question, and I want to start by just answering it that, I really have issues with the term services. And the reason I have issues with the term services is that it's as if students need to access services, that means they have to know what they know. But students don't know what they don't know, and it doesn't matter how old they are or what background they come from, we operate within this environment that we call higher education from an aspect of, to be honest, White privilege. Because that's been the historical system of higher education, it was built upon, if people want to ask the questions about why do we have issues with racism and why do we have issues that we're dealing with right now in 2022, we've got to reflect back on 1609 when Jamestown was established, and how the history of higher education actually evolved. And it was evolved on education of the elites, it evolved from an understanding of Whiteness. And this has nothing to do with the political discussions that are going on, this simply has to do with the fact that we have to operate from a premise that every student comes from a cultural base. It doesn't matter who they are, it doesn't matter what color, it doesn't matter any of – but they have a background and they have a culture. And we have to stop seeing our students in this generalizable term and framework that always seems to fall back on the old model of providing services. We have to see our students as they are developments, they are not problems that need to be fixed, they are opportunities that are looking for a way to unleash and advance themselves and to see their own educational dreams and goals fulfilled. And so, when I think about this, I think about it in how does that happen? We wrap around all of the things that they need, but we can't get to what they need if we continue to treat them in manners of generalizing that they need to come to financial aid, so they need to know that they go to financial aid because they're going to get money. Well, they don't – many people don't know how to fill out a FAFSA form, we have to really begin to break down the ways in which we think, and we view students, and to the reality of what students actually present when they come to our institutions of higher education, and they are the reason that we are here that has gotten lost. I think it's the foundation approach that actually springs from what we should be doing in higher education, and that is addressing the needs of the students as each individual student, and that's a hard job to do, that's a hard job to do.

But in order to participate in that, we have to begin to understand that our students are developmental, they are all developing, just as we are continuing to develop. We need to have high impact practice within our classrooms, within our environments where we tap into all the learning senses that every one of us as human beings come with. That means if they need to learn because they're visual learners, we have to do that, we have to acknowledge that, we have to understand

that we have to implement that within the ways that we do business, and it's not just in the education of the classroom. Students are so much more than – learn so much more outside of the classroom than they do inside the classroom, so how can we tap into that? I'm very passionate about this topic as you can see.

Dr. Reyna Anaya: Absolutely love that, Dr. Henning. As you were talking, the concept that came to mind for me was Mosou's [sp] framework of community and cultural wealth. I think that as we think about who we serve in our institutions, we need to recognize to the foundation that we're built on and how we have slowly began to chip, I wouldn't even say break, chip that away, because there's still some very large structures in place. And what we have started to see that has happened is we start to notice and approach things in a different way where we are centering students' cultural wealth. The values and the strengths and the really amazing pieces that we bring to the table, into the learning environment, when students have different identities and different backgrounds come into our spaces.

And we have to utilize that framework as we are thinking about a student's initial start with our institutions, we have to be able to utilize that as a lens to support creating some sort of path for them. The different potential identities they may resonate with or even, if it is an academic learning path, how do we make sure that that is always at the forefront of how we are approaching service, how we're approaching instruction? Because I think what can happen is then if we get too bogged down on, okay, a student's path should be they do the application, they get admitted, they do financial aid, then they get registered, and then it's like no, that's not everyone's experience, that's not everyone's need, that's not where everyone may be starting from. And so, I think what then that does is well, it creates this piece of deficit thinking about our students, and particularly at our institution, we are a majority student of color serving population and I often will hear kind of comments, and it's like, well, is that really about us or is that about the students or about us and our systems that we've created? And so, I think to get to that point where we make sure we include students in that potential passing formula where we're centering that community and cultural wealth at the top, we also have to have an intersectional approach to how we do it.

At my institution we have student parent services program where we've been able to focus in on particular parent identities, and it wasn't just are you a mom, are you a dad, like it wasn't this binary thinking. It was like how do we blow that out of the water and be really inclusive and understand where the intersections may be happening for these parents. And so, are you a foster parent? Are you a parent that

is a single parent? Whether that be male or female, or whatever identity that may be, and so making sure we left space for students to share who they were and how they, how based on who they identified as, the needs they needed. And then the strength and values they brought to the table to support their goals, their end goal and their success. And so, I think that framework has always been something that even in my own development as a practitioner, I have to consistently remind myself, as a woman of color in administration in higher ed, it can be easy to get bogged down and get into that deficit thinking. But we have to have tools around us to make sure that we start to make more than just chips, we make chunks and break them off in that system. And so that's a framework that I really appreciate when we think about having these specific wraparound services for folks of color.

Gianina Baker: I'm appreciating the conversation and the resources that you're sharing, especially for listeners, as they're thinking about how do I learn more? You've given some good tangible practices and/or researchers and authors to then go and look up.

Are you aware of a particular pathway program that has effectively embedded wrap around supports within it that fosters and/or advances equitable student outcomes among racially or ethnically minoritized adult learner populations. And if so, from your perspective, what are they doing right or what is the thing or things that make them successful in these efforts?

Dr. Denise Henning: I have two, if I can share those? So of course, those of you that know me, know that I operate from a perspective called Indigegogy. And Indigegogy is a framework of incorporating pedagogy and practices that are done within ceremony, they're done within medicines, they're done in the presence of elders. They're very respectful of traditional and re-establishing traditional relationships with indigenous students and people, and the pathways actually give permission for students to come and be who they are.

So, let's give some examples to that, meaning that they have elders that are there to support them, they have elders that have different ceremonies and have that responsibility, are recognized within their communities so they can help re-establish people that have been disenfranchised from their indigenous cultures and their languages and their practices and ceremonies. And so that's one that comes to mind for me. Now that one is out of Wilfrid Laurier is where it began, but it actually was started from a wonderful community college faculty member, Dr. Stan Wilson, who is a Cree elder in Canada, and he actually developed the

Indigegogy what we know of today as Indigegogy, and is beginning to really make major impacts with indigenous learners, which are very unique politically as well as racially.

The other one that I want to talk about is one that we do at UNCW in partnership with all 58 of our community colleges in North Carolina, and it is really about community college undergraduate research experiences. And working specifically with students of color and high impact practices and pedagogies that really incorporate, as I was talking about before, the ways in which each individual student learns. They're very small, but what's so powerful is the shared approach to the initiative. And this is where it is taught by a community college faculty who is paid by UNCW, it is partnered with a UNCW faculty, because you know what? University faculty need to know what community college faculty do. We need to change the paradigm in the way in which four-year institutions and university institutions see and view the work and pathways that community colleges do instinctually, which is a part of their historic mission.

But what is so powerful about this undergraduate research experience is, is that it does focus on math and science. In other words, we can learn the power and importance of math, trigonometry, of science and chemistry that is present within basket weaving. We can understand bead work and we can understand, if I use those as examples from my own culture, but also with our African American students, our Black students, our Latino students, understanding the importance in meeting the needs that they have as well because they are being mentored. It's a mentoring and coaching approach that incorporates high impact practice and partnerships and we really focus on social justice, we focus on inclusive pedagogy so that every student has an opportunity to learn. And the interesting thing is that all of their tuition is paid for, they get to start a transcript at a university or four-year institution, and the students get to walk that pathway or the stepping stones that are needed for them to achieve their dreams and goals. And it's really been a powerful program, and it's three years in existence and the outcomes already have been demonstrative of some really good things that have come out of it, and it's taught by the majority of our underrepresented groups.

Dr. Reyna Anaya: So, I don't have a concrete example, but I do have, I guess high impact practices that are really important to begin this work and is a journey that our own institution is currently taking on and really our system is looking to us to as we model this. I think there is a significant importance about understanding your data as an institution, understanding where your baseline is and being able to

disaggregate that, pull it apart and understand that data story of what success metrics potentially look like at your institutions amongst racial identity, amongst age, amongst all the indicators that your institution collects to really be able to then understand where are those potential gap pieces.

One of the things that I've really appreciated about our institution, we recently got a new president and have really kind of been doing this. As I named at the top, like that mirror turning around, looking at ourselves and understanding, looking at our academic programs, looking at our support services, doing that redesign mechanism, because I think in some ways the pandemic and multiple pandemics have allowed us the opportunity really reflect and redesign our practices and the way that we do work and service along students. And I think there's been some shining lights that have come out of it, but at the core of it has always been data. And you know, if you don't understand your data, or you say we are, we pride ourselves on X, but you don't really know why or you don't really see the success pieces of that, is that truly what you're doing? And so, I think that's an important piece to really creating a model practice is being able to understand who you are first before you can even begin that journey.

Dr. Mara Lazda: And I can share perhaps, not a pathway specific program, but I think, I want to talk a little bit about the first year program and how it's evolved at my institution, which is at Bronx Community College, which is also [inaudible] population is largely students of color, many of whom are English language learners, many of whom have pretty recently within the last three to five years arrived in the United States. And of course, the first-year program is not new, it's not a new concept, it's at many other institutions, but I thought I'd share, because I think it's perhaps a tool that we can use kind of in a smaller scale while we're building out these pathway programs. And so, our first-year program, the point being that many iterations it's kind of a well, here you are welcome to college, and here are the buildings and so forth, and here's what it means to be a college student. But I think, increasingly what our college has done, and what I would encourage us all to do is reflect, well, what does it mean to [inaudible] down to campus? What does it mean to be a student? And really make it again more student centered, so you're not delivering like, here's what it means to be a college student, but rather what are you bringing to the campus? What are your experiences? And how can we make our team, and our team of the first-year program includes an advisor, an academic advisor, a peer advisor, so that's really important. It's usually a student who has recently, who has done well but also has some of the challenges, a faculty member, and then we bring in also some the support programs that we have around campus. But increasingly, we kind of shifted our focus in thinking about that as a

place where we can form community, we can form contacts, and a way in which we can begin to have these conversations about pathways but all on a smaller scale. So, I think kind of my point here is perhaps one way and what we have done is kind of re-evaluating what is the first-year program? What is that? What is the intent and how do we make sure that it's inclusive and also building bridges to the community and build bridges to the students' goals?

And the second quick program I think speaks to some of the points that we've all made here is kind of the caring campus approach. That it's kind of out of the Institute for Evidence Based Learning, and the point there being that every person, every representative, whether they're a faculty member, whether there a state, whether they are administrator, whether they're student, you know, in student services. I'm rethinking this idea of services as well. As Dr. Henning mentioned, that you are a point of contact, and that you see yourself as part of this caring network. And I think it maybe sounds kind of more emotional, not tangible, but I think it's essential in the way in which we build an inclusive curriculum. An inclusive curriculum and inclusive and pedagogy that we foster these caring contacts at every point along the pathway.

Gianina Baker: You're not alone. I revised the remaining questions to take out the word services, So I am glad and so I can think a little bit more about what word to use. Glad that you've complicated that for us in a way that we can have some real conversations around it. And so, another piece in talking about this. We like to think and want our work to be culturally sustaining, and as we think about what that means, we use Paris and Elaine's definition, culturally sustaining practices support learning, elevate student performance, and foster critical consciousness in culturally competent manners that affirm and preserve cultures. And so, I want to open it up to the three of you to ask, what do you feel colleges need to do to make sure that both inclusive and equitable pedagogy, as well as wrap around supports are culturally sustaining? Anyone want to talk through that first?

Dr. Reyna Anaya: I think one thing that comes to mind for me, most recently this past spring, I believe that NASPA, which is a large student affairs organization, puts out kind of a charting the future document. And for me as a student affairs practitioner I particularly paid attention to kind of this wrap around service mentality and needs, and three components came out of that, that resonated for me. That our services, quote-unquote, different word we'll need to figure out, need to encompass concepts of basic needs, mental health, and ultimately this concept of student development. And so, thinking about how do you apply that with a

culturally responsive and sustaining lens? I think about often that the framework when I, when basic needs comes up is Maslow, thinking about Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. And for me, I also need to be critical about Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs because of how, not everyone starts at the same foundation, for Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. So, when we're thinking about supporting students to get needs of shelter, food, security, that looks very different for all of us. And so, I think it's about having a comprehensive awareness and then being able to gather the knowledge of what students' needs are from different cultural and social identity backgrounds to be able to even implement practices or provide options or solutions for what their needs may be without kind of thinking through those frameworks.

And so, I think that's something that I think about, how do we sustain some of those pieces? I think it's utilizing some of the larger practices but also being critical of how that may look different for who we serve on our particular campuses, who we serve in community colleges, because thinking back of NASPA it is higher education, so encompass all types of institution types. And oftentimes, I do feel community colleges are left out of that equation, and so we often have to take this big concept and reinterpret it for ourselves. And then, because of the work that we do in this specific conversation, having that additional lens of equity and inclusion and culturally responsive practice is another layer. And so, I think about taking big practices but then narrowing it down to really make sure that it is meeting the mark of what we're wanting to do. And so, I think that more of the framework, more so than like, this is how you do it, because I think it depends, which is also a very student "affairsy" answer, it just depends.

Gianina Baker: I can maybe add there, just as far as at the sustaining part, and this is a much larger question that I know has come up in other forums, but it's about changing institutions. And that also goes to Dr. Anaya's point about changing the institution of hierarchy or needs, something that we've used as, to assess, but maybe that's not the right assessment tool we need to shift and think about how we apply that. So I think as far as sustaining, make sure that it's culturally inclusive, and we're sustaining culturally inclusive, and practices is that we have to look at our institutions and what questions our institutions are asking or what the administrators are asking about what we are doing in our classrooms? About what we are doing in our interactions? And valuing that. I think it seems that sometimes that kind of reflection, that kind of conversation is a reaction, it's not proactive. And I think having those questions up front and center, is how are we serving our students? Or, how are we meeting them where they are? Is an important step.

Dr. Denise Henning: I'm going to be quick about this and I tend to fall back into this much more broader perspective, but I think what we're doing in our society and in higher education is that we're wrestling with understanding what colonization is, and how it began. And I'm going to speak to that in perspective of for people of color it's pertinent that we begin to understand that. And the reason is that we have to, we can not liberate ourselves and really be self-determining for ourselves as different racial groups or cultural groups or distinctive groups of people because we're not supposed to be here. We're not supposed to be culturally distinct, that was not something that was supposed to be happening. And decolonizing ourselves is about reclaiming our own perspectives, our own knowledge, our own ways of knowing and wisdom that has been devalued and suppressed by education historically.

I'm going to give you an example of how this has played out historically and why it's so important to understand this is William Henry Pratt, who is the father of Indian boarding schools in this country, which has impacted intergenerational trauma that is just beginning to be understood and the truth being known. He said in Congress in 1881, that we must kill the Indian in order to save the man. We must hold them under and educate the young. We must hold them under until they are thoroughly soaked.

So this was the concept of government, and it didn't just occur and have a impact on indigenous people. It had impact on all people of color. And for educators, decolonizing ourselves means that we as educators have to accept alternative ways of seeing the world, alternative ways of knowing and reclaiming that we can teach from a different perspective. A perspective that is going to be one where every person in the classroom can have a sense of belonging. Because it's more than just being included, including still offers that somebody has to give permission to include us. Where belonging means that I can walk into that room and whatever is happening I feel like I fit there, no matter what my language is, no matter what age I am, no matter what gender I am, and that is really, really important to me so how do we process this? It's a big undertaking that's going to happen over years, but we have to begin to get over ourselves in order for this to begin to really take impact and have meat.

Gianina Baker: I wish we could talk all day. I have learned quite a bit, and in some ways have been in a space of healing, and so I thank you all for joining me to talk through some of these topics that others are also trying to understand. And so, as we conclude today's podcast, I want you just to give me your brief final thought

that you want to leave with our listeners today. Let's start with Reyna and then we'll go to Mara and Denise. What's your final thought?

Dr. Reyna Anaya: I am just sitting here also in awe with Dr. Henning and I just resonate so much. And so when you talk about belonging, I just think about again, that concept of community and cultural wealth is such a powerful concept not only for institutions and organizations to rethink how we're engaging and serving our students, but for the individual themselves to start to validate and affirm themselves first. I think it is so powerful, and so I think my last piece of wisdom is continue churning and being courageous to create spaces that affirm students, that validate students, that make them belong and include them in those conversations, and so that's my last piece of thought.

Dr. Mara Lazda: I'll quickly say I think, Dr. Henning and Dr. Anaya, especially in their last comments have brought home how significant this work is and how the impact and how this really has been, education really is about power and structures against which we are, so that can be intimidating. I think to realize how these large inequities against, and the racism that we are working against. But I think at the same time maybe the final thought is that we can work against it in small steps. And so to value every contact, again, ways and so forth that you have with every student, with every community member. That can go a long way, and that we can and then, build, and I think and dismantle some of these structures from within with these grassroots one-on-one contacts.

Dr. Denise Henning: I want to thank my colleagues, Dr. Anaya and Dr. Lazda. Thank you so much, Gianna, for having us. And my final thought is that we have to expand the conversation but more importantly, we have to stop just talking about it, we have to implement, we have to change. We have to create transformational change in higher education in order for our country to be successful in its endeavors for the future.

Gianina Baker: Thank you all. I want to thank our panelists for joining me today. I will leave with the we are, therefore I am quote, and hope that you'll join us in listening to the rest of this four-part series. So, thank you all today for joining.