



Editor's Corner

The National Council of Black American Affairs North East Region is pleased to provide you with this special intersession news supplement News You Can Use. At NCBAA we recognize the importance as higher education professionals not only to stay current with the key issues, important trends, and critical strategies for effective practice, but also to stay connected as an important voice in advancing the national community college agenda. In this supplement, which will be produced semi-annually, we will have four sections to keep our readers in the know about our work.

1. **Making Headlines:**
Top news stories impacting community colleges
2. **Trend Watch:**
What to look for as higher education as evolves
3. **Leaders Toolbox:**
Practical advice & strategies for workplace success
4. **The Working Scholar:**
Research updates impacting institutional success

Two things can make this effort a great contribution to the profession. First, if you read it, like it and share it with others. Second, if you submit articles for consideration to be included in any of the four sections. What a wonderful way to increase both your knowledge of and impact on the work of the community college. We hope that you enjoy this edition and we look forward to hearing your feedback.

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Making Headlines

From Vice President to President

Student Affairs Leaders Being Considered for the Top Spot

The Chronicle of Higher Education recently reported that today's presidents are expected not just to run institutions but also to be their public face, representing them to students as well as parents, government officials, and donors. They must navigate thorny campus issues like sexual assault and alcohol. And in an age when any misstep can go viral, they are relied on to know how to deal with unfolding crises in ways that won't make the situation worse. Given those new demands, a group of administrators often passed over for the top job is getting a fresh look: vice presidents for student affairs. <http://chronicle.com/article/New-Proving-Ground-for-the/228907/>

Graduate Employability

Employers plan to hire nearly 10% more college graduates in the United States this year compared to 2014—and some majors are considered especially desirable, according to a new National Association of Colleges and Employers survey.

www.naceweb.org/s04152015/job-outlook-spring-update-hiring-plans.aspx

Trend Watch

5 Trends Shaping the Future of Education & Work

What's the next big thing? What's likely to change what we do? What are some of the most important trends gaining momentum nationally in terms of work and education? These questions were the focus of Barbara Endel, Senior Director, Building Economic Opportunity, Jobs for the Future (JFF) Innovators Exchange session at JFF's spring Bridging the Gap summit in New Orleans, LA. The goal of the session was to help leaders and practitioners better prepare and adapt to the changes likely to shape what we do over the next decade. Endel said the most important trends are:

Competency based education. More than 300 universities are starting programs giving students credit for what they already know. As this grows, the questions surround consistency of credit given for the same skills in the same way between colleges? What will be the impact on college enrollment? What are the business implications? How can this process be visible and documented?

Big data and analytics. Products and services are being created that will reach out to individual learners, define pathways for their success, and travel down the path with them. As this grows will the need for advisors be the same? What about other support services?

Employer integration. Employers will need to be engaged now more than ever and they want to be. When faced with challenges to their talent supply chain new partnerships between universities and industry will have multiple impacts. Will the current curriculum meet the needs of business? What about middle skill jobs?

Alternative finance strategies. Much of the challenge for students attending college has to do with the indirect costs of attendance – living expenses, child

care, transportation, etc. What alternatives to traditional financial aid will help students stay in school?

Collective impact/collective action models. Working from cradle to career within communities will continue to be important. How will K-12, colleges and communities collaborate to strengthen the career pathways that sustain vibrant communities.

For more information on the building economic opportunity efforts of Jobs For the Future visit their website at <http://www.jff.org>

Leader's Toolbox

In this edition of Leaders Toolbox we encourage you to take some time for you this summer and we have an easy read that we think you will enjoy because it's all about you. In his book *Leading the Life You Want: Skills for Integrating Work and Life*, Stewart D. Friedman notes:

"Work/life balance is a misguided metaphor for grasping the relationship between work and the rest of life; the image of the scale forces you to think in terms of trade-offs instead of the possibilities for harmony. And the idea that 'work' competes with 'life' ignores the more nuanced reality of our humanity. It ignores the fact that "life" is actually the intersection and interaction of the four domains of life; work or school; home or family; community or society; and the private realm of the mind, body, and spirit. Of course, you can't have it all – complete success in all the areas of your life, all at the same time. No one can. But even though it can seem impossible to bring these four domains into greater alignment, it doesn't have to be impossible. Conflict and stress aren't inevitable. Harmony is possible." To find harmony Friedman offers the following three-part framework: Be real, be whole, be innovative. We hope that you will take time to enjoy the summer break and come back to campus refreshed. When you come back - be real, be whole, and be innovative! And remember – you don't need a title to be a leader, you can lead from right where you are!!

The Working Scholar

Welcoming Engagement in the Classroom for Men of Color in Community Colleges

By J. Luke Wood and Frank Harris III

Student engagement is a common concept often used among educators in conversations on student success in college. Engagement involves the “time and effort students invest in their studies and other educationally purposeful activities” (Kuh, 2009, p. 683). Being engaged encompasses a wide array of activities including the effort students place in the classroom, collaboration with peers, the use of technology, being academically challenged, interactions with faculty, and use of student services. Repeated evidence has demonstrated that greater levels of engagement, particularly academic engagement, leads to enhanced student outcomes (e.g., persistence, achievement, attainment, transfer).

The concept is so often referenced and traditionally accepted that it has shaped perceptions on student success for generations of scholars and practitioners. Informed by this perspective, some educators have supported discussions, engaged institutional assessments, created interventions and programs, and implemented initiatives that focus on ‘mending’ students. Permeating these efforts are perennial questions on whether students are asking questions in class, responding to questions, participating in group projects, and visiting faculty during office hours. However, rarely is a more fundamental question posed; have we as educators made our students feel ‘welcome’ to engage?

Despite the widespread use and influence of the engagement concept, it is readily apparent that conversations among educators on student success that begin with a focus on students’ engagement have already missed the mark. These conversations, and the logic embedded within them, do more to disenfranchise historically underrepresented and underserved students than to advance their success. The primary focus of student engagement is on what the student has done or is doing to succeed in college. The concept advances practices that begins with the student, not with the institutions that serve them. This approach has been

heavily criticized by equity-oriented scholars, who argue that this perspective overshadows colleges responsibility for providing an environment that is conducive to student success (Bensimon, 2005). Instead, equity scholars suggest that college’s “must focus on what is within the control of educators in terms of changing their own practices to meet the needs and circumstances of men of color” (Harris III, Bensimon, & Bishop, 2010, p. 280).

Not surprising, after decades of misspecification, many colleges and universities still struggle to adequately serve men of color (and other underrepresented populations). However, new scholarship is evolving conversations on engagement from an equity perspective with the concept, ‘welcomeness to engage’. As advanced by Wood, Harris III and White (2015) welcomeness to engage “refers to the conditions created in and out of the classroom that communicate to students whether faculty members want students to engage with them” (p. 25). Inside the classroom domain, a welcomeness to engage entails fostering conditions that make students feel welcome to ask questions, respond to questions, participate in group projects, inquire about their course progress, and to attend office hours. Outside of class, faculty members should welcome similar interactions. Simple actions such as positively acknowledging students’ presence, smiling at students, saying “hello”, waving at students, and being open to informal conversations with them can go far in fostering preconditions that support engagement. Too often, it is clear that these opportunities are not maximized, as many men of color note having greater interactions with maintenance workers, groundskeepers, and cafeteria staff than they do with faculty (Wood, Palmer & Harris III, 2015).

Fostering a climate and culture where students feel welcome to engage is particularly critical for men of color. Research from Wood (2014) demonstrated that these men may be apprehensive to engage in the classroom with faculty for fear of being perceived as

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academically inferior. In fact, these men noted that what some faculty perceived as disengaging behavior was really angst about being stereotypically viewed as 'dumb', 'unintelligent', or 'stupid'. Moreover, this same study found some faculty members often used an "approach me first" or "prove yourself first" stance, where students had to initiate engagement and demonstrate their proficiency in the course before faculty would invest their time in them. Wood concluded that due to the apprehension to engage along with the "approach me first" and "prove yourself first" stances, many men of color and their faculty never meaningfully engaged with one another.

Welcomeness to engage is a necessary precondition for engagement, and is one among several outgrowths (e.g., sense of belonging, mattering) of healthy campus climates and cultures. Welcomeness to engage is particularly evident in colleges and classrooms when students receive validating messages that communicate that they "belong", "can do the work", "can succeed", and are "believed in". It occurs when faculty members employ culturally relevant pedagogical practices that connect course content learning to the lives, experiences, and cultural knowledge(s) of students. Other factors that foster a welcomeness to engage include multicultural counseling, built (physical) environments that prioritize faculty-student interactions, time-invested relationships between faculty and students, and student diversity. Altogether, these factors provide the necessary context for engagement to occur.

Enhancing and reorienting campus climates and cultures to foster a welcomeness to engage requires intentional efforts and planning, particularly around professional development. Because of the predominant perspective of engagement as being a function of what students do, many educators have been trained to perceive a lack of engagement as a student issue. As such, there is a need to train faculty and staff to focus on their role in fostering conditions that create in and out of class engagement. Moreover, campus personnel need training on strategies that enable them to best create environments where their desire for student engagement is communicated as a welcomeness to engage.



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