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Mission
The Community College Equity Assessment Lab (CCEAL) is a national research laboratory at San Diego State University. CCEAL supports community colleges with research, assessment, and training activities that support the success of historically underrepresented and underserved students. The mission of CCEAL is to develop knowledge and advance promising practices that enhance access, achievement, and success among underserved students of color.

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ABOUT CCEAL

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CAMPUS LEADERS

1. Provide Cultural Competency Professional Development for All Faculty
2. Update and Sync Student Information Systems
3. Consider the Impact of the “Free Bus” Policy on Students Who Pay to Park on Campus
4. Scale Programs That Serve Disproportionately Impacted Students
5. Improve the General Counseling Experience
6. Use Equity-Minded Hiring Practices
7. Obtain Deeper Insights and Perspectives From Students About the Welcome Center
8. Take a Comprehensive Approach to Financial Aid Advising
9. Expand the Emergency Grant Program
10. Develop Effective Communication Strategies to Raise Students’ Awareness of Campus Resources
11. Review all Campus Applications and Materials
12. Inquire About the Experiences of Student-Athletes at Cabrillo College
13. Leverage the California College Promise Grant (AB 19)
14. Devise a Strategy to Act on the Findings and Recommendations Presented in This Report

APPENDIX
Focus Group Protocol
The Community College Equity Assessment Lab (CCEAL) at San Diego State University was contracted by Cabrillo College to engage in a comprehensive assessment of the experiences of disproportionately impacted students (e.g., African American, Latinx, Native American, veterans, former foster students). The assessment entailed conducting focus groups with students who represent a range of backgrounds and identities. This project is a part of Cabrillo College’s efforts to redress persistent inequities and outcome disparities in student success that disproportionately affect historically underrepresented and underserved students.

The purpose of this report is to share findings that emerged from the qualitative assessment of the experiences of disproportionately impacted students at Cabrillo College. In line with the purpose of this project, these four overarching questions guided the qualitative inquiry with students:

1. What are the lived experiences of disproportionately impacted students at Cabrillo College?
2. What are salient challenges that disproportionately impacted students experience at Cabrillo College?
3. What factors (e.g., people, programs, campus services, resources) situated within the campus context enable disproportionately impacted students to persist at Cabrillo College despite the challenges they face?
4. What are some intentional and equity-minded strategies that can be enacted by educators to improve outcomes and the quality of experiences of disproportionately impacted students at Cabrillo College?

The conceptual framework guiding this study is the socio-ecological outcomes (SEO) model (Harris III & Wood, 2016). As illustrated in Figure 1, the SEO model is composed of seven constructs that account for key factors that contribute to the success of students of color (e.g., Black, Latinx, Native American, Pacific Islander, Southeast Asian) and other underserved students in community colleges.

The first two constructs are described as inputs, consisting of background defining and societal factors that account for the experiences of students of color prior to entering the community college. Background defining and societal factors shape students of color dispositions and learners and their expectations as they matriculate into community college. Defined as the socio-ecological domains, the noncognitive, academic, environmental, campus ethos, and structural domains illustrate the various factors that contribute to the student success of students of color and shape their salient experiences on campus. Moreover, according to the SEO model, student success in community college is broadly described as persistence, achievement, degree attainment, transferring, goal accomplishments, and preparation for the labor market.

In addition to the aforementioned conceptual model, the research design for this project was also informed by several key equity-related initiatives that have been recently enacted in California and will have a substantial influence on the ways in which colleges address issues of disproportionate impact. Specifically, we constructed the focus group questions based on goals of the California Community Colleges Guided Pathways project, AB 705 (Student Success Act of 2012), AB 19 (California College Promise), the Student Equity and Achievement Program (SEAP), and the Chancellor’s Vision for Success.

Finally, our work is informed by Estela Bensimon’s notion of institutional responsibility for student success (Bensimon & Harris III, 2012).² We contend that educators and institutions are ultimately responsible for identifying and eradicating outcome disparities and disproportionate impact. Institutional efforts to facilitate success among disproportionately impacted students must be prioritized above and beyond perceived student deficits (e.g., academic preparation, external commitments, poverty). Stated simply, these efforts must be informed by the questions: “What are we doing (or not doing) as an institution that is creating and sustaining outcome disparities?” and “How can we change our policies, programs, and practices in ways that can best meet the needs of our disproportionately impacted students?” It is from this standpoint where equity-minded institutional practices emerge.

Figure 1. Socio-ecological outcomes (SEO) model.

Participants
A total of 69 students (36 women, 28 men, and 5 gender nonconforming) participated in the focus groups. The racial/ethnic composition of the sample was: Mexican/Mexican American (31 students), White (18 students), Multiethnic (9 students), Black/African American (8 students), Central American (2 students), and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (1 student). It is important to note that there were six students who participated in the focus group for Native American students. All six of these students described their race/ethnicity as multiethnic. Forty-seven (47) of the 69 participants were enrolled in 12 or more units. Nearly 80% of the students in the sample had completed at least 15 units at the time of data collection, and 15 of the 69 students (22%) completed more than 60 units. With regard to the participants’ ages, 34 were 18-24 years old, 22 were 25-34 years old, eight (8) were 35-50, and five (5) were 50 years or older. More than half of the students reported being employed. The overwhelming majority of the participants (55 of the 69) indicated “transfer to a 4-year institution” as their primary educational goal. Thirty-nine (39) of the participants reported having taken at least one developmental education course. Among the 39 students who had been enrolled in developmental education, 23 of them reported taking some combination of reading, writing, and mathematics.
Data Collection
Data collection for this project occurred during the Fall 2018 semester. Students who identified as experiencing disproportionate impact at Cabrillo College and who were currently enrolled in credit-bearing courses were invited by the Office of Equity to participate in one of 10 focus groups that occurred over the course of 2 days. Prior to each focus group, we informed the participants (both verbally and in writing) that their participation was strictly voluntary. Participants were informed that they could opt out of answering questions they did not feel comfortable answering and could discontinue their involvement in the project at any time without consequences. None of the participants who began the project discontinued their participation.

All of the participants agreed to have their conversations audio-recorded and were assured that the insights they provided would be treated confidentially by our project team. All of the audio recordings were transcribed for data analysis. Immediately following each focus group, the facilitators co-constructed research memos to capture the salient aspects and interpersonal dynamics of the conversations that took place. We relied on both the transcripts and research memos to construct this report.

Data Analysis
The audio recording for each focus group was transcribed for data analysis. Each transcript was uploaded into Dedoose—a qualitative data analysis software program that enables multiple researchers to work collaboratively on analyzing a data set. Data were coded deductively in three phases (initial, focused, and axial) as prescribed by Charmaz (2014). Although we took a deductive approach to analyzing the data, we paid close attention to concepts and insights that emerged inductively.

OVERARCHING FINDINGS

The following overarching thematic categories emerged as salient across the 10 focus groups.

1. “Why I Chose Cabrillo College”
   Pathways and Experiences That Led Students to Community College

2. “I Can Be Myself Here . . . For the Most Part”
   Feeling a Sense of Belonging at Cabrillo

3. “I’m Not Saying All of Them, But . . .”
   Students’ Interactions With Faculty

4. “Taking It One Day at a Time”
   External Pressures and Challenges

5. “She’s Constantly Helping Me Out”
   Institutional Agents of Student Success

6. “With the Mainstream Counselors, It’s In-and-Out”
   Navigating the General Counseling Experience

7. “I Was Failing Until They Helped Me”
   Campus Programs and Resources That Are Critical to Student Success

In this section of the report, we discuss each thematic category and support this discussion with representative quotes and reflections from the participants. Following the discussion of overarching findings, we present a summary of group-specific insights that emerged from the focus groups. We conclude this report with recommendations and advice for how Cabrillo College faculty, staff, and campus leaders can employ equity-minded practices to close equity gaps and facilitate success for disproportionately impacted students.
There were several reasons that emerged during the participants’ discussions about why they decided to pursue postsecondary studies at Cabrillo College. As with many community college students, participants cited the proximity of the campus to their home and the relatively low cost of tuition at Cabrillo—particularly in comparison to a UC or CSU. Students were also drawn to the college’s comprehensive academic programming and student support services. In addition, participants expressed a sense of responsibility to attend college on behalf of their family and community. For these students, enrolling in college was also an opportunity to become role models for younger generations.

When asked what motivated them to enroll at Cabrillo College, many participants expressed an innate responsibility to attend college on behalf of their parents or families. This was particularly salient among Latinx students who also identified as first-generation. For example, one Latinx student shared:

“I’m a first-generation college student, and I see my parents working so hard. Like, my mom has two jobs and she’s working all day . . . but I can see how hard it is for her and I was just like, you know what, when I grow up, I want to be able to help her out because she’s been doing all this.”

Others felt that pursuing a college education afforded them the opportunity to serve as role models for younger siblings and make their parents proud. For some undocumented students, college was not only a priority, but also a necessity. As mentioned by one participant, “That’s just been placed in my mind since I was a young kid, that I came to the U.S. to study and to do something with my life.” Participants associated a college education with economic and social mobility, which was not only important for their own future, but also for the well-being of their family.

Participants also cited Cabrillo College’s unique academic programs and student support resources as reasons for their enrollment. For example, a veteran student mentioned the college’s dental hygiene program as being “top notch.” Similarly, a former foster student shared their insights on why they enrolled at Cabrillo College:

“This is supposed to be one of the best junior colleges in the state . . . I was looking at different junior colleges that have programs that are beneficial like this, that can help you with whatever it is you need, whether it’s academic help for emotional support or whatever. This school really had a lot of benefits in these subjects, and it just seemed like a good fit.”
Finally, participants noted the proximity of Cabrillo College to their home and the lower cost of attendance as reasons for enrollment. Regarding the latter, students consistently stated that Cabrillo was more cost effective than attending a 4-year institution. However, this was also coupled with students’ praising of Cabrillo College’s educational programs and sense of community. For example, students stated:

“I was considering going to UOP, but for the same reason, because of the cost of going to a private college as opposed to community college, and the program is just as stellar, just didn’t make sense to pay for private education and get, you know, similar education, you know.”

“It was an affordable option because I was almost going to go to San Francisco State University, but I would end up paying lots of loans anyway and I didn’t want to do that. So now I took this. But it was a great decision I made because you know I found my own community.”

It is important to note that, while Cabrillo College was regarded as more affordable than UC and CSU campuses, financial pressures were still a concern for students. This is further illustrated in our findings pertaining to external challenges faced by Cabrillo College students.

“OVERARCHING FINDINGS”

The focus group participants shared the degree to which they felt welcomed and felt a sense of belonging at Cabrillo College. These perspectives ranged from positive (for LGBQ students and Latinx students at the Watsonville campus) to marginal (for Native students, trans students, and students with different abilities), to hostile (for African American students, Latinx students, and veteran students at the Aptos campus). Students whose experiences were positive reported feeling safe in expressing their salient identities in their classes, in student-centered spaces on campus, and in the communities immediately adjacent to the campus. One of the students who identified as trans shared:

“My experience here as a trans student at Cabrillo, it’s been pleasant for the most part. I must say faculty [and staff] have been very welcoming and warm toward the LGBT community. I haven’t had one bad experience being a student of an LGBT identity.”

Students who experienced a sense of belonging at Cabrillo College credited faculty for establishing relationships with them that were grounded in trust, mutual respect, and authentic care, and for having their salient identities foregrounded in course curricula. This finding was particularly salient among Latinx students who primarily attended the Watsonville Center. As one participant noted:
When it comes to the Watsonville Center, which is here, I feel like it’s more welcoming. I’m surrounded a lot in class by my peers, which are like me, same background, so Mexican. So I feel like when I’m in those type of classes, I’m always more likely to participate, and I feel like I’ve been heard the most. The teachers are always interested in what I have to say. But when I take classes in Aptos, it’s a whole different story.

As evident in the reflection above, Latinx students’ experiences at the Watsonville Center were overwhelmingly positive. However, their experiences at the Aptos campus were substantially different. These students found the Aptos campus and the surrounding community to be racially hostile, isolating, and marginalizing. They attributed their feelings of marginalization at Aptos to a lack off Latinx students, faculty, and staff at the campus. These sentiments were also expressed by Undocumented students; for example, one student shared:

I feel like here, in Watsonville, everybody is very aware of like, you know, being undocumented, the DACA program, and the Puente Program and then whenever you come here, because the community itself is very, um, Hispanic, we really embrace it. But, at Aptos, it’s completely different. The city itself, is ruled by, you know, like most high society people, mostly White people, and that kind of breaks the stigma of like, people not being aware over there of, like, the program itself.

African American students did not feel a sense of belonging at Cabrillo and reported experiencing racial microaggressions on an ongoing basis—both on campus and in the Aptos community. The words “isolation,” “tokenized,” and “fear” were used routinely by these students in describing their lived experiences as African American students at Cabrillo College and in Aptos. One student noted:

They always look at you as a threat on this campus. You know? You always get that vibe it’s that energy that’s like, “Oh, I'm scared of you.” I’m like, “Why are you scared of me? I’m just walking by. I’m not doing nothing to you.” It’s that constant vibe that you get, you know?

African American students also expressed frustration with what they believed to be a lack of cultural competence among faculty, staff, and students.

Most of the students, including those who did not necessarily experience a sense of belonging at Cabrillo College, were able to identify one campus space where they felt safe and comfortable, notably the Veteran Center for veteran students and ASC for students with [dis]abilities, as examples. “You have to tiptoe around about what you say [in general], but in the Veterans Center we can feel a little more secure about whatever [our] beliefs are.” Interestingly, a common theme that was shared across the focus groups was that the Welcome Center is a very hostile space that does not engender a sense of belonging for students. Finally, although trans students reported feeling a sense of belonging at Cabrillo College, they expressed challenges with the campus in transitioning from their birth names to the preferred names that best reflect their identities.
As was the case with students’ sense of belonging at Cabrillo, their experiences and interactions with faculty were mixed. Some faculty were identified as offering much-needed support to LGBTQ and students with [dis]abilities. These faculty were also effective in providing opportunities for students to explore their identities by way of the course curriculum. Students also appreciated faculty who were aware of campus and community resources and were intentional about sharing them within the context of their classes. African American, Native American, and veteran students shared the most marginalizing experiences with faculty and peers in class.

Interactions with faculty were often dichotomous, with some students feeling supported and others feeling anxious or ostracized. For instance, Native American students shared several examples in which their identities, culture, and values were dismissed and disrespected by faculty. As one student shared, “He put us down so badly... He put us down like we’re stupid because we are Natives.” African American students often felt a lack of care from faculty, particularly those in STEM-related disciplines. One student shared the following:

There's no real connection between the Black students in the science and math department. You know, I've seen that the instructors from the arts, communication, English, they tend to care more. I'm not saying all of them, but they tend to care more about students than the sciences and all that. I don’t know. I don’t understand it... maybe that’s the way they think and that’s, that’s how they live. But I just see there’s a lack of connection between the science professors and the Black students here.

Students also related instances in which they were met with unsupportive responses from faculty when asking questions pertaining to the course, assignments, or during class discussion. As a result, they were hesitant to ask for help or participate in class. Some participants felt as if faculty were dismissive of their questions and did not create welcoming classroom environments. For example, one African American student stated, “I don’t feel like I could stay behind and ask questions. [Faculty] always have this very tense attitude after the class is over, like I’m out the door.” Furthermore, veteran students felt anxious about disclosing their military or political affiliation in class for fear of being shunned. One veteran student shared the following, which was met by nods of agreement by their peers during the focus group:

Yeah, I don't even bring it up, like my viewpoints. When I first got here, I did, but now I just feel like there's no point even discussing. You're just going to get shot down immediately.

Despite these troubling interactions, students also shared positive experiences with faculty. Students from multiple focus groups acknowledged the same faculty members
over and over again. At the core of these exchanges were perceptions of authenticity and care from faculty that made students feel like they mattered. As one student from the Accessibility focus group shared:

She [faculty] allowed for humanity to happen. I was having some mental health days, and I was not wanting to be alive. I emailed her and she was like, yeah, I get it. Here’s some resources, and I'm available to you, like referred me to the mental health services.

My other teacher . . . me and my son, we are still homeless right now. We're living at the shelter right now. So it was like going through a really, really hard time. [I] came super late to my class and like, after class, she kind of just sat with me. When we were talking, she's like, “Well if you end up getting kicked out of the shelter or have absolutely nowhere to go, I don’t have a place where you can live, but I do have a couch,” and this lady just met me a couple weeks ago. (Former Foster Student)

When asked to share specific examples of characteristics, qualities, or teaching styles they valued in their faculty, students often cited approachability, inclusivity, openness, relatability, and having a holistic concern for their well-being. Students also expressed appreciation of faculty who validated their identities and lived experiences, both inside and outside of the classroom. Examples from students underscored the critical need for faculty to practice equity-mindedness, as demonstrated through curriculum, assignments, guest speakers, community networks, and genuine relationships with students. The following quotes that were offered by participants in the former foster student, LGBQ, and Accessibility focus groups below, respectively, were reflective of these themes:

It may be, I guess, the way she teaches and the way she's open about everything makes you want to try, but then at the same time, it’s not easy what she’s teaching you, but because she makes it a comfortable place, it allows you to be able to push yourself and try even harder.

You know, she came from the same background I did where her parents were migrant farm workers and uh, well, you know, just basically if you want it, you gotta do the work, you gotta put in the work, you know, um, just showing me that basically it can be done like, kind of like taking me under her wing.

I feel like she was so nurturing and like in the beginning of her classes she throws out like opportunities or event things or for like scholarships. And then she’s like, you guys need money, it's free money come on. Like all you have to do is write a little essay, you get free money, like you don't have to pay this back.

Overall, findings revealed the significance of positive interactions with faculty, particularly those who demonstrated authentic care.
As is often the case with disproportionately impacted students who attend community college, the focus group participants experienced persistent external challenges that adversely affected their experiences and success at Cabrillo College. Most salient among these challenges were mental health concerns, transportation to and from campus, financial pressures, and food and housing insecurities. Chief among these challenges were mental health concerns, which were a significant topic of discussion during each of the focus groups. Students discussed the intentional efforts they had to employ on a regular basis to manage mental health challenges, which at times were “exhausting,” according to some participants. Students also shared instances in which mental health challenges directly impacted decisions they made about their academic trajectories. For example, one of the LGBQ participants shared that she had to stay enrolled in a class she no longer needed because of mental health challenges:

I [didn’t] need to take this class anymore so I’m like, “Okay great. I can drop this class so that I can make more money at my job and take on more hours in order for me to pay rent.” But I [had] a lot of withdrawals because I have, like, mental health issues that I had to drop out a lot in the past years.

Food and housing insecurities were also pervasive among the participants. Students acknowledged that living in Santa Cruz County was incredibly expensive, so much so that they found it difficult to meet their most basic needs. Many of the participants worked more than 20 hours per week and/or received financial aid to pay for school. Others had friends and family members who supported them by providing money or a place to stay. Yet, still, many found it nearly impossible to afford to live in Santa Cruz County, especially while attending school. The reflection below was offered by a trans student and is representative of what most of the participants had to say in describing their experiences with this challenge:

I’m currently homeless, but I’m staying with some friends, so I eat like one small meal a day, even though I have a job now and my partner works well above minimum wage full-time . . . We just can’t afford to live here.

Securing reliable transportation to and from school was also a salient challenge. Unlike housing insecurity, students had more options to address transportation concerns. However, this still proved to be a challenge for many of the participants. For example, two students, one who participated in the focus group for students with [dis]abilities and the other in the group for undocumented students had this to say:

That’s another issue that I faced too, as well, is the daycare issue and especially if I have a night class. I don’t have nobody that wants to do daycare at night. And I don’t have transportation for him during the day cause he’s at daycare and somebody had to pick them up and take him to preschool because he goes to preschool in the afternoon and I worked my butt off to get him into preschool 6 hours of the day, but it didn’t work out.
I don't live here in Watsonville. I live in [another city that's more affordable] but it's hard for me transportation wise because I don't know how to drive, and I count on my dad and he goes to work really early, like around 6am, so I have to wake up at his hour. So, it's very difficult for me to go further away from home so I can't do that. So, that's why I'm at Cabrillo over University of Santa Cruz.

Moreover, we learned that students rarely experienced external challenges in isolation. Typically, they experienced two or more simultaneously, which intensified the impact of these challenges and complicated the options that were available to students as they worked to resolve them. The students also noted that they appreciated the access to the city bus that was available to all Cabrillo College students. Some declared that, without having access to the bus, they would likely not be able to attend school. But, for those who could not take the bus and have to drive to and from campus, paying for parking on top of the student fee that is charged to all students each semester to cover the cost of the bus service was a significant burden. As one participant in the undocumented students’ focus group shared:

I drive my car. So when they started doing the bus thing, and I know it helps a lot of students, they started charging a $40 fee [per semester] for everybody . . . $40 is a whole tank [of gas] for a whole week.

In conclusion, during our conversations with the participants about what made a difference in helping them to overcome these challenges, they noted that having faculty who were understanding and supportive made a substantial difference, especially during those critical moments in which they were faced with the decision of staying enrolled or stopping out. The importance of being able to talk transparently with faculty about these challenges and the accommodations they needed to overcome them was evident during their conversations with students about this issue. As an example, one of the trans participants talked about support both they and a friend received from faculty to whom they disclosed the mental health challenges they experienced:

I've also noticed, at least in my experience, teachers being pretty understanding when it comes to things to do with mental health. Like, every time I brought that up, teachers respond with, like, “Okay, thank you for letting me know. How can I help?” I have a, I have a friend who actually, like, has also been struggling with a mental illness recently, and they emailed one of their teachers, and like their teacher responded like just like super empathetic note, at the end being like, “I hear you, I validate you, you're not alone.” You know? And I've, I've seen a good amount of, like, similar things from teachers like that and just being, like, at the very least, understanding.

In conclusion, faculty and staff who are both empathetic and knowledgeable about how to support students with external challenges are essential.
Institutional agents are faculty, staff, and other key personnel who affirm the identities and status of underserved students by providing knowledge, resources, validation, and other critical supports that are typically absent in educational contexts for these students (Dowd et al., 2013). Institutional agents play an essential role in the educational trajectories of disproportionately impacted students. The participants discussed interactions with and support received from Cabrillo College staff and faculty members. Among the most salient were staff in the Office of Equity, the Guardian Scholars Program, the Veterans Center, and the Watsonville Center. Students expressed that staff in these spaces had both an understanding of and appreciation for their varying identities and engaged in proactive efforts to affirm them, provide resources, and eliminate institutional barriers that threatened their persistence and success. Accordingly, staff in these areas played a “critical” role in their success at Cabrillo College. The following quote from an undocumented student focus group participant reflected these experiences:

I've been getting tutoring from here in the Watsonville Center when I had a math class. The tutors are very patient . . . and yeah, other resources that we have, the Dreamer resource under the Office of Equity and it's very, um, we help students as well with their AB 540 form, with their California Dream Act, we provide them with other resources on campus.

Participants also noted the significance of having resources introduced to them by staff or faculty members who were well-connected in the community. These individuals were often lauded as going above and beyond to support participants’ success. This was especially helpful for first-generation students, students with varying abilities, undocumented students, and veteran students, who often struggled to navigate bureaucratic systems on their own. For example a veteran student shared:

Pretty much, if you have like an injury, [Chris] will get you an appointment at the VA for compensation and pension, which is like a disability rating if you really need it. Also, he’s been doing it for almost a decade now, like helping people with the paperwork, the VA has a lot of codes on paperwork. It's easy to not know what it is or like mess something up. Um, so if you have paperwork that you need, or say you get a letter from the VA and you don't even know what it is, you could ask [Chris].

Similarly, a veteran student shared:

[Sarah] from Student Health Services, she comes down to the Vet Center once a week and just hangs out for like an hour or so. And if anyone needs to talk to her, then they could go. She's like a therapist in Student Health Services, like talk therapy. She's an older lady, her office is above the Veteran's Center by the cafeteria, but she actually comes down and hangs out in our office every once in a while, and she's really cool and everyone really likes her.
A student from the LGBQ focus group had this to say:

I've had an English teacher, an outstanding class. The teacher brought in a triangle group from the local LGBTQ community and they spoke about their different [experiences]... trans speakers to gay speakers to lesbian speakers just, you know, giving us, uh, what it’s like to grow up to be... you know, so just the outlet.

Overall, participants acknowledged individuals, spaces, and curriculum that were inclusive, culturally relevant, caring, and welcoming.

“The Mainstream Counselors, It’s In-and-Out”
Navigating the General Counseling Experience

Overall, students described their experiences with general (not program-specific counseling) to be both negative and not value-added to their success. According to the participants, general counselors were more concerned with getting them “in-and-out” of the appointment than they were about addressing the questions and concerns that motivated them to seek counseling. In addition, some students found counselors to be “rude” and “impatient.” Even worse, some students shared feeling invalidated after meeting with a general counselor. For example:

[The counselor] was like, “Oh, so you think you can get into a UC?” [with] kind of like this [negative] attitude. And I’m just like, “Well, I want to go to a UC because I like research.” Then [they] said, “Well, why? And why that one?” [They were] just so negative and I’m like, “What is up with the dream crusher?”

Similarly, an African American student described her experiences with general counseling as more like “being analyzed” and less so about being guided and supported:

Yeah. I felt like I was being analyzed more than her getting me my education. It was more of, “So where are you from? Do you have a good education? Are you smart?” That’s how I felt, like I was being tracked, you know, instead of helping me get classes, if [they were] trying to see who I was and if I could do the work.

As we probed deeper into students’ experiences with general counseling, we learned that students typically employed three strategies to having their counseling needs met. First, students discussed the importance of “planning ahead” to ensure that the counselor only needed to check and approve their educational plans, which limited the amount of time they needed to spend with the counselor. When students employed this strategy, their goal was to have the counselor confirm they were “on the right path.”
The second strategy students employed was to request a specific counselor in the general counseling department who had a reputation for being helpful and supportive. While this strategy enabled students to have their counseling needs addressed, at times it meant having to wait longer than necessary to see the counselor.

Finally, most of the participants were involved in a campus program that served disproportionately impacted students that offered program-specific counseling. Thus, a third strategy that was employed by students was to avoid general counseling altogether and to only seek program-specific counseling services. As one participant shared, “So, my experiences, so the counselors who are assigned to other programs [like] EOPS [and] ASC tend to care more about the students because these students are in like outreach programs.” As noted, students experienced program-specific counselors as more caring and relational than they did general counseling. That said, it is important to note that program-specific counselors tend to have smaller caseloads and more time to spend with students than their colleagues in general counseling. Thus, opportunities to develop relationships with students and address complex needs and concerns are perhaps more available than they are in the context of general counseling.

As noted in the aforementioned discussion of institutional agents, the students identified key campus programs that were critical to their success. The most commonly named programs across the 10 focus groups included the Accessibility Support Center, EOPS, and the Office of Equity. Other significant programs included the Guardian Scholars Program, the Veterans Center, the Puente Program, and the Dream Resource Program. Within each of these, participants often shared their experiences with both the services and the people in these offices. Once again, this underscored the value of developing personal relationships with students. The following quotes exemplify this:

“I Was Failing Until They Helped Me”
Campus Programs and Resources That are Critical to Student Success

I will say The Hub. The first semester here, it was all about The Hub because I had my classes over there, my reading class. So I got to know like the few people out there and it’s definitely very welcoming, very. The vibe itself is more like you come to learn and we’re willing to teach you. (Latinx-Aptos Focus Group Participant)

I would say, like, pretty much everyone in the Office of Equity is being supportive. I’ve interacted with a fair amount of them and they’re all like really nice people who are working on things that you work on in the Office of Equity, you know? So they’ve all been pretty great. (Trans Student Focus Group Participant)
I remembered that they mentioned ASC, so I went in there and started the testing and I qualified. What they do for me is that, they put my books into a PDF form, so it’s read to me, which is great because now I get to have my reading done and then I’m a slow processor. For that, they give me extra time for my testing, which is great for me too because I wouldn’t finish my exams, and then I would be failing. I was failing until they helped me. Then I got a B in the class, thought that was nice. (Accessibility Support Center Focus Group Participant)

Yet, while participants noted Cabrillo’s wealth of resources to support students, knowledge and accessibility of them were inconsistent. This was evident throughout the focus groups, as some students expressed being unfamiliar with the support programs that were mentioned by their peers. However, the focus groups also became opportunities for students to share their social (networks of people and resources) and navigational (skills of maneuvering through social institutions) capital (Yosso, 2005, pp. 79-80) with one another. This was especially salient given the intersecting identities of students. For example, while a student may have participated in the focus group centered on the experiences of LGBQ students, they may have also expressed similar interactions with programs and staff as students in the Accessibility or Former Foster group. These experiences are illustrated in the following quotes:

I wasn’t a good student in high school because I have a learning disability and so I just thought I was done, but once I came to Cabrillo and I joined the ASC, I know they told me about the ASC, and I went in and it’s just like an EOP, and they gave me my accommodations where they help me with my reading. And then you test and when I got my tests back I actually tested higher learning, so I’m really smart. I’m just a slow processor. And I saw that in my classes, that I understood everything. (Latinx-Aptos Focus Group Participant)

. . . tutoring center upstairs, I’m there literally every day in between classes. Like every single class and just sitting in there doing homework and stuff and like, if I need help, like they were helping, they’re super helpful. (LGBQ Student Focus Group Participant)

Overall, students had positive experiences with the campus resources identified above.

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GROUP-SPECIFIC INSIGHTS

Having presented findings that were salient across the 10 focus groups, in this section of the report, we summarize within-group findings that emerged from our analysis. It is important to note that on occasion there is some overlap in the between-group and within-group findings. That said, the purpose of this section is to foreground group-specific experiences, insights, and challenges.

### Accessibility Support Students

Three primary concerns emerged from participants in the Accessibility Support focus group, including coping with mental health concerns, interactions with general counseling, and feeling stigmatized when asking for accommodations from faculty. Participants were transparent about their mental health, describing their challenges with anxiety and depression. Students often described compounding life stressors that greatly affected their motivation, engagement, and learning. When asked about coping mechanisms, many students admitted they were “heavily medicated” or turned to other types of substances to reduce their stress.

When seeking guidance from general counseling, participants mentioned that their sessions often felt transactional. This was particularly challenging for students who took “longer to process” information, had difficulty focusing, were first-generation students, or had been away from school for some time. As a result, students mentioned these interactions felt unwelcoming and impersonal. Rather than seeking additional support from general counseling, participants preferred meeting with staff at the ASC. However, participants found it difficult to navigate all the ASC resources. Thus, they suggested having access to early semester workshops on ASC resources (e.g., alternate media), Canvas, and time management.

Once having been assigned their accommodations, students expressed feeling stigmatized when providing faculty with their “intake” form. At times, students felt that these interactions were transactional and that faculty lacked a sense of care. One student recalled being denied testing accommodations for their final exam because the faculty member was unfamiliar with assistive technology. However, participants also shared positive interactions with faculty, particularly those who were compassionate, took time to understand their accommodations, and were encouraging. Students also appreciated faculty who made announcements during class about community events and resources on campus. These faculty members were perceived as going “above and beyond” by engaging with the student to make their classroom experiences pleasant.
**Former Foster Students**

Overall, former foster students expressed having positive experiences at Cabrillo College with faculty, staff, and student support services. Specifically, they felt supported through the Guardian Scholars Program. The program provided them with backpacks and school supplies that they found extremely useful. Moreover, the students expressed their satisfaction with staff who were willing to answer questions and go out of their way to find answers not readily available. Additionally, participants appreciated staff who connected them to other resources on campus and who created an environment that was welcoming and supportive.

The students also talked about some of the external challenges they encountered that often impacted their experiences on campus. Two students identified childcare as one of their main concerns, specifically the fact that the on-campus childcare was full and that their hours did not accommodate students taking classes in the late afternoon or evening. One student disclosed their daily struggle with anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues, which was met with agreement by other participants. Another student spoke candidly about being homeless and how finding safe and affordable housing was always something she worried about.

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**African American Students**

African American students experience Cabrillo College as a hostile and unwelcoming environment. Students shared concerns about the lack of African American representation among students, faculty, and staff. They often felt invisible on campus and in their classrooms. Some students mentioned feelings of isolation when eating in the cafeteria, not being included in group work among their peers, and being hyper-surveilled by staff and administrators. Students underscored that their peers are hesitant to form study groups outside of class with them, resulting in them having to study independently or forming study spaces with close friends who are not enrolled in the same course. When interacting with faculty, African American students felt they were viewed as incompetent and incapable. When seeking help, students expressed that faculty frequently referred them to the course syllabus rather than providing the time and support for their academic development. Another challenge they experienced in the classroom was being asked to represent the African American voice on social issues, which further intensified their feelings of marginalization.
Latinx Students

**Watsonville Center:** The majority of Latinx students who took most of their classes at the Watsonville Center described the campus as welcoming and very communal. In contrast, they found the Aptos campus less welcoming and described their experience there as isolating. Latinx students appreciated faculty members who utilized culturally relevant pedagogy in their teaching, promoted critical thinking, and were involved in fostering a welcoming environment by sharing campus and community events with students. In addition, students shared that the Puente Program helped to create a welcoming environment and supported their academic and personal development. Finally, they also noted (and appreciated) that faculty at the Watsonville Center were more likely to be Latinx and bilingual.

Latinx students expressed challenges interacting with faculty when seeking help on their assignments or understanding difficult concepts, particularly in math. The students shared that math faculty were often unaware of how to support students whose second language is English when students did not fully understand mathematical concepts. Students who were undocumented shared similar challenges in their interactions with faculty. They noted that when they disclosed their undocumented status to faculty, they often responded with hesitation and uncertainty of how to best support them. In addition, Latinx students shared challenges with peer interactions.

Many shared feeling isolated from their White classmates, especially in math classes during group work. Students expressed being included in group work with their White peers only after they demonstrated knowledge of the content.

**Aptos Campus:** Latinx students at Aptos shared most of the experiences and challenges that were presented by their Latinx peers at Watsonville. Students expressed feelings of not belonging and marginalization at Aptos. Examples of negative experiences at Aptos that made students feel unwelcome were engaging with staff members who were rude and did not acknowledge students when they sought support services, assuming that students would need information sheets printed in Spanish based on their last name, and using terminology, such as “illegal,” when referring to undocumented students on registration forms.

Financial insecurities and transportation were also challenges that often influenced students’ academic endeavors. Some of the participants expressed challenges of not being able to afford required textbooks for class and described it as stressful, therefore causing students to feel unprepared with thoughts of withdrawing from the course. A few students shared that they used the free bus program that Cabrillo College provides because transportation was a challenge.
LGBQ Students

LGBQ students expressed overall positive experiences at Cabrillo College. The majority of LGBQ students shared positive faculty-student interactions in sociology and psychology studies. Students appreciated faculty members who provided opportunities for them to understand and explore different concepts of sexual identity. Students expressed that while faculty outside of the social sciences, communication, and human services departments lacked awareness of gender and sexual orientation beyond the heteronormative lens, most were open to learning more about how to better support and engage with LGBQ students.

Housing was a common challenge among the LGBQ participants. Students who expressed housing insecurities shared they were “couchsurfing” or on the verge of homelessness. Factors that contributed to students’ housing insecurities were the high cost of living in Santa Cruz County as well as external challenges (e.g., health, death in family, unemployment). These students also talked about how external challenges often required them to withdraw from classes, which had an adverse effect on their eligibility for financial aid.

Native American Students

The Native participants spoke mostly about their experiences with faculty and staff at Cabrillo College. Overall, students perceived faculty and staff as having either negative or indifferent attitudes toward the Native culture. The participants felt like their Native identities were treated as an afterthought at the College and that most faculty and staff were unaware that there were Native students on campus. For example, one student shared that while they were performing a Native ritual on campus, they were approached by an employee who accused them of smoking on campus. The lack of understanding for their culture and the stereotypes that are associated with Native cultures contributed to the less than welcoming environment for these students. Some participants shared that they did not have access to Internet or even cell service at home, which impacted their ability to register for classes and submit assignments that were due electronically on Sunday nights. However, when they informed staff and faculty that they did not have access to Internet, they were often met with skepticism and were not provided with alternative solutions. While most participants from each focus group could identify several institutional agents who had supported their success, this was not the case for Native students. In fact, aside from one faculty member who identified as Native, no other faculty member was mentioned in the focus group with Native students.
GROUP-SPECIFIC INSIGHTS

Veteran Students

Veteran students expressed feelings of stigmatization and a lack of belonging at Cabrillo College. Participants described the campus and surrounding community as “extremely liberal,” which made them unwilling to disclose their military affiliation. In particular, students felt as if their political views were not aligned with their peers and faculty members. Further, they felt that curriculum and classroom discussions did not reflect their experiences or viewpoints. As a result, they became strategic about their engagement in class, stating that they “spoke up just enough to get participation points,” but were reluctant to authentically share their opinions. Participants also perceived the campus climate as a hostile environment for veteran or military-affiliated students. Students often hid their military identity to avoid questions about their service or political opinions. One student described a time on campus when he was spat on for wearing his “Make America Great Again” hat. Participants were also frustrated by the general lack of interest by the campus community to learn more about veteran issues.

Despite these challenges, participants found their community with the Veterans Information Center. Students constantly praised the coordinators for creating a welcoming environment that allowed them to be their authentic selves. This was especially important, as participants admitted that asking for help was often difficult due to their military culture. However, this same culture also prompted these students to work as a team and support one another, whether it be academically, financially, or personally. As with other groups, veterans also struggled with housing insecurities. Participants also expressed appreciation for the veteran advocate who consistently helped them navigate Veteran Affairs processes and systems. Overall, veteran students were systematically supported, but lacked a sense of belonging.

Trans Students

Although students in the trans focus group expressed feeling like they belonged at Cabrillo College, the salient challenge they encountered was faculty and staff calling them by their birth names and using incorrect pronouns when referring to them, which was not only embarrassing but emotionally taxing. They acknowledged that, at times, faculty would immediately become aware of their mistake and begin to profusely apologize. In some cases, this would bring more unwanted attention to the student. Additionally, there is no way to change their names in all campus information systems at once. This requires the student to have to do additional work to ensure that their preferred names are being used.

Trans students credited the Office of Equity for always being welcoming and supportive. They also described instances of faculty who did a good job of creating inclusivity in the curriculum and intentionally addressing gender and social issues that affect the trans community in their courses.
Undocumented Students

The undocumented students expressed feeling marginalized and invisible on campus. The students also felt use of the term “illegal” was degrading, and they expressed fear in submitting the Cabrillo College application after having to self-identify as “illegal.” The students expressed a lack of community on campus and discrimination at the Aptos campus. Specifically, the faculty and staff at Aptos were not always aware of resources for undocumented students. However, at the Watsonville Center, the institutional agents were supportive and validating.

Students had varying experiences with the resources on campus. General counseling was described as very “fast” and transactional. They also described being microaggressed by staff who asked for their DACA numbers. Students expressed a fear of having their undocumented status in the campus database. Another microaggression described by undocumented students pertained to the requirements and signage to show identification at the Aptos location but not being required to show identification at Watsonville. The students also felt they lacked a counselor specifically for undocumented students who could provide emotional support. In numerous occasions, the students expressed a fear of being undocumented and continuously being traumatized by sharing their stories without follow-up support services.

"With equity as the goal, we understand we have the institutional responsibility to identify and remove barriers to student success in order to improve outcomes for historically underserved students. Under the umbrella of Guided Pathways, we are working to improve outcomes on a substantial scale through fundamental rethinking of our organization, its culture and its impact on the student experience."

Cabrillo College Student Equity Executive Summary, Integrated Plan 2017-2019
Based on the findings reported herein, we offer the following recommendations to inform the efforts of educators to improve student experiences and outcomes for disproportionately impacted students at Cabrillo College:

**1. Provide Cultural Competency Professional Development for All Faculty.**

In describing their experiences with Cabrillo College faculty, the participants distinguished those who were culturally competent from those who were not. Culturally competent faculty affirmed students’ identities (e.g., racial/ethnic, gender), intentionally provided space in the course curriculum for students to explore their identities, and were skilled at creating a safe and inclusive classroom ethos. Unfortunately, being enrolled in a class that is taught by a culturally competent professor was more so the exception than the norm for these students. Thus, the college should identify ways to support all faculty in becoming culturally competent and in creating a culturally relevant learning experience for their students. Identifying the professors who were identified by the focus group participants and providing them some course release time to support the college in this effort may be a good starting point. Adjunct faculty must also be included in this effort and invited to participate.

**2. Update and Sync Student Information Systems.**

One of the more disheartening findings that emerged from the project was trans students’ experiences with transitioning from their birth names to their preferred names. These students shared many instances of being “outed” by faculty because their names on the official class rosters did not reflect their preferred names, despite having taken the necessary steps to have their names updated in the campus’ student information system. Thus, campus leaders must come up with a more seamless and reliable process for students to update their records to ensure that every employee who has access to these records can easily distinguish students’ preferred names from their birth names. The fear of being outed on the first day of every class each semester or being called by the wrong pronouns creates intense fear and anxiety for trans students.

**3. Consider the Impact of the “Free Bus” Policy on Students Who Pay to Park on Campus.**

As noted previously in this report, the “free bus” policy is an effective strategy for providing students access to public transportation that enables them to get to and from campus. Several students in the focus groups lauded the campus for providing this service. That said, for students who must pay to park on campus, the $40 fee that is charged to all students each semester to cover the cost of providing public transportation is a burden. Therefore, the campus should consider reducing or waiving the fee for students who pay to park on campus. If doing so will make it difficult to continue providing the service at no cost to students, perhaps the campus can identify other sources to subsidize it.
4. Scale Programs That Serve Disproportionately Impacted Students.

Clearly evident in the focus groups was the critical role that programs like EOP, ASC, the Veterans Center, and others that served disproportionately impacted students played in making the campus accessible, welcoming, and inclusive for students, which has a direct impact on their persistence and success at Cabrillo College. Moreover, these programs are providing critical support and student services that are not as accessible to students outside of the context of these programs. The college should consider infusing resources into these programs so they can be scaled and serve more students who meet the criteria to participate. In doing so, campus leaders must be mindful to not compromise the core values, impact, and integrity of these programs.

5. Improve the General Counseling Experience.

Students’ experiences with general counseling was a common challenge across all of the focus groups. The majority of students expressed the need for general counselors to be more affirming, validating, relational, and less transactional in their work with students. Thus, in line with our recommendation to build cultural competence among classroom faculty, this is an important area of professional development for counseling faculty as well. In addition, counseling faculty should be offered space and opportunity to revisit practices like building rapport, unconditional positive regard, and empathy, which are all foundations of the counseling profession. Moreover, the campus should consider the extent to which counseling faculty have the capacity to support students with the mental health concerns they experience. Given the growing complexity of mental health concerns among college students, the campus may consider bringing in counselors who have specialized training in this area and/or developing an effective partnership with an external entity that can provide students with timely and accessible mental health support at little to no cost.


The lack of representation of people of color among Cabrillo College’s faculty and staff is a salient concern for the students of color in the focus groups. Students expressed the need to have more faculty who “looked like them” and to whom they could potentially relate culturally. Equally important is to hire faculty and staff who are equity-minded. Thus, the campus should review its practices for recruiting, screening, hiring, and retaining faculty and staff to ensure they are aligned with equity-minded hiring practices. To the extent possible, candidates who can best position the college to achieve its equity goals and eliminate equity gaps should be brought on board. Moreover, having good practices in place to onboard and retain new faculty and staff are critical, especially faculty and staff of color who often feel marginalized in predominantly White departments.
7. Obtain Deeper Insights and Perspectives From Students About the Welcome Center.

The Welcome Center was identified by the participants as a very hostile space. Despite the Center’s name, the students did not feel “welcomed” there. These experiences seem to cluster around staff who were not friendly and who the participants described as rude and unpleasant. We did not have the time to delve deeply into this issue during the focus groups. Thus, the campus should pursue deeper insights from students about their experiences in the Welcome Center. Supporting this inquiry with some unobtrusive observations of the Welcome Center will also be value-added in efforts to understand what and how students are experiencing this space.

8. Take a Comprehensive Approach to Financial Aid Advising.

Given both the complexity and intensity of the acute external concerns the students experienced (notably housing insecurity, food insecurity, employment, and transportation), educators who are working in financial aid should utilize a comprehensive financial advising model. At present, most financial aid educators focus exclusively on getting students access to the financial aid for which they are eligible. Although making sure students get their aid is undeniably important, educators should also work with students to address concerns that extend beyond getting access to state and federal aid. This would entail taking all of students’ financial needs and concerns into consideration, even those that are not met by state and federal aid. Connecting students with campus and community resources, such as CalFresh, low-income housing, job placement agencies, and an affordable textbook program (as examples) should also fall within the purview of financial aid advisors. Stated simply, financial aid should not be just about distributing money, but rather connecting students to a broader range of financial knowledge and resources. Finally, students who are enrolled in developmental education courses that do not count toward college credit should be advised to enroll in these courses at the College’s continuing education center where they can be taken at no cost.

9. Expand the Emergency Grant Program.

Over the past year, the Cabrillo College Foundation awarded 101 emergency grants with a maximum of $750 to students with emergency needs. This is a great resource to both students and the college that can be the difference in a student staying enrolled or leaving the college due to an unforeseen emergency. Based on the focus group findings presented herein, there is a great need to expand the number of emergency grants that are available to students as well as the maximum amount awarded per grant. To secure the additional resources that are necessary to expand the program, foundation leaders might consider creating an aggressive tax deductible employee-giving campaign and partnering with local businesses for sponsorships. Above all, the need for readily accessible emergency funding for students cannot be overstated. Along the same lines, the Foundation should consider establishing community partnerships to address acute food and housing insecurities that are experienced by Cabrillo College students. For example, identifying local restaurants and supermarkets to sponsor a food pantry is a potentially promising strategy for addressing this issue. If a food pantry is established, it should also provide hygiene products and second-hand clothing.6

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10. Develop Effective Communication Strategies to Raise Students’ Awareness of Campus Resources.

The participants acknowledged and appreciated the multitude of resources and supports that were available to all Cabrillo College students. That said, they also declared that although resources and supports were plentiful, timely awareness of access to these resources were challenges. Thus, campus leaders should assess the communication strategies that are used across the campus to advertise programs and services to students. Because there tends to be wide variation in how students access information (e.g., email, social media, text messages), using multiple channels of communication is essential to ensure students have equitable access to this information. Finally, it is important to not overlook traditional information sharing strategies like flyers and in-class announcements. In fact, the participants appreciated faculty who shared information and resources in their classes.

11. Review All Campus Applications and Materials.

Participants in the undocumented student focus group shared that some campus materials and applications described them as “illegal.” Therefore, the campus should conduct a comprehensive review of all materials and applications to ensure that undocumented students are not being asked to identify as “illegal.” Moreover, having clear and consistent policies and signage for when students are required to show identification and the types of identification that are acceptable is important to ensure the campus is a safe space for undocumented students.

For additional insights on addressing food and housing insecurities see:


There were three student-athletes (all men of color) among the students who participated in the focus groups. These students appeared to have unique experiences and challenges that were directly related to their status as student-athletes. It would be important to conduct additional inquiry with student-athletes to learn more about how the campus can better support them. This is especially important for student-athletes who enroll at Cabrillo College from out of state, as these students typically experience financial, food, and housing insecurities more intensely than students who are residents of California.

The California Community College Promise Grant waives fees for one academic year for first-time students who are enrolled in 12 or more semester units. This grant provides a great opportunity for California community colleges to enroll underrepresented and underserved students. However, to fully maximize this opportunity, the college should find a way to extend the grant to 2 years. Partnering with the Cabrillo College Foundation to obtain the funding to cover fees for Promise Grant students in the second year would likely go a long way for disproportionately impacted students to continue their education in the wake of financial and other external challenges.

Some of the findings reported herein are aligned with those that were presented from inquiry that was conducted by the RP Group in 2015. The steps the college undertook to leverage the findings and recommendations from the RP Group report are unclear. Thus, our recommendation is to come up with a systematic plan, work group, committee, or task force to review both reports and devise a strategy to make the findings and recommendations actionable. In doing so, the campus should prioritize findings and recommendations that are aligned with its Student Equity and Achievement Plan and its Guided Pathways Action Plan. Finally, the Planning and Research Office should be involved in developing a plan to evaluate and monitor the strategies that are enacted based on the recommendations provided in this report.

7 https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB19
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<th>Guided Pathways Pillar</th>
<th>Cabrillo College Theme</th>
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| ALL                    | Sense of Belonging at Cabrillo (connection to the college) | 1. What is it like to be a [salient identity] at this college?  
2. To what extent do you feel welcome as [salient identity] at this college?  
3. Please describe your interactions with faculty and staff at Cabrillo.  
4. Who are some key folks on campus that convey messages of encouragement and support (“you belong here,” “you can do it” “you have what it takes to be successful”)?  
5. How important is your salient identity to you? |
| Pillar I: Clarifying the path | Pathway to Cabrillo College                                | 6. What motivated you to enroll at Cabrillo College? What are your long-term academic goals?  
7. How has Cabrillo supported your transition entering college? |
| Pillar 2: Helping students choose and enter a pathway | Registration & Enrollment (counseling - inaccessible and impersonal, major choice, course enrollment guidance, lack of financial aid guidance, ease of navigating matriculation) | 8. Thinking about your experiences with the counseling office here, what have you found most helpful? What have you found challenging?  
9. To what extent do you use campus services or other resources on a regular basis (e.g., tutoring, counseling, career services, financial aid)? How helpful or important are these services to your success? |
| Pillar 3: Helping students stay on the path | Retention (need for support/campus resources/services, awareness of resources, categorical programs, tutoring, support with housing, transportation, food, employment, and textbooks) | 10. What have been some challenges you faced during your time in college?  
11. What are some key sources of support on-campus that have enabled you to overcome these challenges?  
12. What are some challenges you experience outside of college (e.g., work, transportation, housing, regular access to food, family responsibility)? |
| Pillar 4: Ensure that learning is happening with intentional outcomes | Pathways and Tracking | 13. To what extent are your work-related activities aligned with your career goals?  
14. How can faculty best support your learning in their classes?  
15. To what extent do you see your salient identity in the curriculum? |

APPENDIX: STUDENT FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

This protocol was developed by CCEAL with consultation from the Cabrillo College Planning and Research Office and the Office of Equity.
Cabrillo College’s mission “connects students to pathways that impart the relevant skills and knowledge to propel them from where they are to where they aspire to be. With an emphasis on quality and equity, Cabrillo’s students are empowered as effective communicators, critical thinkers, and responsible world citizens.”

Cabrillo College Student Equity Executive Summary, Integrated Plan 2017-2019