

Large Scale Faculty Development: A Taxonomy of Faculty Perspectives on Teaching Men of Color

Enhancing success and learning outcomes for students who have been historically underrepresented and underserved in education remains a key challenge facing America's community colleges. While many states have taken up the mantle of student success reform, demonstrated progress from these efforts is limited. Largely, this is due to an intervention model that focuses on mending student deficits rather than better preparing educators to engage diverse student communities. In reality, few college and university faculty have ever received formal training on teaching. Fewer still have been afforded development opportunities that have prepared them to support the learning needs of underserved students. This of course is an interesting paradox for institutions dedicated to a teaching and learning mission that also serve high proportions of historically underrepresented learners.

Implementing large-scale capacity building to improve teaching and learning is difficult to accomplish, if not nearly impossible. Taking pride in one's instructional prowess, fear of losing autonomy, bureaucracy, and perceived infringements on academic freedom are some among a multiplicity of barriers facing organizational change. At the campus-level, the execution of meaningful interventions necessitates buy-in from key stakeholders, chief among those being faculty. Attaining faculty buy-in for large-scale capacity development is a central challenge, as the roll out of equity initiatives are often marred by treating faculty as a monolithic group. We must recognize that faculty members have varying levels of preparation, experience, and commitments to society's most underserved students. This information should be taken into consideration in advancing large-scale capacity development efforts for underserved students.

Across the nation, colleges have struggled to facilitate successful outcomes for men of color. In 2011, we founded the Minority Male Community College Collaborative (M2C3) at San Diego State University to support colleges in better understanding factors that facilitate success for college men of color. This work is approached from an institutional responsibility perspective that situates the onus of student outcomes as a manifestation of institutional systems, processes, and culture. Based on our work in facilitating campus-level professional development to support faculty

in enhancing their preparedness to teach Black men, Latino men, and other college men of color, we have identified at least four distinct groupings of faculty based on two characteristics. We refer to these groupings as the *Taxonomy of Faculty Perspectives on Teaching Men of Color*. This taxonomy is offered as a resource for conceptualizing the roll-out of any equity-based, organizational strategy focused on large-scale faculty capacity development.

The first characteristic is based on whether faculty know (K) or don't know (DK) effective strategies for teaching men of color. The second criteria is based on whether faculty are willing (W) or unwilling (UW) to employ these promising practices in teaching these men. From our research, we have learned that while all faculty have the ability to educate college men of color effectively, enhanced strategies are needed for doing so. Understandably, some faculty already possess an in-depth knowledge of these practices, meaning they know what to do. In our research, we have identified promising strategies from faculty who had a demonstrated record of success in teaching men of color. The strategies that are useful in teaching college men of color (e.g., relationship-building, collaborative learning, critical introspection, culturally relevant teaching, and intrusive practices) have been found to be beneficial for all students, but to have an intensified benefit for men of color. The faculty who know what to do already use these strategies; however, other faculty may require additional development opportunities. Of course, many faculty members do not know the strategies necessary for facilitating success for college men of color. This assertion is rooted in ubiquitous challenges that colleges have in facilitating student persistence, achievement, attainment, and transfer for these men. It is also evident in extensive research that documents how men of color experience marginalization and alienation in and out of the classroom. However, knowing what strategies to use and employing those practices may not always coincide. Some faculty members, regardless of whether they have knowledge of effective strategies for men of color, will have an unwillingness to employ those strategies. Based on these experiential insights, we have identified four types of faculty, based on their knowledge and willingness to employ effective strategies for college men of color. We define these faculty as, the Choir, the Allies, the Resisters, and the Defiant.

The Choir (K-W) know what to do and have a willingness to employ successful strategies for men of color. The Choir have been trained in how to teach men of color and other underserved students effectively. They

already employ promising teaching practices and often advocate for other faculty to do so as well. The Choir regularly attend the normal professional development meetings to continue to hone their practice. Their attendance is not predicated on whether the training is mandatory but on their deep personal commitment to the success of men of color students. If there is an optional training during lunchtime, the evening, or on Saturday that is focused on historically underserved students, these faculty will be in attendance. While the Choir is often comprised of faculty of color, it should not be assumed that all people of color know what to do and are willing to support men of color success. Like the Choir, the Allies (DK-W) also have a willingness to employ practices for college men of color. However, they may not know what to do or may require additional training to teach underserved students effectively. However, key identifiers of Allies are their willingness and eagerness to learn. And, when these Allies are provided an opportunity to do so, they strive to implement enhanced techniques. The Allies are often known by members of the Choir, as they may already support equity efforts for other populations. As such, these educators can be readily identified by members of the Choir based on their prior commitments to equity in education.

Unlike the Choir and the Allies, the Resisters demonstrate an unwillingness to employ practices to support college men of color. The Resisters (DK-UW) are characterized by not knowing what to do and being unwilling to employ effective teaching strategies for men of color. Simply put, the Resisters are those faculty who don't know and don't care when it comes to the success of men of color. There are two primary sub-groups of Resisters, those who are active Resisters and those who are passive Resisters. Active Resisters will actively advocate against equity measures. When the active Resisters learn that a new training program, equity effort, or diversity initiative have been launched, they will be vocal opponents against change. Many faculty are passive Resisters. Passive Resisters typically try to stay away from the fray to avoid being associated with supporting or fighting equity efforts. However, when required to do so, they will passively address their opposition for training focused on teaching specific student subgroups. Often, this is done through a lens of being color-blind to student differences and variances in teaching strategies that work for underserved communities.

The final group is referred to as the Defiant. The Defiant (K-UW) actually know what to do but have an unwillingness to employ the strategies necessary for men of color. The Defiant have been formally trained or exposed to strategies that are useful for teaching underserved students, but they refuse to employ them. Most commonly, the Defiant will employ similar strategies for other students, particularly those with whom they are the most comfortable and identify with,

but will be unwilling to do so for men of color. The Defiant represent a significantly smaller population of detractors in comparison to the larger share of active and passive Resisters on campus. There is little that can be done in attaining the participation of the Defiant in voluntary development opportunities other than to create a campus culture that makes their involvement compensatory. Even then, their participation may not result in changes in their teaching and learning practice, hence, they are Defiant.

Based on this taxonomy, we advocate for the implementation of large-scale (voluntary) faculty development that employs the three E's—empower, educate, and encourage. The three E's emerge from our work with the Center for Organizational Responsibility and Advancement (CORA) that has an online, intensive professional development program for preparing faculty to better educate community college men of color. The program lasts one week and includes video modules, readings, reflections, and live interactive sessions with instructional facilitators. This intervention has been used by a number of colleges who have made the program available to all of their faculty, staff, and student leaders throughout the academic year. We encourage the professional development coordinators and other college leaders to consider the three E's when launching the program campus-wide.

First, begin with the Choir, those who know what to do and have a willingness to do it. *Empower* these individuals by exposing them to the training before any other group. Given their internalized commitment to underserved populations, these individuals will be among the first to participate voluntarily in the program. The goal is to energize the Choir with content that sheds light on the utility of their current practice while also providing them with the opportunity to learn some new insights as well. The Choir will demonstrate an authentic interest in participating in the program and can identify Allies who can participate in the second phase of implementation. Second, colleges should *educate* the Allies, those who possess a willingness to employ successful strategies but who aren't fully trained on what to do. Allies should be provided with the opportunity to learn new strategies that can assist them in facilitating teaching and learning in a more impactful way. Members of the Choir can also serve to support their learning and development based on their expertise and prior participation in the program.

Third, colleges should then *encourage* the Resisters, those who seemingly don't know what to do or have a willingness to employ promising strategies. In particular, passive Resisters must be targeted first as the presence of active Resisters can galvanize passive Resisters to reject participation in the training. Unlike the Choir and Allies who will willingly participate based on a moral obligation and will participate in professional development opportunities when they can, the Resisters are motivated by alternative rationales. The

Resisters must be encouraged to care with arguments that speak to their interests. Often, these interests are rooted in compliance, funding, and organizational priority as advocated by administrative and/or faculty leaders. In addition, training opportunities should be brought directly to these leaders in meetings that are already mandatory in nature, such as department meetings, faculty senate, faculty union, all college day, convocation, etc. Otherwise, they will not participate in necessary development activities.

By adhering to the three E's, colleges can galvanize those who are willing to support enhanced practices for men of color (first the Choir, then the Allies), and then use the momentum derived from this critical mass of supporters to encourage the Resisters to think more critically and compassionately about their role in advancing student success. While the taxonomy and three E strategy offered was developed for our work with men of color, we believe these concepts have direct applicability to all large-scale faculty development efforts focused on underserved students. As more colleges begin responding to state and national calls for reform in student achievement, these concepts can help to advance equity agendas that recognize the critical role that faculty have in fostering student success.

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