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# SLOW PROGRESS TOWARDS EQUITY AT A HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTION (HSI): A Case Study

Paulette Lopez

University of Washington Tacoma, lopezp4@uw.edu

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Slow Progress towards Equity at a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI): A Case Study

Paulette Lopez

University of Washington Tacoma

2019

A dissertation in practice  
submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education  
in Educational Leadership

Supervisory Committee:

Christopher B. Knaus, Ph.D., Chair

Laura Flores-Cailloux, Ed.D., member

Gerald Pumphrey, Ed.D., member

Program Authorized to Offer Degree: School of Education, University of Washington Tacoma

### Abstract

This case study examined how a specific Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) pursues an institutional equity agenda. Through interviews with sixteen full-time employees representing a two-year public institution of higher education in the Pacific Northwest, this study explored faculty and staff perceptions of the purpose of an HSI designation and the intentionality of serving Latina/o students. The literature review provides a historical context of Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) and the role MSIs serve in higher education. Themes identified through an in-depth thematic analysis include knowledge and awareness of HSIs, serving and supporting students, access and opportunities, and sense of community. Findings revealed the Critical Race Theory tenets of liberalism, the permanence of racism, interest convergence, and a related white fragility in many college employees. Findings also indicated that faculty and staff (a) support serving all students, (b) lack knowledge, awareness, and reflection on how the institution serves Latina/os students, (c) confused equality with equity, and (d) made no connection with the HSI identity. Recommendations include in-depth professional development and training centered on cultural awareness, cultural competence, cultural differences and cultural disengagement; and HSI 101 workshops and open forums. An additional recommendation includes creating institutional definitions using CRT language as a foundation to build an institutional culture as an effective HSI.

**Keywords:** Hispanic serving institutions, critical race theory, equity, case study, qualitative

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### Dedication

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## Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and how an HSI is serving Latina/o students in the pursuit of equity.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, this case study centered on one HSI in the Pacific Northwest, Paramount Community College (PCC) whose goal is to address equity through the development of an institutional equity agenda and influence change at the institution in efforts to address institutional racism. This study was supported by research focused on HSIs and examined through Critical Race Theory (CRT) to understand the historical perspective of institutional racism at PCC.

Throughout this dissertation, the term “Latina/o” is referred to the contemporary inclusion of both female and males who self-identify as Chicana/o, Latina/o, and/or Hispanic, while the term Hispanic is only used in reference to the federal designation of HSIs (Garcia & Otgonjargal, 2015). The term “Latinx” and other choices of linguistic transgression continue to gain wider circulation in various publics, including in academic journal essays, books, and online popular press articles (deOnis, 2017). The next section provides a historical context of Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) and the role MSIs serve in higher education.

## Minority Serving Institutions

In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the first Higher Education Act (HEA) (Espinosa et al., 2018), in which MSIs became federally designated. MSIs play a critical role in higher education, providing access to post-secondary education for millions of students of color who come from disadvantaged backgrounds, including those who are first in their families to

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<sup>1</sup> Due to the wide variance of use across higher education, the terms Hispanic and Latinas/os will be used interchangeably in this paper. I use the term Latinas/os in this study as my personal preference and use Hispanic when referring to the federal designation of a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI).

attend college (Espinosa, Turk, & Taylor, 2018). Similarly, Boland (2018) suggests that MSIs were created as a response to a history of racial inequity and social injustice due to racial and ethnic minorities' lack of access to Predominately White Institutions (PWIs).

As the nation grew more diverse and more institutions were enrolling large number of students of color, subsequent iterations of the HEA and legislation established additional MSI classifications such as Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), Alaska Native-and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions (ANNHs), Asian American and Native American Pacific-Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs) and Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs) (Espinosa et al., 2018). Although MSIs are defined as accredited, degree-granting public or private nonprofit institutions of higher education, MSIs collectively, differ in characteristics, institutional missions, and student demographics (Espinosa, et al., 2018). Gasman et al., (2017) described MSIs as a “mosaic of our nation’s racial and ethnic diversity” (p. 18).

MSIs vary in their missions, characteristics, and day-to-day operations (Gasman, Nguyen, Samayoa, & Corral, 2017; United States Department of the Interior, n.d.). While some MSIs are a few decades old, others, particularly Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), have been operating for more than a century. HBCUs are the first of MSIs to be created (United States Department of the Interior, n.d.), whose mission remains focused on the education of Black Americans (Espinosa et al., 2018). Similarly, Tribal College and Universities (TCUs) became federally designated as MSIs in 1978 under the Tribally Controlled College or University Assistance Act that provided higher education opportunities to Native Americans through programs that are locally and culturally based, holistic, and supportive (Espinosa et al., 2018).

In 1998, ANNHs were created as part of the HEA to serve two separate populations: Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiian students. Asian American and Native American Pacific-Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs) were established by Congress under the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 with the purpose of serving Asian American Pacific Islander students (Espinosa, et. al, 2018).

### **Hispanic Serving Institutions**

Unlike HBCUs, Hispanic Serving-Institutions (HSIs) were originally created as a result of recent demographic shifts and student enrollment of Latina/o students and not by institutional mission (Boland, 2018; Excelencia in Education, 2014; Garcia, 2017; Hubbard & Stage, 2009; United States Department of the Interior, n.d.). Garcia & Taylor (2018) describes HSIs as a rich and storied history that began with grassroots effort by educators and policymakers in the 1980s. As early as 1989, recognizing the demographic and economic shifts occurring in the United States, the federal government worked with several Latino organizations to create a federal designation and target federal funding to these institutions in efforts to improve educational opportunities (Hispanic Association of College and Universities (HACU), 2017) for Latinas/os.

Defined by the Department of Education's Office of Postsecondary Education (2016), HSIs are an accredited, degree-granting, public or private nonprofit institutions of higher education with 25% or more total undergraduate Latino full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrollment. Despite falling under one umbrella, HSIs vary with respect to sector, Carnegie type, enrollment size, percentage of Hispanic students (ranging between 25 to nearly 100%), regional considerations (Nunez & Elizondo, 2012), and may enroll drastically different populations in terms of race, ethnicity, class, religion, and sexuality (Gasman et al., 2017).

According to a report by the United States Census Bureau (2015), the Latina/o population in the United States continues to grow; contributing to more than half of the nation's population growth the last decade. The number of Latina/o students at all levels of education has doubled in 20 years. From 2006 to 2011, the two-year college enrollment grew by approximately 600,000 with 42.9 percent of all Latina/o college students enrolled in two-year schools by 2011. From 2001 to 2016, the pattern shifted with four-year colleges growing by almost 700,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). As the nation's largest population, the United States' economic and social success rests on the level of social skills and knowledge attained by Latinas/os (HACU, 2017). Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) are increasing in significance with regard to access for Latina/o students (Garcia, 2016). In 2018, HSIs represents 14.9% of non-profit colleges and universities, yet enroll 24.5% of all students and 63% of all Latina/o students (HACU, 2018). HSIs are crucial to the educational attainment of this fast-growing student population, and these institutions play an important role in the educational advancement and overall success of Latina/o students (Medina & Posadas, 2012).

In a longitudinal study, Nunez, Sparks, & Hernandez (2011) found that 39% of Latino community college students who began in the 2003-2004 academic year began at Hispanic-serving community colleges. Nunez, et al., (2011), posits that Latina/o students, despite having demographic and background conditions related to a lower likelihood of college completion, first-time and first-year beginning students enrolled in 2-year HSIs actually intend to go further in their educations than their non-HSI community colleges. Medina & Posadas (2012) further argue that HSIs not only contribute towards educational attainment and success of Latino students, but towards the well-being of Latinos and society as a whole; and play an increasingly

larger role in providing college access and degree attainment for Latinas/os, particularly at the community college level (Laden, 2004).

In addition to the growth of Latina/o students, HACU (2018), reported that the number of HSIs continues to grow rapidly, from 189 in 1994, to 229 in 2000, to 245 in 2005, to 311 in 2010, and 492 in 2016. In 2016, 492 institutions met the federal enrollment criterion, enrolling 2,075,317 Latinas/os with 215 (46%) identified as public two-year institutions. Thus, as more Latina/o students enter college, the percentage of eligible HSIs continue to increase (Garcia, 2017; Medina & Posadas, 2012). Regardless of the positive trends in enrollment and growth in HSIs, however, educational gaps continue to separate Latina/o students from other groups (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017).

Garcia (2012) underscores that HSIs are in a position to become more transformative, all-inclusive, and to move beyond Latina/o enrolling to Latina/o-serving. Furthermore, Medina & Posadas (2012), suggests that there are colleges and universities who meet the criteria for an HSI designation but whose administration and leadership have not articulated what it means to “serve” Latina/o students. According to Santiago (2012), a fundamental premise for creating the HSI designation is the assumption that a critical mass of students motivates an institution to change how it operates to better “serve” students. Medina & Posadas (2012) argued that this enrollment growth, however, has not translated into increased efforts to better serve Latino students.

The purpose of this study is, thus, to examine the role of a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) in serving Latina/os students. Specifically, this case study centered one HSI in Washington State, Paramount Community College (PCC), whose goal is to pursue equity and

influence change at the institution through the development of an institutional equity agenda in efforts to address institutional racism.

### **Problem Statement**

Community colleges (non-HSIs) and federally designated HSIs (two-year and four-year) serve as critical gateways for Latinas/os (Nunez, et al., 2011). Garcia & Otgonjargal (2015) found that regardless of the changes in student demographics, the “organizational structures of these institutions are largely unchanged, making it difficult to truly ‘serve’ Hispanic students who have distinct needs based on the history of discrimination in the educational system” (p. 346). Similarly, PCC lacks an institution-wide equity agenda, and the HSI identity is not reflected in the college mission statement. According to Malcom-Piqueux & Bensimon (2015), mission statements influence what campus leaders and practitioners’ value, prioritize, and focalize. Therefore, the presence or absence of an institutions’ HSI identity within the mission statement may question the value leaders place on their institutions. Openly valuing Latina/o student success does not mean that an HSI is not concerned with facilitating success among all students, nor does valuing Latina/o success suggest that HSIs focus only on Latina/o students to the detriment of other student populations. Openly valuing Latina/o success does, however, mean that the institution, community, and stakeholders recognize their responsibility to Latina/o students and consider whether Latina/o students are benefitting from the educational resources HSIs use to support persistence, course completion across all disciplines, and degree attainment (Bensimon E. M., 2012; Malcom-Piqueux, & Bensimon, 2015).

This study’s purpose is to examine how administration, faculty and staff at PCC perceive their understanding and purpose of an HSI designation and the intentionality of serving Latina/o students, and why this designation matters.

In addition, this study explores how administration, faculty and staff, define the meaning of equity at PCC, as an HSI. Despite meaningful discussions to develop an institutional equity agenda, the perceptions of administration, faculty, and staff have not been identified or solicited across the institution. An additional applied goal of this study was to help guide PCC with intentional conversations towards a shared understanding and purpose of an HSI designation and the intentionality of serving Latina/o students, by assessing current perceptions of employees and factors that contribute to the success of Latina/o students.

### **Study Justification**

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2016), the percentage of American college students who are Latina/o, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, and American Indian/Alaska Native have increased. From 1976 to 2013, the percentage of Latina/o students rose from 4 percent to 16 percent, the percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander students rose from 2 percent to 6 percent, the percentage of Black students rose from 10 percent to 15 percent, and the percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native students rose from 0.7 to 0.8 percent. During the same period, the percentage of White students fell from 84 percent to 59 percent.

Within these growing numbers of students of color, Nunez, et al., (2011) describes Latinas/os as the fastest and youngest growing population who begin their educational paths at community colleges (non HSIs) and enrolled in Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs). Outcomes for Latinas/os attending HSIs, however, continue to remain a challenge with Latina/o students experiencing high attrition rates and low college completion rates in 2-year and 4-year HSIs (Contreras & Contreras, 2015). In their study, Contreras & Contreras (2015) examined student outcomes at two-year and four-year HSIs in California using student data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and the California Community College Data

Mart. Findings indicated that while HSIs provided access to higher education for Latina/o student success, persistence, and completion rates remain low. Latinas/os had lower completion rates than their White peers across all 42 institutions analyzed except for one institution where Latinos exceeded the college's overall completion rate (42.1% compared to 39.3%), but still remained behind their White peers in transfer or degree completion; and persistence rates did not translate into completion rates. Additional findings suggest that raising Latino college transfer and completion rates at HSIs is critical for creating economically sustainable Latino communities.

### **Review of the Literature**

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and explore how an HSI serves Latina/os students in the pursuit of equity through the lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT). The first section of the literature review focuses on Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), specifically centering on Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs). This section provides a review of HSI identities, mission statements, and perceptions of HSIs in serving Latina/o students. The second section reviews critical race theory (CRT) in relation to historical and contemporary perspectives of inequities in higher education.

### **Hispanic-Serving Institutions**

Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) have grown considerably since the 1980s (Flores & Park, 2013). According to Conrad & Gasman (2015), MSIs enrolled 3.6 million undergraduate students in the United States and a disproportionate percentage of students of color who are at lower levels of academic preparation for college and are more likely to come from high-stress and high-poverty communities. Some institutions, such as MSIs, have served underrepresented students for some time, whereas other postsecondary institutions have experienced growth in



racial and ethnic diversity during the past 20 years (Flores & Park, 2013). Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) have seen a rapid growth since their inception in 1994 with 189 institutions designated as HSIs. According to Excelencia in Education, 492 institutions met the federal enrollment criterion, enrolling 2,075,317 Hispanics in 2016 (Excelencia in Education, 2018).

In a quantitative study to examine the factors that distinguished Latina/o community college students from others and those factors that distinguish students enrolled in two-year Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) from students enrolled in two-year non-HSIs; Nunez, et al., (2011) found that HSIs played a critical role in offering Latina/o community colleges students access to higher education. Latinas/os were more likely than other community college students in general to rank personal and family reasons and academic programs as important criteria in their reason for choosing a college.

Similarly, in their research to better understand enrollment patterns by race and institutional type, over time (1997-2008); Flores & Park (2013) analyzed enrollment data by race and year of underrepresented students in various stages of the educational pipeline from high school to college completion in the state of Texas. Results indicated that Latina/o students chose not to enroll in college, as their primary college decision. However, in 1997 the next enrollment option students chose was to attend a two-year HSI (16.46%), followed by four-year HSIs (8.76%), and traditional two-year institutions (7.50%) and traditional four-year institutions (7.08%). Findings in the study indicated that HSIs are a primary core of Latina/o higher education, enrolling close to a majority of the Latina/o students in postsecondary institutions. Results indicated that the community colleges remain a vital source of entry to postsecondary education for Latinas/os in Texas.

**HSI Identity and Mission**

Hurtado & Alvarado (2015) posit that Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) have the potential to define the meaning of Hispanic-Serving in the changing context of an increasingly diverse and global society. HSIs have the potential to span many borders as they draw a local and global Latina/o student population, support faculty research, and create community partnerships to advance the health and economic, social, and political lives of Latinas/os in the United States and the Americas (Hurtado & Alvarado, 2015).

Andrade & Lundberg (2018) conducted a study to examine the ways that mission statements from 70 HSI community colleges communicated their commitment to their Latina/o-serving function. The sample included those HSIs who were recipients of Title V grants in the 2004-2005 academic year. Content analysis was used as a method to search for themes, words, and patterns referencing Hispanic or Latina/o students in some context in relation to service, commitment, and awareness. Results indicated that no colleges referred directly to Hispanic and/or Latina/o students in their mission statements. Most colleges generally referred to culture and access, within mission statements, with no reference specific to ethnicity or race. Forty-six out of 70 (65%) of the mission statements referred to culture as a term reflective of their campus environment. Thirty colleges directly referred to access, and 12 colleges referenced both access and culture. Results of this study found that no mission statement mentioned HSI designation, Hispanics, or Latina/os. The study suggests that the lack of reference to Latina/o or Hispanic students in mission statements raises the question of institutional commitment and responsibility for the success of Hispanic/Latina/o students.

In an exploratory analysis of HSI mission statements, Contreras, Malcolm, & Bensimon (2008) argue that lack of transparency as being a HSI has yet to create a sense of collective

responsibility and accountability among institutional leaders and faculty members for producing equitable educational outcomes for Latino students (Contreras, Malcolm, & Bensimon, 2008). Similarly, Garcia & Otgonjargal (2015) conducted 60-90-minute in-depth interviews with selected administrators, faculty members, and student affair staff as well as focus groups with students at a four-year HSI. The purpose of this study was to understand how participants determine what it means to serve Latina/o students. Participants were asked to describe how they see themselves represented in the organization and to illustrate ways the organization is reflective of a Latina/o-serving mission. Data analysis revealed two important themes about serving diverse students at an HSI: (1) the historical presence of culturally relevant curricula and programs and (2) the embedding of culturally relevant curricula and programs within the structures of the institution. Results suggested that institutions must find ways to serve Latina/o students through curricula and programs that place their needs at the center. Embedding these programs into structures of the institution can have an effect on the institutions' ability to serve Latina/o students.

Furthermore, in a study to examine the meaning of Latina/o-serving through Whetten's organizational identity framework, Garcia (2016) conducted in-depth interviews with administrators, faculty and staff, and focus groups with students at a four-year HSI. Participants were asked to respond to the questions of "Who are you as an organization?" and "What does it mean to be Latina/o-serving?" Participants were also asked to describe the ways in which they see their culture reflected in the institution, in addition to, questions about curricula, pedagogy, and support services. Results indicated no consensus among members about the meaning of Latina/o-serving. However, members attached meaning to this identity as it pertains to values and processes in efforts to sustain and enhance the culture and education of Latina/o students.

Narratives were collected through observations, historical documents and grant applications. Access to diverse populations as a core value was identified, however, no mention of being Latina/o-serving was in the mission statement. The study posits that HSIs have more than one identity, with the institutional context and organizational members contributing to the construction of a Latina/o-serving identity.

### *Equity*

Witham, Malcom-Piqueux, Dowd, & Bensimon (2015) stressed that disparities in educational outcomes are a cumulative result of disadvantages and barriers that low-income students and students of color face throughout their lives. Moreover, racial inequities in education continue to exist through segregation in schools, inequitable funding of schools in poor neighborhoods, gaps in academic achievement, and the further entrenchment of a Eurocentric curriculum (Zamudio, et al., 2011). Coates (2014) argued that “while inequities that stratify educational opportunity in the United States by race and class are often connected, inequities are not the same. Racial inequality is the cumulative effect of 250 years of slavery, 90 years of Jim Crow, and 60 years of separate but equal” (Witham, et al., 2015, p.14).

Education has long been seen as an essential foundation of democracy. From 1965 to 1995, equal opportunity programs, and later, affirmative action programs, represented hope and promise to the nation’s disenfranchised. (Allen, Teranishi, Dinwiddie, & Gonzalez, 2000). Under President Johnson, affirmative action officially became part of the nation’s consensus to achieve racial social justice (Moore & Renner, 2004). While Executive Order 11246 was based on the compelling justification of establishing equality and remedying the effects of past discrimination (Moore & Renner, 2004), Allen, et al., (2000) assert that affirmation action was

an attempt to address the twin heritages of slavery and “Jim Crowism,” or historic and contemporary racial oppression.

Felix, Bensimon, Hanson, Gray, & Klingsmith (2015), described the efforts to make equity for racial and ethnic groups in community colleges a goal that contributes to the national agenda through equity-minded change. The Center for Urban Education (CUE) developed the Equity Scorecard that utilizes participatory action research (PAR) as the underpinning of the Equity Scorecard’s theory of change. Equity-mindedness requires practitioners’ acceptance that higher education, as an institution, is racialized and that structural racism is produced by everyday practices that are grounded on norms and rules that privilege Whites (Felix, et al., 2015).

### **Critical Race Theory in Education**

To provide context behind the rationale of addressing equity at Paramount Community College (PCC), Critical Race Theory (CRT) was used as the theoretical framework to examine historical and existing institutional racism and educational inequality in higher education. Critical race theorists understand the process of racialization (i.e., creating social divisions based on race) as a historical one (Zamudio, Russell, Rios, & Bridgeman, 2011); which draws from and extends to a broad literature base of critical theory in law, sociology, history, ethnic studies and women’s studies (Yosso, 2005).

In 1994, the legal scholarship movement of CRT was introduced in education (Ladson-Billings, 2005). In 1995, Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate called for a new movement in education in CRT. These actions were rooted in frustrations of the under-theorized utilization of race in educational scholarship (Zamudio, et al., 2011). In a brief synopsis of CRT, Ladson-Billings (1998) stresses the importance of understanding the citizen in a democracy, and its

relationship to education. She states, “Adopting and adapting CRT as a framework for educational equity means that we have to expose racism in education and propose radical solutions for addressing it. We will have to take bold and sometimes unpopular positions” (p. 10). Huber (2010) adds that one of the most powerful elements of CRT in education is the ability to examine how multiple forms of oppression manifest in the educational experiences of People of Color. Since being applied to education, CRT has been used as a tool to analyze and critique educational research and practice for making sense of persistent racial inequities in U.S. schools (Ladson-Billings, 2005). Furthermore, Delgado & Stefancic (2001) assert that CRT is used to understand issues of school discipline and hierarchy, tracking, controversies over curriculum and history, IQ and achievement testing.

Several studies (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Gaxiola Serrano, 2017; Yosso & Solórzano, 2006) suggest that educational inequality for Latina/o students does not begin in higher education; inequities are present throughout the educational pipeline. Latina/o students experience institutionalized racism in their elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education, with fewer students progressing from one step to the next (Gaxiola Serrano, 2017). To better understand racial inequality, Zamudio, et al. (2011), described CRT as a practice of interrogating or questioning the ideologies, narratives, institutions, and structures of society through a critical conceptual lens.

In a qualitative study on the racialized experiences of Latina/o graduate students, Gaxiola Serrano (2017) incorporated CRT in education as a method of sharing the lived experiences and perspectives of historically marginalized groups in the form of narratives and short vignettes (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). Students reflected on their K-12 experiences and pathways to community college. Integrating counter-stories helped challenge dominant narratives by

highlighting the racialized experiences of students of color, including barriers and success, in order to portray a more accurate understanding of Latina/o students (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Findings indicated that racism in K-12, in the forms of tracking, limited college information, and low expectations from academic personnel had a direct impact on the postsecondary experiences and opportunities available for Latina/o students (Gaxiola Serrano, 2017).

Delgado Bernal (2002) acknowledged students of color as holders and creators of knowledge whose histories, experiences, cultures, and languages were devalued, misinterpreted, or omitted within formal educational settings. In this study, Bernal (2002) compared and contrasted experiences of Chicana/Chicano students through a Eurocentric and a critical-raced gendered epistemological perspective. By analyzing student voices “counter-stories,” Delgado Bernal (2002) found that students illustrated vastly different worldviews about what counted as “valid knowledge.” Students saw their “home knowledge” – their bilingualism, biculturalism, and commitment to communities as tools that helped them navigate through the educational obstacles they faced. They learned to develop tools and strategies for daily survival in an educational system that often excluded and silenced them. These findings demonstrated that each perspective held different views of what counted as knowledge, specifically regarding language, culture, and commitment to communities.

In another study, Huber (2010), highlighted critical race *testimonios* through racist nativism and Latina/o critical race theoretical (LatCrit) lens. *Testimonio* is a research strategy that originated in Latin American literature as a method to document the experiences of oppressed people during times of war (Booker, 2002). LatCrit, is an extension of CRT in education, used to reveal ways Latina/os experience race, class, gender, sexuality, immigration status, language, ethnicity, and culture. In this study, ten undocumented Chicana college

students told their stories '*testimonios*' on how they experienced multiple forms of oppression in education. Students were found to experience various forms of racist nativism, intersected with class and gender throughout their education. Findings suggested that racist beliefs were often connected to undocumented immigrants, who were perceived to be a threat to the well-being of the U.S. and its 'native' citizens. Furthermore, findings on internalized racist nativism indicated the power of racist nativist ideologies, rooted in white supremacy, were transmitted and accepted by Latina/o youth, often at as young as elementary school-age, before becoming aware of a racial group identity (Huber, 2010).

The one problem with *testimonios* is that White people are not interested in hearing them. People of color can and are willing to share their stories '*testimonios*,' but White people get defensive, which then reinforces racism. Robin DiAngelo (2011) described these behaviors as White fragility.

According to DiAngelo (2011), White fragility is the state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include an outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium. DiAngelo (2018) described the term "white fragility" as a white phenomenon that is more than defensiveness or whining. The term may be conceptualized as the sociology of dominance: an outcome of white people's socialization into white supremacy and a means to protect, maintain, and reproduce white supremacy (p. 113).

In an analysis of CRT in education, Hiraldo (2010) described how the five tenets of CRT: counter-storytelling, the permanence of racism, Whiteness as property, interest convergence, and the critique of liberalism (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1998) were used in the



context of diversity and inclusivity in higher education. Counter-stories can assist in analyzing the climate of the college campus through opportunities that provide faculty, staff, and students of color a voice to tell their narratives involving marginalized experiences. In higher education, the permanence of racism may be analyzed through the structural impact. When higher education ignores the existence of systemic racism, diversity action plans become ineffective (Iverson, 2007).

The third tenet is Whiteness as property. Whiteness is considered the right of possession, the right of use and enjoyment, the right to disposition, and the right of exclusion (Decuir & Dixon, 2004; Hiraldo, 2010; Ladson-Billings G., 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). In higher education, the division between student affairs and academic affairs maintains the notion of race as property rights (Patton, McEwen, Rendon, & Howard-Hamilton, 2007); and evidenced by research on how the majority of African Americans who earn their Ph.D. in education earn them in education administration, thus, continuing as practitioners who rarely become faculty (Ladson-Billings, 1998). As a result, the majority of African Americans do not become part of the driving force in higher education: faculty. Faculty are seen as owners of the curriculum. Therefore, designing courses according to their own understanding of their philosophy of knowledge, which can be a barrier for students of color (Patton, et al., 2007).

The fourth tenet of CRT is interest convergence. Interest convergence stemmed from the landmark case of *Brown vs. Board of Education*, which was intended to challenge discrimination and racial equality (Zamudio, et al., 2011). Decuir & Dixon (2004) argued that early civil rights legislation provided only basic rights to African Americans, right that had been enjoyed by White individuals. Ladson-Billings (1998), further argued that White individuals benefit from a structure that was initially implemented to offer equal opportunity to people of color.

Affirmative action and diversity initiatives in higher education are examples of interest convergence (Hirald, 2010). The last tenet, a critique of liberalism stems from the ideas of colorblindness, the neutrality of the law, and equal opportunity for all. In higher education, the lack of inclusivity in the academic curriculum supports the notion of colorblindness that works against dismantling social inequities (Decuir & Dixson, 2004). Institutions must recognize and work towards dismantling colorblind policies at their institutions (Iverson, 2007).

In another study, Solórzano (1998) identifies five tenets of CRT in relation to educational research: the first is the intercentricity of race and racism, with CRT in education starting with the premise that race and racism are endemic to and permanent in U.S. society (Bell, 1980; Crenshaw, 1993; Delgado, 1995; Yosso, 2005). The second is the challenge to the dominant ideology, wherein CRT challenges claims of objectivity, meritocracy, color blindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity, asserting that these claims camouflage the self-interest, power, and privilege of dominant groups (Bell, 1987; Calmore, 1992; Delgado, 2003). The third tenet is a commitment to social justice. CRTs social and racial justice research agenda exposes the “interest convergence” of civil rights gains, such as access to higher education and works to the elimination of racism, sexism, poverty and empowerment of People of Color and other subordinated groups (Bell, 1980; Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; Yosso, 2005). The fourth tenet frames the centrality of experiential knowledge. CRT recognizes the experiential knowledge of People of Color as legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination. CRT listens to the lived experiences of People of Color through counter-storytelling methods such as family histories, parables, testimonios, dichos (proverbs), and chronicles (Bell, 1987; Delgado, 1989, 1993; Solórzano & Yosso, 2005). The fifth tenet centers interdisciplinary approaches. CRT extends beyond disciplinary boundaries to analyze

race and racism without both historical and contemporary contexts, drawing on scholarship from ethnic studies, women's studies, sociology, history, law, psychology, and other fields (Delgado, 1984; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solórzano, 2009).

This study applies three tenets of critical race theory (CRT): (a) the permanence of racism with the premise that race and racism are endemic and permanent in U.S. society (Bell, 1980; Crenshaw, 1993; Delgado, 1995; Yosso, 2005), (b) Liberalism and challenging the dominant ideology within the traditional claims of the educational system and its institutions to objectivity, meritocracy, color and gender blindness, race and gender neutrality, and equal opportunity (Solórzano, 1998), and (c) interest convergence, developed by Derrick Bell, and its impact on race relations, civil rights laws and policies, and 'diversity' initiatives in American society; and contends that White elites tolerate racial diversity advances only if it benefits their own individual or group interests (Giles & Hughes, 2010). These CRT tenets, in absence of the interdisciplinary perspective and experiential knowledge tenets, present a unique approach to existing modes of scholarship in higher education because they explicitly focus on how the social construct of race shapes higher education structures, practices, and discourses from the perspectives of those injured by and fighting against institutional racism (Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solórzano, 2009). Furthermore, along with White Fragility (DiAngelo, 2011), these tenets guide the analysis of a specific institution of higher education in efforts to support Latina/o students.

### **Research Questions**

In order to better understand the perceptions of employees at Paramount Community College (PCC) in how they perceived their role and their efforts in supporting Latina/o student success, the following research questions guided this study:

Research Question 1: How do employees define how PCC is meeting the HSI mission of serving Latina/o students?

Research Question 2: How do employees define serving Latina/o students at PCC beyond enrollment?

Research Question 3: How do employees define equity at PCC?

### **Methods**

This study uses a case study approach and employed semi-structured interviews to examine how employees at PCC perceived their understanding and meaning of HSI designation, purpose in serving Latina/o students, and why this designation matters. In addition, this study explored how employees defined the meaning of equity at PCC. This section describes the methods of this study beginning with the research design, research setting, sampling, recruitment, and analysis.

#### **Research Design**

This qualitative study focused on the perceptions of administrators, exempt staff, faculty, and classified staff employees at Paramount Community College (PCC). Student and employee demographics were examined through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) database. The data were used to provide an overall portrait of the student and employee demographics at PCC. In addition, a historical inquiry revealed how similar the characteristics of PCC were to a predominately White institution (PWI) before the student demographic shift. For example, before PCC's formal HSI designation (1998-1999), 41.5% of enrolled students (n=11,000) were Latinas/os and 50% were White. From 2000-2009, the percentage of Latina/o student enrollment ranged between 38%-45%. In 2008-2009, student enrollment of Latina/o students (45.2%) were equal to their White peers (45.1%). By 2010-2011, Latina/o student

enrollment (49.8%) surpassed their White peers (40.9%). Although total student enrollment decreased in 2017-2018 (N=7626), Latina/o enrollment continued to grow while enrollment of White students decreased. As of this study, approximately 58.4% of Hispanic students are enrolled at PCC compared to their White peers at 30.8 %.

### **Setting**

Founded in the early 1900s, Paramount Community College (PCC) is one of the oldest community colleges in Washington State. Beginning in 2000, PCC received federal designation as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI). PCC has continued its federal designation through continuous efforts in successful grant applications by providing evidence of eligibility and the pursuit of educational attainment for Latina/o students. This includes being open and transparent to the community being served. PCC is one of the 215 public two-year Hispanic-serving institutions in the country; and one of four, two-year HSIs in Washington State.

As demonstrated in internal documentation, in 2017-18, Paramount Community College began internal conversations regarding the development of an institutional equity agenda. Efforts by the Vice President of Instruction and Student Services, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, and other administrators moved away from conversations to action steps in support of and commitment to equity. A core team of administrators, faculty, and staff, from various programs and departments were invited to participate as a member of PCC's Equity Core Team. The role of the Equity Core Team is to provide leadership in the development of an institutional equity policy, develop a shared understanding of key concepts and terminology, and engage stakeholders (internal and external) in conversations of the meaning of equity. Each team member was responsible for facilitating stakeholder conversations. Team members were recruited to participate based on their equity work across the institution and interests.

Discussions were held to expand the committee, which would include students. The overall goal was to develop an institutional board policy towards the pursuit of equity. This policy recommendation was planned to be presented to the Board of Trustees for adoption in fall 2019 by the Vice President of Instruction and Student Services. The intent of the policy was to commit the institution towards equity.

### **Sampling**

The qualitative interview sample was comprised of full-time employees at a specific two-year community college. Purposeful and convenient sampling was used. Purposeful sampling allowed the researcher to choose participants that are informative about the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007) and to identify participants from various areas of the college: instruction, student services, administrative services, and the satellite campus. Participants were selected on a first-come basis. Interviews were conducted from December 2018 through February 2019.

### **Recruitment**

Initial contact with potential interview participants was made electronically through email. The email message included an introduction of the researcher, the purpose of the study and data collection logistics (Appendix A). Due to the limitations of all-campus emails, the recruitment email was not sent in one distribution email to all employees. The recruitment email was sent to the vice-presidents of instruction and student services, administrative services, and campus deans for distribution to their employees. A separate email message went to the directors of Human Resources, Technology Services, and other departments that were missed. Interested participants who responded and indicated their willingness to participate. Detailed information regarding the study was described in the email (Appendix A). Sixty to 90-minute semi-structured individual interviews were conducted in person, in a private confidential setting

that was chosen by the participants. The study was reviewed by the University of Washington's (UW) Institution Review Board (IRB). Approval was not required for this case study. Informed consents were available if a participant requested one. In order to maintain confidentiality, participants were assigned a pseudonym.

Interviews addressed the research interview questions and provided baseline data on individual perceptions of an HSI, how they perceived their role and their efforts in supporting Latina/o student success. To protect the identities of participants, race/ethnicity, gender, age, and campus location were not identified in this study. The following demographic variables were collected: years of employment at college and classification of employment. Interview responses were collected through audio recordings. Recordings were transcribed initially by two transcription services, Rev, and NVIVO. Reliability and accuracy of transcription was a factor in determining a transcription service. After the first four transcriptions were reviewed, the remaining interviews were transcribed using Rev. To address the validity and trustworthiness of the research, member-checking was used as the method of verification. All participants were provided with their audio transcripts and given the opportunity to edit their responses. According to Creswell (1998), this approach involves taking data, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions back to the participants so that they can judge the accuracy and credibility of the account (Creswell, 1998); and to ensure that the researcher is representing them and their ideas accurately (Glesne, 2006).

The aim of this study was to explore the role of a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and how an HSI was serving Latina/o students, as well as, to create an awareness of the purpose and meaning of an HSI. Results of this study may add to the growing body of knowledge related to HSIs on how one college identifies itself as an HSI and meeting the promise of serving Latina/o

students. Additionally, this study collected employee perceptions of their understanding of equity and how equity was addressed to support Latina/o students at a Hispanic-Serving Institution.

To ensure confidentiality of participants, all identifying information (name, phone number and email addresses) was filed in a secure location. Files were accessed only by the researcher and kept in a password protected computer. Participants were given a pseudonym for confidentiality purposes used throughout the study. Pseudonyms were utilized in all written responses, data transcription, analysis, summaries, and the final reporting to protect participant identities.

### **Positionality**

My positionality as the researcher is critical to the findings and interpretation of this study. Merriam & Tisdell (2016) emphasized the assumption that power relations are everywhere, including in the research study itself. While all forms of qualitative research address issues such as building rapport with participants in qualitative data collection, in critical research, more attention is given to an examination of power relations in the research act itself. As the researcher, I am a Latina administrator who is currently employed at the institution of study. I identify myself as cis-gender Chicana and I have been employed at the institution for over 16 years. During this time at PCC, I have developed professional and personal relationships with employees across the institution. I am in a position of power and privilege, and I provide supervisory authority over some of the participants (n=3) in this study. I believe that my background, experience, and trust by participants did not impact the credibility and trustworthiness of this study.



## Participants

The sample size of the interview participants consisted of sixteen full-time employees (N=16) representing instruction, student services, administrative services, and a satellite campus. The sample represented full-time faculty, classified and exempt staff, and administration. Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant. The sample population characteristics included employment classification and years of employment, as shown in Table 1. For this study, the term staff represents the combination of classified, exempt and administration personnel. Ethnicity, gender, and campus location were excluded from the sample due to the small sample size and confidentiality. Of the total sample, 44 percent identified themselves as faculty and 56% identified as staff. Fifty percent of the participants have been employed at the college for more than ten years, and the remaining 50% were employed at least two years, but no more than ten years.

Table 1

### *Sample Participant Characteristics*

<b>Interview Participant</b>	<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Self-Identified Employment Classification</b>	<b>Years of Employment</b>
1	Chuck	Faculty	More than 10 years
2	Sandra	Faculty	2-5 years
3	Mary	Staff	2-5 years
4	Terri	Staff	5-10 years
5	Edward	Staff	5-10 years
6	Jennifer	Faculty	More than 10 years
7	Lori	Staff	5 -10 years

8	John	Staff	2-5 years
9	Eve	Staff	2-5 years
10	Alice	Staff	More than 10 years
11	Cynthia	Staff	More than 10 years
12	Gina	Faculty	2-5 years
13	Hank	Staff	More than 10 years
14	Christine	Faculty	More than 10 years
15	Larry	Faculty	More than 10 years
16	Jill	Faculty	2-5 years

### Coding and Analysis

Manual coding was used as the process to identify themes in this study. Coding is described in a variety of ways. Charmaz (2001) described coding as the “critical link” between data collection and their explanation of meaning (as cited in Saldana, 2016). Glesne (2006) described coding as a process of sorting and defining and sorting scraps of collected data (i.e., observation notes, interview transcripts, memos, documents, and notes from relevant literature) that apply to the research purpose, which leads towards the development of an organizational framework. Saldana (2016) further emphasized the process of coding as just “one way of analyzing qualitative data, not the way” (p. 3).

Merriam & Tisdell (2016), described analysis as the process of making sense out of data that involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read. In starting this process, a minimum of three cycles of manual coding was conducted. Open coding and axial coding were used on member-checked

transcriptions. Codes were aligned that were relevant to the research questions. The process of open coding is a way to capture data using a word or a phrase that seems to be responsive to the research question (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Further highlighting the process, Merriam & Tisdell emphasized how this particular process will “most likely repeat the exact word or phrase used by the participants” (p. 208).

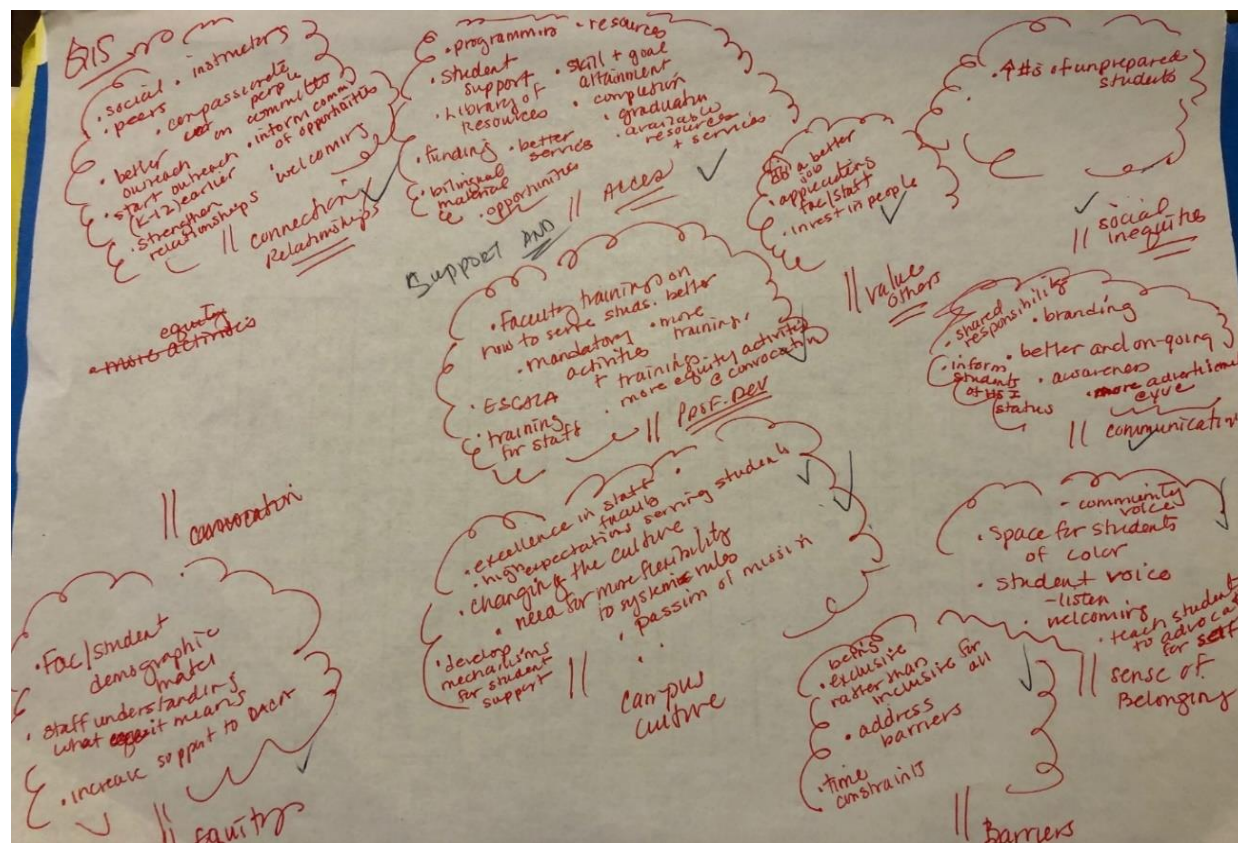
The first step in the process involved reading each transcript and manually coding directly onto the transcript. Using a colored highlighter, words and phrases were highlighted to develop codes using similar colors. During this step, notes were made in the margins identifying assumptions, questions, and highlighting relevant quotes that were responsive to the questions. The second cycle of coding consisted of organizing the data using the first set of codes and developing themes onto an excel spreadsheet. The excel spreadsheet was organized by each interview question and by participants’ pseudonyms. Next, codes were highlighted, and themes began to develop. This process allowed the researcher to organize data and double check for accurate coding. In addition, this coding cycle allowed the researcher to verify the interpretation and meaning of a word or phrase by reviewing the original transcription recordings as needed. It was critical to interpret the word or phrase accurately. In the third and final cycle of coding, Merriam & Tisdell’s (2016) concept of visualizing codes as “trees” guided this cycle. During this process, as trees were formed (codes of data), these trees multiplied and became a “forest.” Codes of trees and forest were captured into potential themes, as shown in Figure 1. This step assisted in identifying and re-organizing codes and themes. In addition, these steps allowed me time to reflect on personal biases and positionality by asking myself the following questions outlined by Merriam & Tisdell (2016), “What might you be projecting on the data based on your

beliefs and life experience?," "How does your "positionality" or "social location" affect what you see?," and "How are you guarding against your biases?"

Because analysis is a process, themes and subthemes continued to narrow during the process of writing. Frequency, relationship, and commonality of words and phrases determined emerging themes. Final themes were then established and analyzed in correlation with the research questions (Appendix B).

Figure 1

Example of tree concept in developing codes



## Observations

Observations provide additional information as evidence about the topic being studied (Yin, 2018). According to Merriam & Tisdell (2016), observations are common in qualitative research, such as case studies, ethnographies, and qualitative action research studies. For this study, I participated in and observed campus meetings, discussions, and training activities related to Paramount Community College's equity efforts. As demonstrated in Table 2, direct and participant observations hours related equity efforts are described and documented through meetings, discussions, note-taking, and training over 24 months.

Table 2

### *Types and Hours Direct Observations*

Type of Observation	Number	Hours
E -Training	3	17
Implicit Bias Training	2	8
Administrative Team Meetings	22	44
Community College Consortium Equity Team Meetings	8	11.5
Internal Equity Team Meetings	2	3
Total	37*	83.5

## Findings and Interpretations

What follows is my interpretation of the findings based on an in-depth thematic analysis.

Four primary themes emerged from participant interviews: knowledge and awareness of HSIs, serving and supporting students, access and opportunities, and sense of community.

**Knowledge and Awareness of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs).**

In the primary theme, knowledge and awareness of HSIs, participants' responses indicated various levels of knowledge and awareness of PCCs identity as an HSI. The following subthemes emerged from the analysis: (a) equality and equity and (b) the mission of HSIs.

All participants were provided with the HSI federal definition, as part of the interview process. Some participants responded in agreement with the definition. Chuck, a faculty member who has been employed at PCC for over ten years, replied:

We fit that definition. We have a high percentage of Hispanic or Latinos. Not quite sure on the term if Hispanic or Latino, or Latin or whatever. I know that we have a high percentage of those students and that qualifies us for, I guess, department of education grants. So, I realize that we are clearly in that definition.

Although Chuck agreed with the definition, another participant indicated that after five years working at PCC, he was not aware of the designation until he was interviewed as part of this study. Unlike Chuck, John a staff member who has been employed for five years, replied, "I mean, that's a big umbrella. I don't even really know how to answer that."

Findings revealed that most participants were familiar with grants, in general terms of grant requirements and accountability; in addition to funding that supports the institution. Several participants revealed that additional grant funds provided opportunities and access to resources, education, reduces barriers and builds structural systems to support students. One participant, Larry, a faculty member, identified his awareness of the HSI designation as a source for additional funds:

The only experience that I have is there are monies we can apply for in terms of grants. We've also been able to tap in some support because we've been a Hispanic-Serving

Institution. Other than the name itself, I think, I don't see the effects of it in the classroom. So my perception is that I know that we are a Hispanic-Serving Institution and the only thing that seems like it does for us is that it seems to open doors for us to apply for grants, but I don't know what it means for our day to day operation. I have gone to some of the conferences and it seems that we are trying to implement some of the initiatives, but it doesn't seem that we are trying to sustain them. Most of the time I don't see that we are an HSI.

Unlike Larry and Chuck, whose understanding is focused on the funding opportunities and had little awareness of the meaning of an HSI, Christine reflected on her knowledge and awareness of HSIs:

I think that recognition comes with the idea that if students of color and Latinx students aren't performing as well on the traditional indicators as White students, then what do we get nationally? Then what do we do as an institution to increase those numbers to ensure them that Latinx students are graduating, and perhaps transferring, enrolling into other institutions for four-year universities and colleges at similar rates? I guess that gives you the whole idea of equity. I think it's implicit in HSIs.

Based on the participant responses, very few participants were unaware or understood the meaning of an HSI designation and why it matters – other than meeting the eligibility to access additional funds.

### *Equality and Equity*

The subtheme, equality and equity, represents responses from participants regarding their perception of what equity means to them and what it means to support students, staff, and faculty at PCC, as an HSI. Findings revealed that many participants emphasized 'equality' as their

perception of what equity means and should look like at PCC. Several participants indicated equal treatment for all, whether they were a student, staff, or faculty member. More specifically, equity meant equal opportunities, equal training, equal access to resources and accommodations, and equal support for all. Some participants indicated that equity meant equal opportunity for men and women regardless of their ethnicity, while other participants indicated equity meant no hierarchical ranking of employee classifications, and equality for an individual. The following quotes are examples of participants whose responses were framed from an equality lens.

Cynthia, a staff member stressed how she treats everybody the same and how she feels the inequities on campus:

I do my job, and I treat everybody the same way. And whether somebody comes in with a tattoo of a little teardrop on their face, or they tell me that they're recovering, or they're trying to go through a program to recover, or they're a first-generation Hispanic, or Native American, they ultimately all want the same thing. They all want to be in school for a reason. We should be treated the same. We should have the same representation. I, or my colleagues should not feel like we're second-class citizens. There's nothing equitable in that.

While Cynthia started describing the inequities on campus, her responses clearly identified equal treatment and equality not equity. On the other hand, John, a staff member who has been employed at PCC for over two years, reported that he doesn't see color. He described his job as supporting everyone on campus, "Everything we touch is being used by White, Latino, Native American. It's touched by everybody, so for us, we definitely have to do what's right for the students regardless of who they are or what their background is." Chuck, a faculty member stated how he sees equity in terms of faculty requirements of having the same job descriptions,



expertise, and the same opportunities for training. “All other factors being the same as far as qualifications to do the job should be the same for all groups. I think it should be equal.”

Like Chuck, Sandra, a faculty member spoke about the story she heard from other female faculty regarding the history of PCC and inequitable pay among male and female faculty:

I know that here's' been some bad stuff happen at this institution in the past with regards to equity. A grievance was filed, and something was done about it. It was the unequal pay, women versus men. It should have never happened in the first place. They didn't receive any back pay for however many years it was.

Sandra continued to express her view on what equity meant to her. She shared her perception of equity; however, she framed her response as equality:

There's no consideration for anything within the person themselves other than they are a person deserving the same respect, opportunities, and access as anyone else. We also want those folks to be mindful that we want everybody to be treated with fairness and mutual respect.

Edward, a staff member, emphasized a similar framing of “equal” opportunity and treatment for all. He stated, “I think it means that we consider all of those things that may present barriers to learning and barriers to walking out of here with the same level of understanding as any other student that we are serving. He continued to express his concern with equity in terms of inclusion and exclusion of others, “I'm just concerned that we are being exclusive rather than inclusive for all populations to be able to take that same path.” Another participant spoke about equity, but her response clearly indicated she was referring to equality. Jill, faculty member reported:

To me, equity means that all offerings, whether its classes, whether its services, whether is time with instructors, is equally accessible to people, but that may not necessarily mean the same thing for everyone, that means something different for everyone. How do you create that accessibility for all of our students and all of their very, very diverse needs?

When I think about equity, it's for all of our students, serving all students. We have just an incredibly diverse, rich group of students. How do we see that, and I think we do, as rich, not as, this is an issue?

The following quotes are examples of participants whose responses focused on equal treatment:

Jennifer, a faculty member who has been employed at PCC for over ten years emphasized the inequities between instructional divisions and the ownership of curriculum and transferability of courses across the institution. Jennifer shared her concern on decisions made from one instructional division and the impact of those decisions on students, "I don't think equity exists when one part of the college has control of certain aspects, and the other part of the college does not; whether it be transfer classes or whatever." Cynthia, a staff member, expressed her thoughts about equity in terms of equal treatment regardless of who you are and what campus one attends or works at:

The rules and services are applied the same way to everybody and in the same manner, regardless of your background, your abilities, your ethnicity, your race, your religion. If person A on one campus has access to these services, they pay this amount, then the student on the other campus who pay the same amount of money should have the same amount of resources available to them. People don't stop to look at how it's getting done and what that impact is. They're burning people out. I understand, the work has to be

done, but if this model of advising is genuinely important, and it's good for students, and it's an institutional mandate, then it needs to be supported. This is not adequate.

Cynthia described her frustration on workload concerns and the on-going inequities that continue to exist on campus. She expressed the lack of support for faculty and staff by the administration to support the new Guided Pathway model. Her responses also indicated the notion of equality rather than equity. Jennifer shared her experience and recognition of equity efforts at PCC that influenced her personal view of what equity means to her. She framed her response in the frame of equity:

My personal definition of equity has changed, which I think is really nice because it means as a college we have developed that description of what equity means from what it used to mean, which I am glad for. Not everybody gets the same, but we try to treat people, so they have equal opportunity to get where they want to go, which is a little bit different.

Another participant described her view on the importance of student and staff demographic match. She framed her response through an equity lens as she described equal representation.

Terri, a staff member who has been employed for at five years at PCC stated:

I would like to see the students' demographic match, at least, as closely as possible to what our staff is, so our students are seeing the same things. For example, our Native American students are such a small percentage of our population. I know we have the Yakama Reservation. It's definitely within our service district, and I don't feel like they're equally represented.

Likewise, Chuck, a faculty member who has been at PCC for over ten years, described his meaning of equity and what it looked like to him. He, along with other participants described the

ethnic-racial mix in terms of equality. Chuck stated, “Perhaps it could mean that our racial or ethnic mix of faculty mirrors the ethnic-racial mix of the students.”

Many participants underscored their perception of equity in terms of equal opportunity and equal treatment for all. Equality was shown to be the most prominent view based on participant interview responses. Participants’ responses suggested that participants did not have a common definition of equity nor did they have a common view on how equity supported students, staff, and faculty at PCC. Some participants expressed their perception of inequities as unfair treatment of others, unequal funding sources that excluded others, equal treatment, and the unfair advantage of those who can speak another language, more specifically, the Spanish language. Most revealing to the researcher were participants responses that indicated that inequities existed at PCC because of the institutions’ designation as an HSI. One participant indicated that not all students were represented due to the HSI designation, while another participant indicated the presence of inequitable support systems for students.

Some participant responses indicated that equity meant being inclusive, fair, and respectful of others. Few participants emphasized the importance of meeting students where they are at in efforts to support their needs, as well as providing services to everyone. Some participants’ responses indicated the need for others to recognize and understand that students entering the institution come with different life experiences and barriers; while others responded knowing that PCC serves diverse populations

Several participants believed equity should exist for both faculty and staff, while another participant addressed the inequities of advising loads and workloads for both faculty and staff. The following quotes are examples of participants whose responses reflected inequities among faculty and staff at PCC. Mary, a staff member who has been employed at PCC for more than

two years, shared that many employees are current students who enroll in classes at PCC. She stated, “Equity is remembering that the staff is just as important as the student. I often hear that ‘well, you’re staff.’ A lot of our staff, including yourself, become students, so we got to think about that.” Larry, shared his perspective about the inequities he has experienced at PCC:

Data has shown us that there are definitely some inequities, but the data does not lead to correcting these inequities. For example, we all know that Latino students fall behind White students, and we are trying to address some of the short comings for Latino students, but the results are too slow. Similarly, it is not a secret that we have very little faculty of color, and the perception is we are doing things to help, but the results are not there to justify our actions of trying to hire and keep faculty of color.

Further findings revealed that several participants described equity as a broad term and applicable to lots of different things but did not further elaborate until asked. One participant described how equity was a way to measure ones' effort, value, and worth; while other participants' responses ranged from fairness and workload issues to creating structures to support equitable student outcomes. Some participants indicated that fairness should be in the areas of curriculum, grading, and working with peers. One participant stated, “To me equity means being fair about what one has and how to distribute resources and wealth,” while several participants indicated the need for the institution to develop new hiring practices across the board. Several participants provided examples of what new hiring practices should include: (a) the need for faculty and staff to match the student demographics and the communities it serves, (b) hiring a more diverse staff, and (c) developing new hiring practices with new processes and new interview questions. Christine shared her perspective on how students needed to see a teacher that looks like them or at least not the dominant culture that exists in higher education:

I think in teaching, the faculty need to look like them, and if not like them, at least not like the dominant culture at this point. White students need to be able to see Black and Brown women teaching in all of these different courses. Because that also helps to dispel stereotypes. But even for students of color, seeing somebody that looks like them or has similar stories.

Similar to Christine's response, Gina, emphasized the importance of student learning from faculty who look like them and who bring different experiences to the classroom:

If you have a campus that is all Caucasian instructors, people may not relate to every instructor that way. So, I think we need to have people that look like other people and people that bring different experiences and education to the school so that the students get a variety of different experiences.

Christine further explained that if everyone were treated equitably and were provided with equitable opportunities, the data would look different with smaller disparities between Whites and minoritized groups, gender, social status, and positions in society:

When we look at things like education or income or business ownership, to live in a community or a society that is equitable, and assuming that there's more or less equal effort put into being "successful," you would expect to see similar percentages of white, black, brown, man, women, in the best levels, status or positions in the society. The fact that we don't see comparable numbers, in fact, we see a big skew and bias in who is represented in the more coveted positions and who is over-represented in the less coveted positions, that's definitely not equitable. In addition, some people may be like, well, I'm not a social worker, or I'm not a counselor, but this isn't about being a counselor, or social

worker, this is about being an effective teacher. If you're going to teach, students aren't robots. So, you have to meet them where they are at.

Christine described the notion that if society were equitable for all, then the data would reflect it. Another participant, Gina, reported that equity and equality were the same. She described the importance of culture and feeling welcomed:

I think equity and equality kind of go hand in hand. And for me, I feel like equity and equality means that there's a place for everybody. And everybody should feel welcomed, and that we should cater to everybody's culture and needs. I think the things of what we already do is the "First in the Family," and continue to help people get that step up that need that step up. Maybe its people that are prone to poverty and help them understand that there are other avenues to get them to where they want their dreams and success to be.

Jill further explained the need for PCC to be creative with the existing limited resources in order to serve students and their needs. She stated, "We can't do everything with the limited resources that we have, so how can we creatively use our resources to serve all the different students and all the different needs, in all different ways that they have needs." Eve, a staff member explained that everyone could not be equal, but it was important to appreciate differences in others and work as a team to help students achieve their goals:

I don't think we can all be equal, but I think we can all appreciate that we're of different backgrounds, different likes, dislikes, strengths, weaknesses, but we're overall a team as employees of PCC. Then we're also here helping the student gain their dream, their goal and in that, we should be reflective of all being together in one community, whether it's

as a college, employees, and students, but then also as part of a community and part of a greater goal.

Lastly, some participants indicated that cultural understanding and increasing intercultural competence was what equity should look like to support students at PCC; however, participants did not provide examples or suggestions.

As a result of these findings, very few participants had a critical awareness of what equity means. Based on participants' interview responses, most participants confused equality with equity. Terms were used interchangeably and used incorrectly. Equity was defined by the participants as equal treatment, equal opportunities to services, pay, responsibility, support, resources, access, accommodations; and equal representation of students, faculty, and staff.

### *The Mission of HSIs*

In the second subtheme, the mission of HSIs, findings suggested that employees at PCC, lack awareness of the mission of HSIs. Of those participants who responded, two participants did not know how the college was meeting the mission of an HSI nor were they familiar with how an HSI is measured. The following quotes are examples of participant responses regarding how they perceived PCC was meeting the mission of an HSI. Chuck, expressed his unawareness and questioned how HSIs were measured, "I don't know how good of a job we are doing."

Larry, stated that he was unsure and didn't know if he knew the mission of an HSI:

The only mission I remember, probably ten years ago when I first got it, I think I probably had a better idea. But now that it's been several years, it's kind of like back to the same old operations. So, I really don't see the practical piece. I really don't remember what the Hispanic-Serving Institution mission is. It seems like if we're truly saying that we're a Hispanic-Serving Institution, it seems like our Latino students should



be aware that they're specifically targeted. I don't know if that's true. I also feel that our community is not aware that we are an HSI or what that means in terms of how this might benefit the community. So, we should advertise as such. Our students should know that as an HSI campus, we are here to help our Latino students in any way we can. Latino students should be proud to come to an HSI campus. And faculty should know what this means, and they should embrace it, but most of our faculty ignore it on purpose and see it as a benefit only to our Latino students, which is seen as unfair.

Similarly, Gina, was unaware of the meaning of an HSI nor the mission in serving Latina/o students. She stated, "I guess I don't know what the definition of HSI would be. But for me, I think that just continuing to be open to Hispanic learning and cultures that come into PCC." Gina's interview response exposed her lack of sufficient knowledge and understanding of the purpose and meaning of HSIs, given that the HSI federal definition was provided to her during the interview process. Unlike, Gina, Jennifer, a faculty member, described how PCC did a good job in awareness and provided flexibility to support students, "I think we do a pretty good job, but I think we could do better. There's a lot of awareness and a lot of flexibility built in that help us advance the students."

The overall findings suggest that most employees were unaware of Paramount Community College's HSI identity and mission; the HSI purpose and meaning, or why the HSI designation matters.

### **Serving and Supporting**

The second primary theme represented employees' perceptions of what it means to serve and support students, staff, and faculty; included are participant perceptions of serving and supporting through an equity lens.

*Serving*

Fifteen of the 16 participants indicated that serving meant helping others and serving students. Most participants indicated the importance of recognizing and addressing the needs of all students. Most of the participant responses varied from generalizing serving and supporting all students to distinctly addressing the Latina/o student body and the Latino community. Several participants indicated serving students meant helping, supporting, and guiding students towards success in reaching their educational goals. Availability and access to opportunities, funding, services and resources, utilizing people as resources, flexibility to be open to new ideas; and the ability to think differently about available resources were examples participants shared on how they perceived serving and support should look like at PCC.

Terri, a staff member, emphasized the importance of understanding individual needs, she stated, “We have to make sure that we understand what the needs are and address them in all the different areas that there are.” Four participants spoke directly about serving the Hispanic community and targeting Hispanic students, while another participant identified HSIs as serving Latino/Latinx students. The availability for DREAMERs to obtain scholarships and other opportunities that HSI grants contribute were examples indicated by participants in serving students. Jill, a faculty member, shared her view of serving all students, “I think the conversation is not just about the Hispanic-Serving institution but looking at all students. I think we really are trying to stay focused on the diversity of students we serve. I really appreciate that.” In Jill’s response, she described serving all students, yet she stressed the focus on diversity and ignored the HSI Latina/o serving purpose.

Unlike, Jill’s response, Terri a staff member, described how she tried to contribute to helping out a subset of the Hispanic population. She shared the following, “Serving to me is

offering whatever skill set I have to fulfill the need somewhere.” Hank noted the willingness to self-reflect and make the necessary changes to address student needs, “I think it's that idea of being able to, or willing to, look at what we do, and be critical of it, and be willing to change it so that it addresses the needs of this many students as possible.” Alice, a staff member, described serving as follows, “Doing what I can to help others, I don't look at it as being a maid or a slave.” Although Alice's response was general in regard to helping others, her response indicated a lack of sensitivity. Cynthia, a staff member, expressed her perception of serving through teaching:

Serving is not doing for them, because ultimately, I've done them a disservice. But if I can teach them, what it is they need to do, and how they need to do it, then I think for them, they're better off. They don't need somebody like me forever then.

Similarly, Jill, a faculty member described serving as teaching students to advocate for themselves, she responded with, “How do you help them learn to advocate for what they need and give them the tools to help change whatever it is that might need to be changed or to strengthen the things that are working well.”

#### *Serving through an equity lens*

Most participants' responses indicated that students needed the necessary tools, resources, and knowledge to achieve their goals. One participant emphasized the importance of challenging “them” in the same way that we do any other student in the group. The following quotes are examples of serving based on participant responses. Sandra, a faculty member stated, “Serving is helping and helping the students reach their goals, their academic goals, helping them understand the material.” Similarly, Gina, a faculty member, responded, “For me, serving my

students and helping them get to their dreams is what that means to me.” Christine, a faculty member shared the complexity of serving students:

It's understanding their particular needs. So that when we're reading their papers, and again, it's not a one size fits all. I still strain at some of the ideas of how students are writing, or how they're presenting themselves. Is this because they haven't read the material or they're struggling with the language, or they're struggling with concepts? These are the kinds of things that it means I think, having to serve students. It's as if there's not a little bit of anguish there when we're working with the students. Maybe we're not doing service to the community, in this case, to Latinos. I think for those that I know of who understand what it means to be an HSI, our aim is to serve not just the Latinx students, but all the students.

Larry, a faculty member, described serving as creating programs and how the college should purposely seek out ways to continue to focus strictly on Latinos, as an HSI:

When I read that we are a Hispanic-Serving Institution that should mean we are creating programs specifically for our Latino students. The ultimate goal here should be to find ways to increase completion for Latino students, to increase retention for Latino students, to increase grades for Latino students and do whatever it takes to reach these goals.

Unlike Larry, Edward, described serving by treating every student the same way and made the assumption that helping one group over another is an indication of lowering standards: Edward stated, “When we start lowering standards for one group or another, it creates a rift with everyone in that process, and we have to be really cognizant of that. I treat everybody the same as I possibly can.” Hank, on the other hand, stressed the fact that PCC had closed achievement gaps and described his knowledge of the institutional work on equity:

I think that the fact that we have closed gaps is hugely significant. I believe that we are in the process. We have an equity team, we're looking at an equity policy, and we have meaningful conversations. It's just being able to define it and to be able to understand equity in Hispanic-Serving, and being, again critical of our practices, and willing to reflect on what we do and see if it works better. That it's not about really focused so much just on Hispanics; serving Hispanics but serving the population that has had less opportunity and often face more barriers. I think it's low income, first generation.

Hank had been involved in the equity work at PCC; he believed his response was framed through an equity lens.

### *Support*

All participants shared an overwhelming response of support for students and their success. Several participants recognized that students enter with unequal opportunities and experiences. One participant emphasized treating students with compassion, understanding, and encouragement. Chuck, a faculty member who has been employed by the college for over ten years reported:

I treat students with compassion and understanding, and maybe that encourages them to stick with it. On the other hand, maybe they do get discouraged in my classes. If they are coming in without the opportunity, without the experience and the preparation, I think I may be providing more disappointment and discouragement to some of them than I do. I could help them understand this new culture of academia and a new set of expectations and what this looks like to show them a picture of the new reality they are entering.

Another participant indicated supporting students meant teaching students about the college culture, while another participant described teaching the misperceptions people have regarding

what a college student should look like. One participant indicated that they saw themselves as a human resource who had the knowledge of resources available to support students in and out of the classroom space. Eve, a staff member, shared how she supported students within her community. She described her role as a resource person by sharing her knowledge as a parent and employee of the college; and how she served and supported prospective students and their families by translating college information within her community. Eve stated, “It’s about being in a position, a resourceful position that can help your community basically; that’s it.” Christine, a faculty member, underscored the significance of supporting students through understanding:

Understand the reality of their lives, students are coming from families that may be disconnected because of a family member has been deported or the risk of being deported or is in hiding or is low-income, and sometimes they have to get pulled from school to help a parent or sibling out to work. And as much as we value you, you got to be at school every day, and then sometimes they can't because they have childcare issues. It was not accommodating or being impartial; it's acknowledging barriers to their education. It's not that we dummy down the material to the extent that that we're not fair to the other students because they think if we're doing this for this student, we're going to do it for another student. We have a lot of first-generation students that are White or have other cultural backgrounds who have particular needs. I think that what it means is that this isn't a one size fits all kind of institution, but rather than we as faculty, we do what we can to accommodate students with reason, to help them get the resources. Some people may not like, well, I'm not a social worker, or I'm not a counselor, but this isn't about being a counselor, or social worker, this is about being an effective teacher. If you're going to teach, students aren't robots. So, you have to meet them where they are at.

Christine described her awareness of barriers faced by students and had an understanding of truly serving and supporting students who enter PCC and the different barriers each student faced.

*Supporting through an equity lens*

Most participants indicated that supporting students was an important factor in what equity should look like to support students. Some participants emphasized that students should receive the support they need both in and out of the classroom setting. One participant indicated the importance of assessing individual student needs and providing support based on those identified needs. Lastly, two participants recommended that the college provide a better college website and be a "one-stop shop" as a means to support students. Terri, a staff member, stated, "I think we can do better to serve our students, and I believe we're on the right track, but we're now quite there. I think we're a work in progress, and I see things starting to happen, which is good."

Three of the 16 participants indicated that supporting staff was what equity should look like at PCC. One participant indicated the need to have a model in education to support staff such as having the ability to add classes if that support is needed and to look at providing different ways to offer instruction that's supported from an administrative standpoint in our search for equity without degrading Whites. Jennifer states, "Providing us with support in our search for equity. And that means that you cannot degrade the White because they're not Hispanic, and you can't degrade the Hispanic because they're not the White model." Two participants indicated that support meant the ability to advance in their jobs and the ability to acquire new skills. One participant indicated that assessing the needs of staff was an important equity factor, similar to students such as flexible schedules, flexible workspaces, and opportunities. Mary, a staff member, stressed the following, "Having more flexible schedules

and having different opportunities, not always having to sit down; for example, to work on your computer. Sometimes we just need a slightly different environment. The cubicle farm does not work.”

Similar to staff, almost half the participants indicated that supporting faculty needs was what equity should look like at PCC. One participant emphasized the need for faculty to be open to helping others, while another participant stressed a need for more time to support student engagement and to explore other opportunities. Christine, a faculty member, described her view of equity in supporting faculty, like herself:

I guess this is the same as the faculty, more diverse faculty. I think for faculty of color for women faculty, for people who are coming out of college, there needs to be a much better system of mentoring, providing guidance and support for our new faculty.

Whether they're young or whether they're old. There are a lot of things I think contribute to whether somebody decides to stay or to leave, and I can see why a lot of faculty would leave. I saw this as my way to give back to the community by serving the students, and it was really the students that helped.

Overall, findings revealed that most participants' responses indicated that serving and supporting all students was an important factor, with varying degrees of participant responses. Most participants shared an overwhelming response of support for students and their success. Some participants expressed their interest in providing opportunities to support and serve students, while few participants recognized that students enter with unequal opportunities and experiences. An additional finding revealed that several participants reported their need for opportunities for themselves, as employees, to support each other and their work; therefore, impacting student success. Both faculty and staff reported the need for institutional support in efforts to better



serve all students and their peers. Finally, most participants emphasized serving and supporting all students.

### **Access and Opportunities**

In the third primary theme, access and opportunities, findings revealed that access and opportunities were a major factor in what equity should look like to support students.

Professional development emerged as a subtheme and will be discussed.

Access was described by many participants as access to opportunities and guidance to help students succeed, as well as access to resources and materials for everyone. Some participants highlighted the importance of access to mental health and financial aid services, information, curriculum offerings, and other resources to support students' educational needs; including social connections with their peers. Additional findings revealed that many participants stressed equal access to the same services, resources, and educational opportunities. The following quote is an example of one participant whose response described access through an equality lens. Jill, a faculty member, stated, "They have the ability to access goods and services across the board, regardless of whether they're a day student, a night student, male, female, race, gender, ethnicity, any of that. Kids, or no kids, whatever."

When participants were asked how they saw themselves contributing to PCC as an HSI, several participants responded with similar responses - access to opportunities and the ability to share new and existing resources and services. Hank, a staff member, who had been involved in recent equity discussions, shared his concern with underserved populations' understanding and ability to access opportunities on campus:

How do you help the underserved populations be aware of an opportunity, and access it, and have those opportunities for success? And building a system that cultivates the

teaching and learning environment that makes students feel like they belong here like they're connected. It's often the students that have had the least opportunity and the least access to information and understanding what's going on that need the most help.

Access to general support services, materials, resources, and opportunities was emphasized as important factors to support faculty. Six of the 16 participants indicated access was an important factor for equity. Examples of opportunities included the ability to be open and think 'outside the box' to explore possibilities, available mentoring opportunities for faculty, and opportunities to be promoted within the institution. Christine, a faculty described her perspective of equitable access, "To me, equity means support, mentorship, opportunities for a clear, transparent process for tenure."

Additional findings revealed that access was an important factor in supporting staff as indicated by seven of the 16 participants. Five participants reported similar responses related to access to materials, resources and services, and mental health services. One participant indicated that access meant supporting staff in acquiring skills in their jobs. Alice, a staff member highlighted the importance of training and the limited opportunities available to staff:

I just think training is really important. And I believe that there should be an opportunity for an employee to be asked, "Are you interested? Or "What is your interest?" "What are you interested in learning? What are you interested in learning about?

Additionally, approximately half of the participants indicated that they were aware of the benefits the institution had with an HSI designation (n=7). Benefits included the opportunity for additional funding for the institution which provided access to additional resources and services, and the opportunity to improve facilities to support students.

## **Professional Development**

Most participants indicated the need for professional development and training opportunities as a factor in what equity should look like to support students, faculty, and staff. Seven of the 16 participants indicated that professional development was an important factor to support faculty, and five participants indicated professional development as a factor in supporting staff. Professional development opportunities ranged from training new employees to campus engagement activities such as book clubs. Some participants indicated the importance that all faculty had the same access to training. Several participants indicated their need to learn new tools to support students; examples included training on intercultural competence, cultural awareness, cultural understanding, student engagement, training for new hires, tools, and awareness training. However, participants did not identify specific types of tools needed.

Some participants indicated professional development opportunities were needed that directly impacted students; for example, inviting speakers to campus, co-curricular activities, and training geared towards students of color. One participant emphasized the lack of professional development opportunities available for some faculty as well as the lack of resources to support faculty at PCC. Larry, a long-time faculty member, described his experience and frustration regarding professional development opportunities at PCC. He stressed his concern about the lack of professional development opportunities and resources, and how they are connected to additional workload:

The only thing that stands out is the lack of resources and professional development for faculty. Many of us just assume there are no monies to seek out resources outside of the college. And if we receive monies, it always seems to be attached to more work - present

something to the board or other faculty. Why could it not be just for the individual faculty member with no strings attached?

The overall findings suggest that faculty and staff find access to professional development and training as important factors in what equity should look like for faculty and staff to support students at PCC.

### **Sense of Community**

A sense of community, the last primary theme, revealed that feeling valued, welcomed, supported, and included, were important factors for employees and students. In addition, culture, deficit-thinking, and societal failures emerged as subthemes.

Five participants indicated that providing a sense of community is what? Equity should look like to support students at PCC. Based on the interview responses, participants described equity at PCC as the following: (a) a place where people can feel a sense of community connection, (b) a place where people are appreciated and welcomed, (c) an inclusive environment, and (d) the ability to share experiences. Several participants described the importance of students feeling welcomed on campus and providing a place where students can feel valued as well as feeling a sense of belonging with their peers. Some participants highlighted the importance of an inclusive environment, which includes providing a welcoming environment for students, their families, and the community. Offering a variety of opportunities for social interactions such as cultural events, resources, programming, and student clubs were examples of activities suggested by participants as a means of belonging to a community.

Most participants spoke in general terms of students and community, while a few participants identified Latina/o students and the Latino community. One participant, Larry, discussed how students need to feel valued and supported at PCC, “Students need to feel their

valued, and students need to know that they have a strong voice on campus.” Unlike Larry, the following quote represents Eve’s perspective of a sense of community through an equality lens:

Provide an environment in which they feel that, not only feel, but see that we're here for them and to service them and we treat them as equals in a sense as we're all in one goal.

I think it's about us passing the word on and what we offer and making them comfortable.

It's not just for English speaking money people who attend college anymore; it's for all.

Additional findings revealed that several participants indicated their need, as staff, to feel welcomed and included, similar to students. Four of the 16 participants believed having a sense of community was a factor in supporting staff. Some participants responded with similar responses. Two participants indicated that connecting with peers and relating to people they see was an important factor. Several participants reported that a sense of belonging included being inclusive and establishing a welcoming environment for staff; while another participant indicated that a sense of community is what community colleges are meant to be – serving our community, both internally and externally. In addition, several participants described a sense of community as a way to support faculty, cultivate each other, and the willingness of faculty to listen to others.

Further findings indicated that a sense of community was an important factor for faculty. Few participants emphasized the need to feel valued at the institution, similar to previous participant responses. However, Christine, expressed her frustration with the institutions' lack of appreciation of people, she stated:

I think people would want to understand or just serve if they also are being valued. What is the message they're getting about how valued they are at this institution? Remember when we did True Colors? This is definitely a green (analytic, intuitive, visionary) institution; there's very little if any kind of blue (empathetic, compassionate, cooperative)

in terms of appreciation. It comes out maybe, once a year when we all have to go to convocation, and we get a free lunch or something.

True Colors is a personality assessment that was commonly used by the college in previous years. This methodology helps individuals understand how different personality types best interact with each other (The Four Colors Personalities, n.d.). Eve, a staff member described how faculty and staff help students achieve their goals and dreams while appreciating differences:

I don't think we can all be equal, but I think we can all appreciate that we're of different backgrounds, different likes, dislikes, strengths, weaknesses, but we're overall a team as employees of PCC. Then we're also here helping the student gain their dream, their goal and in that, we should be reflective of all being together in one community, whether it's as a college, employees, and students, but then also as part of a community and part of a greater goal.

### *Culture*

Several participants emphasized culture as being an important factor in their understanding and meaning of Hispanic or Latina/o serving. Some participants indicated their openness in learning about different cultures, while several participants expressed their own awareness of different cultures. Some participants indicated connections between culture and student demographics; while several participants' responses varied from understanding and teaching about differences to being unfamiliar with cultural differences. One participant emphasized the importance of learning different value systems as well as the importance of celebrating cultural differences. Gina, a faculty member reported, "Here at PCC, we do have a lot of Hispanic individuals here. I think that gives us our identity. Everybody brings something

to the table and being open to that, and understanding is a wonderful thing.” However, one participant expressed the importance of culture, noting that, it was exclusive to one ethnic group.

Cynthia, a staff member, shared her concern:

My reality of this is that the pendulum has swung to an extreme, that we've almost forgotten that there are other minority groups. You look at our Welcome Center; there's no equity there. There's no diversity in that Center. If you're not 100% Hispanic, Latino of some sort or they are half of some sort, but if I'm a Native American student, I can't identify with anybody else in there. If I'm some other race or another ethnicity, there's nobody in there that I can culturally identify with. Do I think the message is important, yes! But, not to the exclusion of everyone else that is not Hispanic.

Another participant emphasized the importance of using her voice to support students at PCC.

The following quote is an example of how Christine described her role in supporting students:

A critical voice in the institution is what I contribute to. College is supposed to be about really thinking and pushing ideas and articulating ideas and critiquing it. By my critiquing, I am hoping to help students learn how to critique. That it is okay to be critical and to say something is not working. If something is not fair or you think that it's not fair or it's not just, then critique it. What do we need to do to change it, or what do you think needs to be done?

In addition, several participants indicated the need for educational opportunities to learn about cultures, while a few participants expressed their expert knowledge of other cultures. Gina, a faculty member, described how she incorporates culture in the classroom, “I incorporate it in the classroom a lot of that, and we talk about why culture is important, and I think it's really important that all instructors do that.” While Gina supports students in the classroom, another

participant stressed the importance of embracing the culture and language without attempting to “Americanize them.” Additionally, participant responses indicated the need for the administration to be sensitive to cultural differences and to help faculty in different ways based on their individual and different skill sets. One of the participants stated:

I never really thought that much about it because the system works, and it's like, What's with the system? Well, the system works because it was designed for a white male. White middle-class male to be successful. And so, I didn't have to deal I didn't think about a lot of different things. About the perspective of how the different lenses that people would look at things through, or that are forced to look through because of their makeup of who they are, and the different types of discrimination they might face.

The overall findings suggest that most employees are unaware of the terms related to cultural identity, cultural differences, and cultural competence as they were used interchangeably. Furthermore, very few employees connected culture as part of PCCs identity as an HSI.

#### *Societal failures and Deficit-Thinking*

This section reflected responses by two participants who shared their critical voice. This was an important factor to consider since two of the 16 participants acknowledged historical failures of traditional institutions as well as deficit-thinking, both impacting students of color.

When asked how she contributed to PCC as an HSI, Christine stated:

It's not enough to say, ' Oh, yeah, we got poor people living here in the ghetto or the barrio, and that's it. It's what is the theories that we're posing? If we're only posing theories of cultural deficits, that's not sufficient. We also have to look at structural factors. Where are institutions failing? And then what policy recommendations then are we already proposing? How are we looking at policies because if something is failing,



ultimately because of the way it was designed, and we look at the policies? Previous policies that prevented say, students of color or women from entering the academy. If that's what created it, then this is what's going to uncreate it.

Christine continued as she stressed the failures of society and, she further emphasized the historical and institutional inequities that existed:

It's not about student failure but the concept of institutional failure or societal failure. Equitable is just recognizing where we are right now as a society, recognizing that society is flawed historically how it was structured. So, recognizing what can the institution do to assist the students who are not coming from perfect backgrounds. And then certainly, we find out about these discriminatory policies and laws in our history that purposely gave advantage to one sector of society over another, then we can see, it's definitely than not something that is culturally based, that is we just prefer that people of color just don't work as hard as White people or whatever.

### *Deficit Thinking*

Based on participant interviews, two of the 16 participants indicated the need to look at the systems and structures that are in place and determine if those systems are best serving the needs of students. Both participants emphasized the need to question whether the systems are based on values and strengths that students bring onto campuses rather than students conforming to the institution. The following quote was an example of Hanks' response to deficit-thinking:

Don't look at what's working or not working at the institution in terms of what's wrong or what's right with the student. But rather what's wrong or what's right with our institution. What are the things we could do to create those structures so that as many students as possible have access and the support they need?

Although participants' responses were limited it revealed most participants unawareness or connection to PCC, as an HSI and the historical inequities in higher education.

### **Discussion**

The findings revealed that faculty and staff defined the meaning of equity in a variety of different ways with little relationship to the overall institutional goal of developing and implementing an institutional equity agenda. Most participants were not aware of the institutions' equity agenda effort occurring at their institution and lacked a critical awareness of equity. Many participants revealed a lack of reflection on how the institution serves Latina/o students, their discomfort targeting resources and services based on race, and exhibited White fragility.

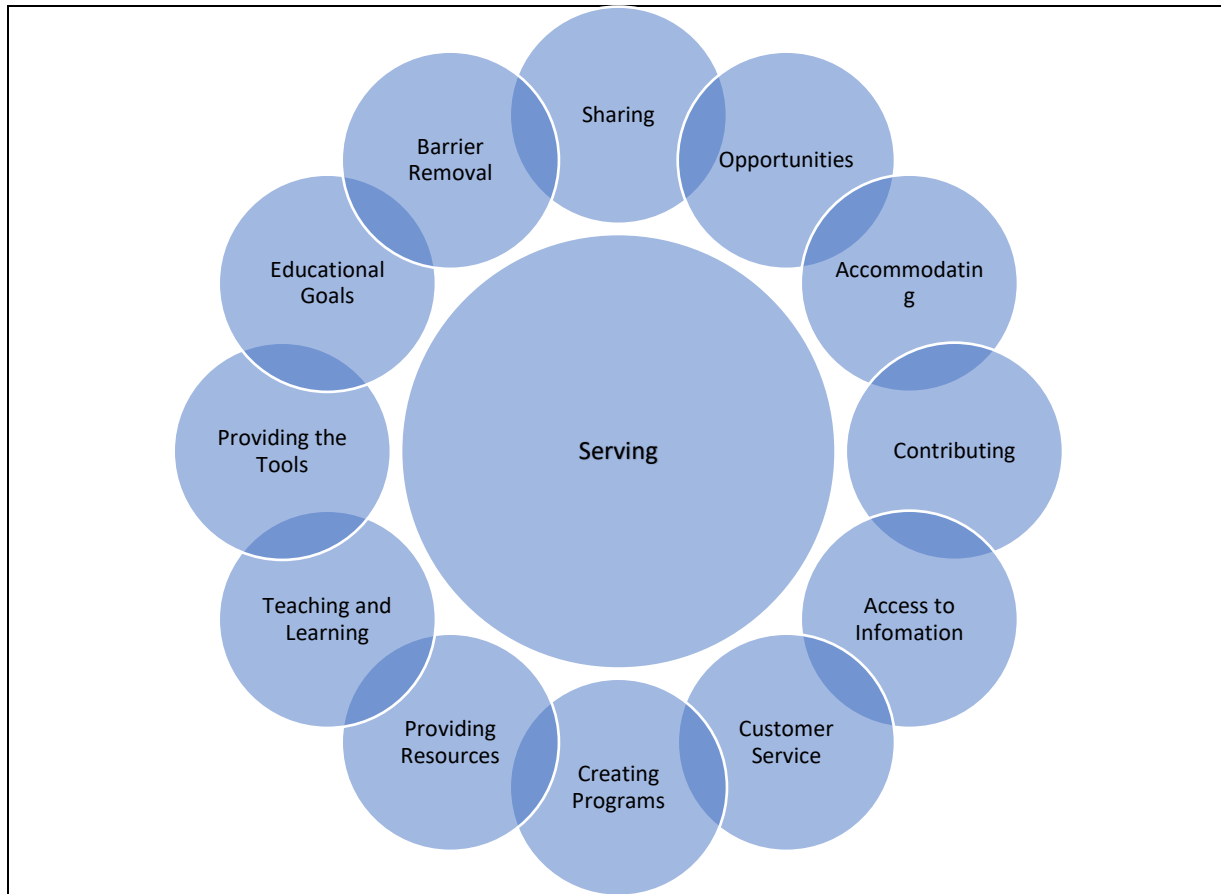
Participants' responses aligned with three CRT tenets. The first tenet, the permanence of racism, is the concept that race and racism is a social construct and prevalent everywhere. Participants' responses such as racial stereotyping of Latina/o students, racial jokes, the lack of reflection and the silence of PCC as an HSI in serving Latina/o students aligned with this tenet. The presence of white fragility emerged from participants during the interviews process and questioning related to equity and equality and their discomfort towards targeted resources and services in support of Latina/o students. The second CRT tenet, Liberalism, challenges the dominant ideology of objectivity, meritocracy, color blindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity. Participant responses were framed through colorblindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunities. Equal access, equal opportunity, equal pay, equal treatment, and "I don't see color" were examples of Liberalism expressed during the interviews. The third tenet, interest convergence, is centered on the notion that White individuals benefit from a structure that was initially developed to offer equal opportunity to people of color. Participant responses included

equity concerns focused primarily on workloads, mostly their own with little reflection on racial inequities as an HSI in serving Latina/o students.

Participants' responses varied in how they defined the term serving, as shown in Figure 2. Findings revealed that faculty and staff responses were overwhelming in support of serving and supporting all students. Participant responses were explicit in terms of serving all students.

Figure 2.

*What "Serving" means*



With PCC serving approximately 60% Latina/o students and designated Hispanic-Serving, very few participants responded to serving Latina/o students or made any reference to PCC as Hispanic Serving. This was not surprising since 20 percent of PCC employees are identified as

personnel of color (SBCTC, Personnel Demographics Dashboard, 2018). Participants responses either lacked the knowledge, ignored the institutions' cultural identity, or refused to see the systemic racial inequities in higher education; nor did they recognize how they perpetuate the oppressive ideology of racism and privilege in higher education, and thus, at PCC. This example demonstrated the premise that race and racism are endemic to and permanent in U.S. society (Bell, 1980; Crenshaw, 1989, 1993; Delgado, 1995; Solórzano, 1997; Yosso, 2005).

This study also revealed the CRT tenet of Liberalism. The critique of liberalism stems from the ideas of colorblindness, the neutrality of the law, and equal opportunity for all. In higher education, the lack of inclusivity in the academic curriculum supports the notion of colorblindness that works against dismantling social inequities (Decuir & Dixson, 2004). Additional findings revealed a lack of reflection by participants on how the institution serves Latina/o students.

Findings revealed that participants' responses focused primarily on equality and equal treatment. Treating everyone the same, equal pay, equal opportunities, and equal access were consistent messages among the majority of participants. Participant responses aligned with the CRT tenet, colorblindness, where people did not see color. The notion of colorblindness suggests that everybody enjoys equal treatment regard to race (Zamudio, et. al., 2011). While these findings revealed colorblindness among participants, additional findings reported a strong presence of white fragility among faculty and staff based on participant interviews and direct observations by the researcher.

Several participants shared recent stories and experiences that involved faculty, staff, and students at PCC but were not disclosed in this study. These incidents were not reported to college officials due to fear of retaliation by students and staff. Because a third party exposed

these experiences, these narratives were not verified. These narratives exposed not only white fragility but outright racist actions and behaviors by employees who engaged in racial jokes and racial stereotyping. These types of racial microaggressions are symptoms of institutional racism that have historically marginalized and excluded people of color. Racial microaggressions are everyday manifestations of racism that people of color encounter in their everyday lives (Huber & Solórzano, 2015). The permanence of racism is alive and well on the PCC campus, despite the current discourse towards the movement of equity and equitable outcomes for PCC students.

Additional findings reflected CRTs frame of interest convergence. For example, faculty and staff defined equity as workload issues, mostly their own. Several participants indicated that equity only happened in the classroom. Therefore, they did not see equity; while additional findings revealed that participants defined equity for students as inclusiveness, welcoming environment, and social connections. Very few participants acknowledged the equity efforts at PCC, nor did participants recognize the racial inequities or the history of oppression and racism in higher education; thus, made no reference to PCC as a Hispanic-Serving. Only a few participants responded to the inequities of higher education and the failures of society towards people of color. Despite the discourse around equity, the limited involvement across the institution, and pockets of strategic efforts; a key point to highlight is the observation of individuals' overuse of popular terms. Although some faculty and staff used the terms equity, diversity, inclusion, and equity-minded in conversations, at times, they were used interchangeably. Moreover, through direct observations and participant interviews, variations of the meaning and interpretation were not equivalent and had a greater impact on people of color who had and continue to have experience oppression. These findings are consistent with the literature. Davila & Aviles de Bradley (2010), described the various forms of oppression that

exist such as race, class, gender, etc.; while one form of oppression does not supersede to take precedence over another. Instead, these forms of oppression intersect to help frame and understand one's experience with Latinas/os experiencing various forms of oppression based on language and citizenship; factors that do not fit within the white social norms.

Additionally, when participants were asked about equity, some participants were either silent, avoided the direct question, did not have an "awareness of equity, and made no connection with PCCs identity as Hispanic Serving nor did participants make reference to the large percentage of Latina/o students PCC serves. These findings were consistent with the current literature, and the notion of silencing of voices, avoidance, and the mere existence of students of color (SOC), specifically Latina/o students. Malcom-Piqueux & Bensimon (2015), described many factors that contribute to institutions' silence about their HSI identity. Some may choose not to publicize the identity for fear of making students from other groups uncomfortable or discouraging them from enrolling. Another factor that may contribute to a weak HSI identity is that institutions often acquire it accidentally as a result of demographic changes within their geographic area over which they have no control.

Additional finding suggests that most participants were not aware of the Hispanic-Serving Institution mission. One participant, employed at the college for approximately five years, was surprised to find out that the institution had HSI status; while other participants were unaware of the mission of an HSI. Furthermore, these findings confirmed that employees of the PCC lack knowledge and understanding of the meaning Hispanic-Serving institution, other than enrolling Hispanic students and receiving money for the college. These findings suggest that employees were unfamiliar with the deep-rooted history of institutional racism that continues to exist in higher education and; how their responses support the oppressive structures that remain

to exist at PCC. These findings align with the CRT premise that race and racism are endemic to and permanent in the U.S. society (Bell, 1980; Crenshaw, 1989, 1993; Delgado, 1995; Solórzano, 1997; Yosso, 2005). Moreover, Delgado (1995) underscored that “Race is not seen as limited to isolated episodes of individual prejudice or violence, but as ‘normal, not aberrant’ (p. 18) in everyday life,” (as cited in Bradbury, 2014).

For the past 15 years, PCC has maintained the formal designation. However, there is limited knowledge and understanding of the meaning and purpose of the HSI designation and why this designation matters to the community as PCC moves towards the pursuit of an institutional equity agenda. These findings are not surprising since the HSI identity is not embedded within the organizational framework or strategic plan. Throughout most the fifteen years, the term and description of a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) was hidden under various pages within the public website. Just recently, the HSI information has become slightly more visible and is now located under the Presidents’ page. Despite the location, it is not transparent to the internal and external stakeholders of the institution. It is, however, publicized when additional funds are granted to the institution, benefiting the institution. Accordingly, these findings align with the CRT tenet of interest convergence, also known as the “white self-interest principle” (Zamudio, et al., 2011, p. 35). Interest convergence critique posits that Whites will tolerate or encourage racial advances when there is something in it for Whites (Stefancic, 2013) and they must see value in their efforts (Delgado & Stefanci, 2001). An interest convergence critique posits that White elites will tolerate or encourage racial advances for Blacks only when such advances also promote White self-interest.

Another important finding highlighted in this study was the participant's reference to culture. Although participant responses indicated their openness and awareness of different

cultures, findings suggested that participants were not aware of the differences between cultural difference, cultural awareness, and cultural understanding; and they were used interchangeably. Despite using these common references, participants did not elaborate on each term nor did they disclose their competency and understanding of these terms. Exclusion of culture, whether campus culture or Latina/o culture in relation to PCC as an HSI was a missing factor, particularly from long-time employees. Furthermore, what was most interesting in the findings was the notion that holding cultural events would bring about equity. Participants tended to generalize serving Latina/o students by stereotyping all Latinas/os as having the same culture and identifying Latina/o students as first-generation students. In addition, participants responded with comments identifying that they only spoke Spanish (English Language Learners) and DREAMERS; while several participants referred to Latina/o students as "them." These responses revealed various forms of racism that included stereotyping and Othering. According to Stefancic (2013), Latinos suffer from an aggregation of negative stereotypes experienced by both African Americans and Asian Americans. As like Asian Americans, Latinos, are perceived as foreigners, outsiders, or immigrants.

Lastly, participants recognized the need to hire more diverse faculty and staff that were more reflective of the student body; however, most responses did not translate to hiring more faculty and staff of color. While some participants were more specific when referring to hiring faculty and staff that matched the student demographics, the majority of respondents did not. These findings were not surprising since only 20 percent of PCCs (N=486) personnel is identified as persons of color (SBCTC) and not necessarily Latina/o. The importance of hiring Latino faculty and staff is consistent with the literature. In a qualitative study by Dayton, Gonzalez-Vasquez, Martinez, & Plum (2004), they found that institutional commitment to



recruiting and retaining Latino faculty and staff was a critical factor in ensuring a diverse staff that reflects the student body. These findings suggest that professionals who have experienced struggles similar to those of Latinos could use their personal experiences to establish a sense of understanding and support within the institution (p. 34). In addition to recruitment and retention, Contreras & Contreras (2015), underscored the presence of diverse faculty as an indication of an institutions' campus climate. Lastly, the dominant narrative of PWIs continues to exist at HSIs, particularly since HSIs were, at one, historically PWIs based on student demographics.

### **Limitations**

This section describes the limitations of this study. The first limitation was the exclusion of the participants' characteristics such as gender, age, race, and ethnicity, and campus location. Characteristics were excluded due to the small numbers of faculty and staff of color at PCC, which could easily identify participants. One other limitation of this study was the absence of Latina/o student voice. Additionally, guided interview questions were not piloted before conducting interviews. However, they were peer-reviewed. Peer reviewers did not participate in the interviews. Lastly, one coder was involved in the coding in order to maintain confidentiality.

### **Recommendations and Implications for PCC**

If PCC, a Hispanic-Serving Institution is truly committed to the goal of addressing equity through the development of an institutional equity agenda and influence change at the institution, all employees should be included in the equity work. Currently, not all employees across the institution have the privilege of being asked to participate in equity discussions and training. It is a recommendation to include all voices and stakeholders in the equity conversations, planning, and training; otherwise the work defeats the purpose of an institutional equity agenda. Although these efforts have been slow, the intentions are purposeful.

Institutional messaging and engagement by all levels of internal stakeholders are critical to these efforts. Active participation should include Latina/o student voices since funding is based upon their enrollment at PCC. Rethinking communication strategies using multi-faceted approaches to inform constituents of the institutional commitment to equity as a Hispanic-Serving Institution. An example would include transparent HSI-centric messaging with a clear statement of organizational purpose and cultural identity delivered by the President of PCC. Since college mission statements are critical to the culture of a campus community, embedding the HSI identity in the college's mission statement reflects the values and commitment of college leadership.

Employees lacked a shared understanding of terms and common definitions which leads to confusion and uncertainty. In addition, diversity language continues to exist; and terms are confusing and used interchangeably. It is highly recommended that PCC create institutional definitions using CRT language to define terms such as equity, diversity, inclusion, cultural differences, microaggressions, racism, racial inequities, and oppression. A glossary of terms can be developed and agreed upon as a reference guide and disseminated across the whole institution. It is critical that employees share a common language as a foundation to build an institutional culture as an effective HSI.

The next recommendation addresses the need for professional development and in-depth training for faculty and staff. The lack of reflection on how the institution serves Latina/o students was evident in this study. In-depth training should include topics such as cultural competence, cultural differences, cultural awareness, and cultural disengagement for all employees. Furthermore, conducting employee HSI 101 workshops and open forums to bring awareness and understanding of HSIs and how HSIs are connected to the U.S. context of racism,

power, and framed upon the Eurocentric model created for white males. Exposure to equity is not enough to make change. Equality versus equity discourse should be intentional and embedded as part of the workshops and training offerings across the institution.

The last recommendation is to create a common evaluative framework for HSIs to assess institutional commitment that addresses CRT and the findings of this study. Further research may be needed to develop a framework that evaluates PCCs practices, commitment and responsibility in serving Latina/o students.

### **Conclusion**

As I began to interview participants, I was not surprised by participants' responses and their lack of knowledge and understanding of HSIs. I came into this study with a predetermined outcome that most participants would lack the knowledge of HSIs unless they worked directly with the HSI grants or their department or faculty directly benefitted from these Latina/o serving funds. What I did not expect was the salient white fragility that existed based on participants' responses, reactions, and direct observations, including from participants who claimed to be equity-minded.

Furthermore, I felt a strong desire and duty as a Latina to remind campus leadership of the commitment, responsibility, and privilege the institution has as an HSI in serving and supporting Latina/o students. For the past 15 years, I have been anxiously awaiting campus-wide messaging and open conversations embracing the identity as HSI, thus, informing the campus community of what the HSI designation means and how employees contribute and support the campus culture of an HSI. The lack of communication led to the frustration that inspired me to focus my dissertation on HSIs, particularly at a time of national discourse focused on racism and equity. Approximately two years ago, the PCC leadership began conversations on the

development and implementation of an institutional equity agenda. The notion of learning more about equity contributed to my interest and thought processes.

As a Chicana growing up in California, I faced many challenges and barriers, similar to other poor brown children. I did not know that I was already categorized as a person of color at such a young age. Growing up in predominately White neighborhoods, I was unaware of my racial identity. I knew I did not have the same things as my peers did even at such a young age, but I had my family. As I continued to get older and faced the everyday challenges of life, I realized that my only way out of poverty and move up in the world was through higher education. I was one of the lucky ones. However, I had to make a trade. Through the process of assimilation, I entered a new culture of higher education and lost part of my culture, my identity and voice; and to some degree, my family. I was forced to fit the white social norms of academia as I entered a four-year university in the mid-west, where I learned that I needed to conform in order to succeed.

Now, I am in a position of power and privilege that I never dreamed of. As I reflect on this work and interviews for this study, I realized that educational leaders committed to social justice have a lot more work ahead of us, including more clearly framing institutional agendas that assess progress. Furthermore, I was not surprised by the intentional and unintentional forms of racism that existed at PCC, since people of color live through these experiences every day in their communities, including their academic community. Lastly, what I did not expect from this study was the salient white fragility that existed among my colleagues at PCC, a designated Hispanic-Serving Institution.

Given this study and the context of racism that HSIs are designed to address, PCC should be compelled to further this work by following the recommendations and reframing support to faculty and staff in centering Latino students.

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## Appendix A

Greetings,

I hope this message finds you well! As you already know, I am the instructional dean for the division at Paramount Community College (PCC). I am also a current doctoral student at the University of Washington, Tacoma. I am currently working on my dissertation and I am hoping you can help me. I am kindly requesting your participation in a doctoral study that I am conducting.

The purpose of this research study is to examine how administration, faculty, and staff at PCC think the meaning of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Latina/o serving. In addition, this study will explore the perceptions administration, faculty, and staff on how they define equity at PCC.

Your participation in this study would consist of one face-to-face interview. You will also have the opportunity to review and verify the data and narrative I have collected from you for accuracy and credibility.

### **What I will ask you to do:**

If you agree to be in this study, I will conduct a face-to-face interview. The interview will include demographic questions of years of employment and employment classification. To protect your identity, you will be assigned a pseudonym. In any report I make public, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. The interview may take approximately up to 90 minutes to complete at a location of your choosing. The interview includes an introduction and face-to-face questions. With your permission, I would also like to audio-record the interview to ensure accuracy.

### **Taking part is voluntary:**

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

If you are willing to participate, please suggest a day and time that suits you and I'll do my best to be available. If you have questions or concerns about this study, please contact me.

Thanks for your time and consideration.

## Appendix B

Question #1: What does the term equity mean to you?	
Major Theme	Subthemes
EQUITY  CRT >>social capital	Fairness to everyone- curriculum, grading, face to face interactions, dealing with co-workers Inequitable Workload Parity Equal opportunities to support and resources; not meaning it's all the same, Broad term Various definitions Applied to lots of different things Fair about what you have and how to distribute the wealth and resources Creating Structures Benefits that I have Fair treatment for all Resources and services to succeed Effort Value & Worth- how an individual is worth, valued and judged
INEQUITIES CRT>> Racism- as social construct	Society failures Historical inequities Institution
EQUALITY  CRT: Dominant Ideology>>Colorblind>>Meritocracy>>Liberalism	Opportunity (2) Pay Responsibility Support Resources Access Accommodations No differences between anyone Accessibility Treating others different (2) Equality for each individual
ACCESS	Same services and resources To Educational Opportunities To many different populations
FEEING VALUED CRT>Meritocracy	Effort Individual worth, valued and judged
SENSE OF COMMUNITY	Inclusive Welcoming A Place for everyone- inclusive Treating students as a resource

Question 2: What do you think equity should look like at PCC?	
Major Theme	Subthemes
EQUITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity</li> <li>• Pay</li> <li>• Playing field</li> <li>• Hiring Practices</li> <li>• Status (no hierarchies)</li> <li>• Same academic services and resources</li> <li>• different backgrounds</li> <li>• different experiences</li> <li>• opportunities</li> </ul>
DEFICIT THINKING CRT>>Contemporary Racism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student</li> <li>• Institutional</li> </ul>
CONNECTIONS CRT>Knowledge>Counter Narratives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community</li> <li>• Sharing experiences</li> <li>• Appreciation of each other</li> </ul>
SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address student needs</li> <li>• Available funding</li> <li>• Success</li> <li>• Opportunities</li> <li>• Guidance</li> <li>• Helping others</li> <li>• Serve all students</li> <li>• Access</li> <li>• Human resources</li> <li>• Think differently about available resources</li> <li>• Faculty and student demographic match</li> <li>• Open to ideas</li> </ul>
SERVING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not equal at all</li> <li>• Complex- serving different needs</li> <li>• Misperception of what college students should look like</li> <li>• Expectations</li> </ul>

Question #3: What should equity look like to support our students?	
Major Theme	Subthemes
EQUITY 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students see equity in faculty – ethnic racial mix F</li> <li>• Meet students where they are at- more personalized approach S</li> <li>• Not all students represented (e.g. Native Americans)</li> <li>• Inequitable support for students</li> <li>• Treat everyone fair, equally and mutual respect F</li> <li>• Provide same services to everyone</li> <li>• Having instructors that look like our student demographics</li> <li>• Convocation is limited to faculty</li> <li>• Equal opportunity</li> <li>• Faculty and Student demographic mix</li> </ul>
SUPPORT 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping them with challenges -limited reading, writing, and language skills</li> <li>• Ability to receive support student needs,</li> <li>• Find better ways to support part-time students achieve their goals</li> <li>• Assess individual needs and individualize supports</li> <li>• Student needs in the classroom -provide opportunities for student engagement</li> <li>• Provide a better college website</li> <li>• Provide a “One Stop Shop” for students- Financial aid, admissions, etc.</li> <li>• Increase in disability support</li> </ul>
ACCESS 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities and Guidance to succeed</li> <li>• Materials and resources</li> <li>• Mental health services</li> <li>• Financial resources</li> <li>• Access to same resources for everyone</li> </ul>
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural understanding trainings for employees</li> <li>• Training tools needed</li> <li>• ESCALA trainings</li> <li>• Co-curricular activities geared towards students of color</li> <li>• Invite speakers on to campus</li> </ul>
SENSE OF COMMUNITY 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcoming &amp; Supportive environment as equals</li> <li>• Serving the community within our service district</li> <li>• Inclusive</li> </ul>
CULTURE 2 CRT>>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural understanding S</li> <li>• Increase intercultural competence</li> </ul>
OTHER AVOIDANCE?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I don’t know</li> </ul>

Question 4: What do you think equity should look like to support our staff?	
Major Theme	Subthemes
EQUITY 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students see equity in faculty – ethnic racial mix F</li> <li>• Develop new hiring practices</li> <li>• Hire more diverse staff</li> <li>• Assess individual staff needs</li> <li>• Fair and respectful treatment</li> <li>• Opportunities</li> <li>• Training needs</li> </ul>
EQUALITY 3 CRT>Colorblind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same treatment for all</li> <li>• Equal treatment</li> <li>• Equal training opportunities</li> </ul>
SENSE OF COMMUNITY 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive and welcoming environment</li> <li>• Encouragement</li> <li>• Cultivate each other</li> <li>• Connections with peers/relate to people they see</li> <li>• Community (internal and external)</li> </ul>
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities to increase intercultural competence</li> <li>• Invite speakers to campus</li> <li>• Provide training needs for staff</li> <li>• More training enriching opportunities for employees 2</li> </ul>
ACCESS 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human resources (human potential)</li> <li>• Services and Trainings</li> <li>• Mental Health Services</li> <li>• Access to services, material and resources</li> <li>• Accessibility to services</li> <li>• Support to acquire skills</li> </ul>
SUPPORT 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for staff to acquire skills</li> <li>• Ability to advance</li> <li>• Need to have models in education to support staff</li> <li>• Assess staff needs</li> <li>• Flexible work schedules</li> </ul>

Question #5: What should equity look like to support our faculty?	
Major Theme	Subthemes
EQUITY -5	Faculty and staff demographic mix Hire more diverse faculty Inequitable advising loads Hiring Practices – develop new process Equity for staff and faculty
EQUAL-2 CRT>Intersectionality>	Equal Treatment Pay (2) Job descriptions Expertise Opportunity Training
ACCESS-7	Should have same access to training or ability to be promoted within Flexible schedules Materials and resources Accessibility to services Opportunities Flexible workspaces Mentoring opportunities Need Resources F Provide Opportunities Opportunities to be open to think outside the box
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT-8	Trainings for new hires Tools and awareness trainings Professional Development -ESCALA, Book club Mandatory trainings needed S Professional Development – ESCALA, Student engagement Professional Development Professional Development Professional Development ESCALA Training Lack of professional development and resources for faculty
CULTURE-2 CRT>Racism>Knowledge	Cultural understanding Being sensitive to cultural differences
SUPPORT-3	Time constraint Open to helping others
OTHER AVOIDANCE?	No issues in my area
SENSE OF -3 COMMUNITY	Teamwork Inclusive and welcoming environment Connection with peers Cultivate each other Feeling valued Willingness of faculty to listen to others Importance of communication

Question #6: What role does data play in your understanding of equity?	
Major Themes	Subthemes
Telling a story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tells the story you want to convey</li> <li>• Hispanic students</li> <li>• Variations of interpretations</li> <li>• Manipulation</li> <li>• Understanding how fortunate we are</li> <li>• Important</li> <li>• As accurate as you want it to be</li> </ul>
<p>Areas in which equity/inequities are measured</p> <p>CRT&gt;Liberalism, meritocracy????</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides evidence</li> <li>• Shows achievement gaps</li> <li>• Institutional and classroom assessments</li> <li>• On-going process</li> <li>• Provides validation and reliability</li> <li>• Measures success</li> <li>• Measures grades</li> <li>• Completion data</li> <li>• Evidence-based decision making</li> <li>• Results</li> <li>• ESCALA Training</li> <li>• It's about student performance</li> <li>• Shows inequities</li> <li>• No support for English Language Learners at the college-level</li> <li>• Shows societal inequities</li> <li>• Shows student demographics</li> </ul>

Question #7: What kinds of concerns do you have with equity in the classroom or workspace?	
Major Themes	Subthemes
EQUITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for equitable workloads</li> <li>• Inequitable learning environments between campuses</li> <li>• Provides an opportunity for self-reflection on how we serve students vs. perception of how we think we're doing</li> <li>• Achievement gaps</li> <li>• Racial equity</li> <li>• The use of Equitable student outcomes – less disruptive language</li> <li>• Social inequities</li> <li>• Scientific content not biased</li> <li>• Different student experiences</li> <li>• Different levels of access to resources</li> </ul>
EQUAL CRT>Colorblindness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equal treatment of students in classroom</li> <li>• Treat all students the same</li> <li>• Not equal at all</li> </ul>
SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student support</li> <li>• Need for bilingual materials and translation services</li> <li>• The need to offer a variety of resources</li> <li>• Provide positive experiences</li> <li>• Various levels of preparedness</li> <li>• Available opportunities for students</li> <li>• Improve collaboration between students, staff and faculty</li> <li>• Need better communication among co-workers</li> <li>• Need resources</li> </ul>
OTHER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No concerns or not aware</li> <li>• No issues</li> <li>• Good job</li> </ul>
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of service training for faculty</li> <li>• Lack of peer review</li> </ul>
STRUGGLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People set in their ways</li> <li>• Space and building issues at Grandview campus</li> <li>• Constraints with bargaining units</li> <li>• Technology between campuses (ITV)</li> <li>• Staff attitude of “not my job”</li> <li>• Language barriers</li> <li>• Accountability of low-performing staff</li> <li>• Staying relevant</li> <li>• Don't know how to help students</li> </ul>



Question #8: What would help you?	
Major Themes	Subthemes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting to know the students – instructor and peer connections</li> <li>• Co-workers open for new ideas</li> <li>• Create appropriate writing courses that support students' goals</li> <li>• Remove constraints of bargain agreements</li> <li>• Knowing you're being supported</li> <li>• Patience and the right communication skills for constructive feedback</li> <li>• I would like a window that will open</li> <li>• Follow through with commitments to services</li> <li>• Access to support and resources (funding, textbooks, etc.)</li> <li>• Equitable workloads</li> <li>• Defining what we mean by equity</li> <li>• Learn strategies to support students with issues outside the classroom</li> <li>• Improve the classroom setting for students</li> <li>• Opportunities for professional development and trainings on student learning, service trainings</li> </ul>	

Question #9: Can you provide an example of how an equity issue was addressed at PCC and what was the outcome?

- Unaware or don't remember an equity issue
- Inequality for female faculty- same duties and same experience but not equal pay
- Unaware or don't remember an equity issue
- RACIST pictures: Shared story of pictures shown of an off-campus party hosted by a White faculty; people dressed up as Mexicans climbing over a fake wall. Uncertain of the outcome. Student apparently shared the story to the VP.
- Unaware or don't remember an equity issue
- People making assumptions of others
- Staff member treated negatively by convocation speaker during break out session
- Inequitable workloads - shifted work to higher performer. The work got done, slower worker was not accountable. Higher performer took on the work.
- Accessibility- the need or accessible resources and support services for students.
- No issue. It's all about talking to one another – communication.
- Inequitable food services on campus
- Lack of Dean at the Grandview campus
- Hiring Practices at the College not equitable
- Workload issues
- Racial Equity
- Lack of knowledge of community issues
- Pathway Advising – only supports college-level students

Question #10: What is your perception of what it means to be an HSI?	
Major Themes	Subthemes
HSI Designation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant eligibility</li> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Intentionality</li> <li>• Unaware of HSI designation</li> <li>• Barrier removal</li> <li>• Grant Obligations</li> <li>• Access to resources, funding, education</li> <li>• Provides opportunities to Hispanic community</li> <li>• Supports building system structures</li> <li>• Institutional changes</li> <li>• GRANT FRAMEWORK definition - at least 25% of our students are Latino</li> <li>• We are earning the HSI category</li> <li>• Dreamers</li> <li>• Public Institution - open access</li> </ul>
Serving Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student population we serve</li> <li>• Larger than average population of Hispanic students</li> <li>• Student demographics</li> <li>• First in the Family</li> <li>• Serving students</li> <li>• Students feel valued</li> <li>• Hard to serve all students – Equity concern</li> <li>• Agrees that PCC's student demographics align with HSI definition</li> <li>• Describes those attending our colleges</li> <li>• Serving Latino/Latinx students</li> <li>• Serving Hispanic Population</li> <li>• Community we are representing</li> </ul>
Sense of community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive environment</li> <li>• Feeling welcomed</li> <li>• Sense of Belonging among Hispanic student peers</li> <li>• Faculty and Student Demographic match</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I don't know</li> </ul>
Culture CRT>racism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Identity</li> <li>• Cultural identity</li> <li>• Understanding differences</li> <li>• Teaching about differences</li> <li>• Important, but exclusive to one ethnic group</li> <li>• Cultural Identifiers- unfamiliar with differences</li> </ul>

Question #11: How do you see yourself contributing to PCC as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI)?	
Major Themes	Subthemes
Treatment of Others Subtheme>equality and equity CRT> Liberalism>Colorblindness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equal access</li> <li>• Equal treatment</li> <li>• Treatment of students – compassion, understanding and encouragement</li> <li>• Hold everyone to the same rigor, same standard, same level</li> <li>• Treat everyone the same</li> <li>• Access</li> <li>• Unequal opportunities, experiences and preparation</li> <li>• Recognizing different needs</li> </ul>
SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serve students</li> <li>• Helping others succeed</li> <li>• Support student's educational goals</li> <li>• Support students</li> <li>• Need for institutional support</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Adequate resources and support</li> <li>• Different learning styles</li> <li>• Teaching – student learning</li> <li>• Connecting with student</li> <li>• Access to available funding</li> <li>• Building structures</li> <li>• Reduce barriers</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offering specific courses</li> <li>• To address educational needs</li> <li>• Provide experiential learning</li> <li>• Sharing resources</li> <li>• Career services</li> <li>• Student development</li> <li>• Sharing available opportunities with students</li> <li>• Social connections</li> <li>• Serves as a community resource</li> <li>• Outreach - Sharing existing opportunities</li> <li>• Teaching and critiquing</li> </ul>
CULTURE CRT>>Racism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural understanding</li> <li>• Inclusive curriculum</li> <li>• Has previous knowledge of other cultures</li> <li>• Educate self (e.g. terms – DACA vs Undocumented)</li> <li>• Personal demographic profile</li> <li>• Critical voice in the institution</li> </ul>
PCC - HSI DESIGNATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant obligations</li> <li>• Funding</li> </ul>

DEFICIT THINKING CRT>Racism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student deficit vs. institutional deficit lens</li></ul>
The Culture of Academia CRT>Racism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recognition of failures of traditional institutions</li></ul>
OTHER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unaware of contributions</li><li>• Unsure</li><li>• Don't know</li><li>• It's complicated</li></ul>

Question #12: What do you think it means to be Hispanic or Latina/o Serving?	
Major Themes	Subthemes
EQUALITY CRT>Colorblindness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equal treatment</li> </ul>
EQUITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serving and recognizing different populations</li> <li>• Recognizing student demographics</li> <li>• Understanding</li> <li>• student experiences</li> <li>• Recognizing barriers</li> <li>• Address barriers to learning with same level of understanding as any other student</li> <li>• Improve student learning</li> </ul>
CULTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of different cultures</li> <li>• Embrace culture and language</li> <li>• Don't Americanize</li> <li>• Open to culture</li> <li>• Experiential learning</li> </ul>
SENSE OF COMMUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping them</li> <li>• Welcoming to Hispanics</li> <li>• Being a resource</li> <li>• How we serve students</li> <li>• Hispanic population</li> <li>• Serving the community</li> <li>• Hispanic community</li> </ul>
SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accommodate educational needs</li> <li>• Provide higher educational pathways</li> <li>• Resources and services</li> <li>• Access to services and information</li> <li>• Address student needs</li> <li>• Student support</li> <li>• Serving students</li> <li>• Helping others</li> <li>• Social Connections on campus</li> <li>• Hispanic community</li> <li>• Community resources</li> <li>• Our responsibility to meet students where they're at</li> <li>• Recognizing needs</li> <li>• Create transparent structures</li> <li>• Target Hispanic students</li> <li>• Serve Hispanic students</li> </ul>

Question #13: How do you define the term serving?	
Major Themes	Subthemes
SERVING/HELPING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities</li> <li>• Sharing</li> <li>• Help achieve goals</li> <li>• Accommodating</li> <li>• Addressing student needs</li> <li>• Contributing</li> <li>• Process of informing</li> <li>• Access to information</li> <li>• Helping ways to serve</li> <li>• Helping students</li> <li>• Serve or clients (students)</li> <li>• Customer service</li> <li>• Create programs</li> <li>• Provide resources</li> <li>• Teaching</li> <li>• Helping students learn</li> <li>• Providing the tools</li> <li>• Offering a skill set</li> <li>• Provide education</li> <li>• Barrier removal</li> <li>• Teach about college expectations and the culture of college culture</li> <li>• Recognizing differences</li> </ul>
EQUAL CRT>Colorblindness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equal treatment</li> <li>• Same standards, same rigor, same level</li> <li>• Equal access</li> </ul>
DEFICIT THINKING CRT>Racism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student deficit versus institutional deficit</li> </ul>

Question #14: How do you perceive PCC is meeting the HSI mission as Hispanic or Latina/o Serving?	
Major Themes	Subthemes
EQUITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unfair and Unequal funding resources</li> </ul>
SERVING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serving all students</li> <li>• Serving Hispanic students</li> <li>• Serving the community and economically</li> <li>• English Language Learners</li> <li>• First Generation students</li> <li>• Offering a variety of programming</li> <li>• Preparing for “college-ready”</li> <li>• Impact on completion</li> <li>• Hispanics who live in the valley</li> </ul>
INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in practices</li> <li>• Reflection of practices</li> <li>• Professional development opportunities</li> <li>• Changes seen over time</li> <li>• Honest and meaningful conversations</li> </ul>
SENSE OF COMMUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource and opportunity to the community</li> <li>• Families</li> <li>• Welcoming</li> <li>• Comforting families</li> <li>• Social connections</li> <li>• Community</li> <li>• Benefits of attending PCC</li> <li>• Culture</li> </ul>
OTHER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Still have work to do</li> <li>• We are trying to make progress</li> <li>• Grade of C-</li> <li>• Important work</li> <li>• I don’t know (2x)</li> <li>• Yes! We definitely are</li> <li>• Good job (2x)</li> <li>• To the extreme</li> </ul>
ACCESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved facilities, resources and services</li> <li>• Opportunities</li> <li>• Support for students</li> <li>• Additional funding</li> <li>• Educational services</li> </ul>
HSI Designation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unfamiliar with HSI data</li> <li>• Meeting grant objectives</li> <li>• deliberate and intentional</li> <li>• Purposeful funding</li> <li>• Resources are not equal to other institutions</li> </ul>



Question #15: What in your own view could PCC do differently to become a high performing HSI?	
Major Themes	Subthemes
EQUITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty and staff demographic mix</li> <li>• Staff understanding what equity means</li> <li>• Increased support to DACA students</li> <li>• Being exclusive rather than inclusive</li> <li>• Increase numbers of unprepared students</li> </ul>
COMMUNICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared responsibility</li> <li>• Need branding</li> <li>• Better and on-going</li> <li>• Awareness</li> <li>• More advertisements about PCC</li> <li>• Inform students of HSI status</li> </ul>
FEELING VALUED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do a better job</li> <li>• Appreciation of faculty and staff</li> <li>• Invest in people, not just students</li> <li>• Excellence in staff</li> </ul>
ACCESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To programming</li> <li>• Opportunities</li> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Better services</li> <li>• Bilingual material</li> <li>• Available resources and services</li> <li>• Resources</li> </ul>
SUPPORT>>Subtheme SENSE OF COMMUNITY/ CONNECTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library of resources</li> <li>• Student support</li> <li>• Skill and goal attainment</li> <li>• Completion</li> <li>• Graduation</li> <li>• Develop mechanisms for student support</li> <li>• Welcoming</li> <li>• Social</li> <li>• Peers</li> <li>• Instructors</li> <li>• Better outreach to K-12; start earlier</li> <li>• Strengthen relationships</li> <li>• Inform community of opportunity</li> <li>• Compassionate people on committees</li> <li>• High expectations serving students</li> <li>• Include people on committees who are passionate about mission</li> </ul>
The Culture of Academia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing the culture</li> <li>• Time constraints</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Addressing barriers</li></ul>
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Faculty trainings on how to serve students better</li><li>• Mandatory activities and trainings</li><li>• More trainings</li><li>• More equity activities at convocation</li><li>• Training staff</li><li>• ESCALA</li></ul>
VOICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Listen to student voice</li><li>• Community voice</li><li>• Space for students of color</li><li>• Teach students how to advocate for self</li></ul>