CUESTA COLLEGE

STUDENT EQUITY PLAN

2022-2025
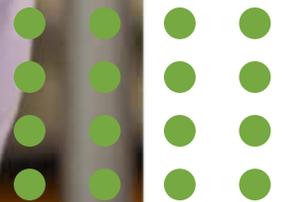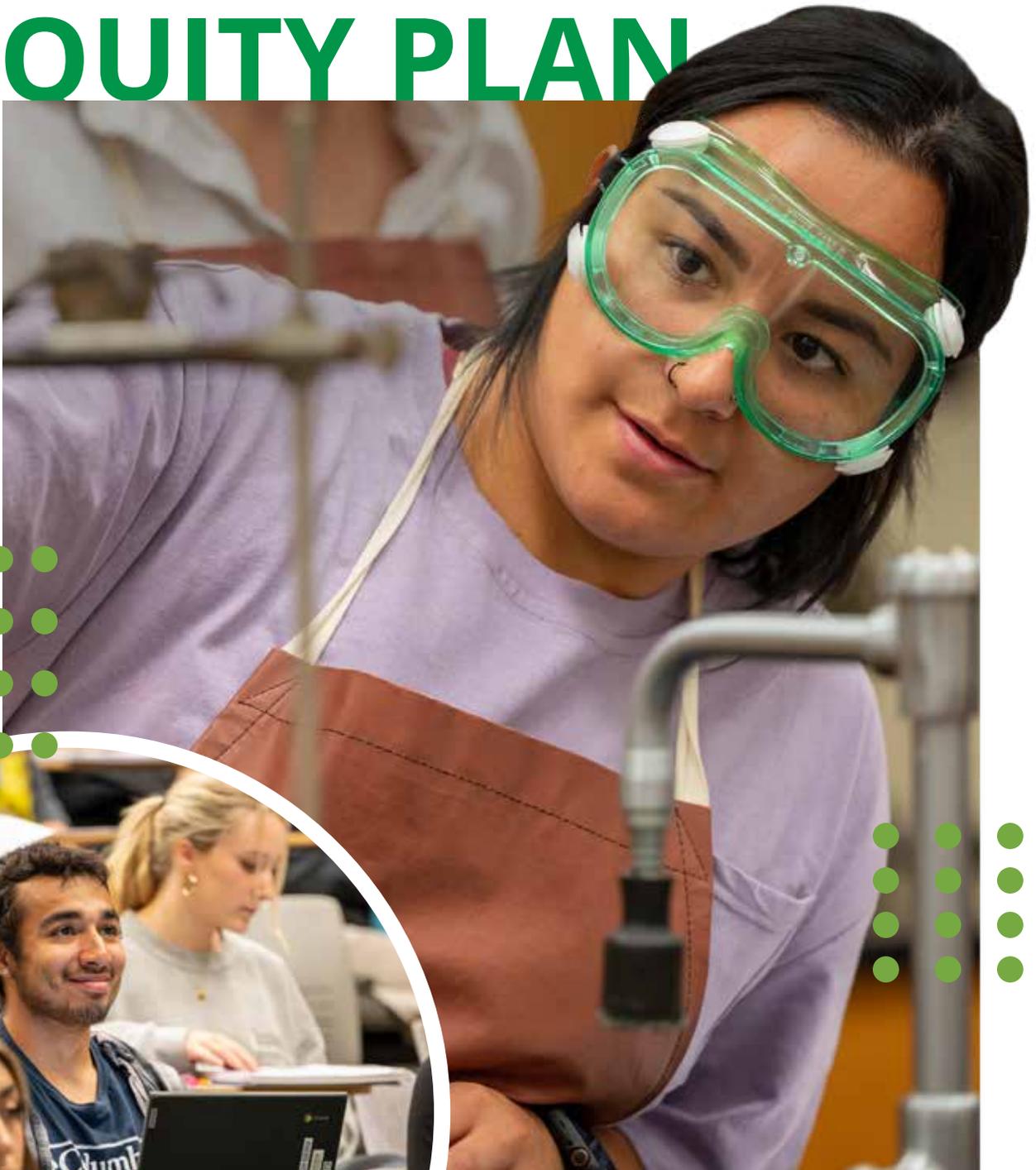
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Introduction

One in every five community college students in the nation attends a California Community College (CCC), and nearly 70% of those students are students of color. The Chancellor's Office and CCC Vision for Success catalyzed a paradigm shift in community colleges statewide, challenging us to acknowledge that while well-intentioned, our colleges have historically failed to adequately address and dismantle systemic barriers that produce inequitable outcomes, particularly for students of color. The 2022-25 Student Equity Plan paves the way for Cuesta College to commit to sharpening our focus on dismantling these institutional barriers while intensifying our resolve to achieve racial equity in outcomes for our students of color.

The CCC Vision for Success explicitly names Guided Pathways as the organizing framework for all efforts designed to improve equitable student outcomes. The framework calls for comprehensive and transformative changes across an entire college, braided into a coherent plan for improvement. To accomplish the Vision, the Guided Pathways framework calls practitioners to analyze existing college structures, identify changes necessary to reform those structures, and implement those changes to achieve equitable outcomes for our students and communities. Accordingly, for the 2022-2025 Student Equity Plan, colleges were challenged with conducting structural analyses of the myriad aspects of an institution (i.e., policies, processes, practices, and culture) that impede equitable student outcomes across instruction, student success and support programs, business services, or other divisions.

In the pages that follow, we begin with a reflection of our 2019-2022 Student Equity Plan. This includes summaries of key initiatives, evidence of decreased disproportionate impact, and how our 2019-2022 plan helped inform our 2022-2025 Student Equity Plan. Thereafter for each of the five metrics – 1) Successful enrollment; 2) Completion of transfer level math and English; 3) Persistence from first primary term to secondary term; 4) Transfer; and 5) Attained the Vision for Success definition of completion —we present the target outcomes for the main student population(s) experiencing disproportionate impact as well as our analyses of:

- Friction points;
- Institutional policies, processes, and/or practices that have produced inequitable outcomes (i.e., current structure);
- What an ideal structure would entail;
- The structural changes necessary to reach the ideal structure; and
- Action plans to achieve the target outcomes.

2019-2022 Student Equity Plan Reflection

Cuesta College's 2019-2022 Student Equity Plan (SEP) was recognized by the Center for Urban Education (CUE) for being race conscious; a reviewer reported "They are race conscious, take institutional responsibility, [and] focus on efforts that change practitioners rather than students." To build on the momentum of the 2019-2022 SEP, for its 2022-2025 SEP, our writing team ensured that for each metric and corresponding disproportionately impacted student group, there is ample consideration given to the racialized experiences of students in the classroom and college environment. For example, for the persistence metric, we underscore the significance of "sense of belonging" and acknowledge that campus spaces (inside and outside the classroom) do not reflect our racially minoritized student populations, specifically Black/African American and Latinx/Hispanic students. To drive the college's progress toward closing its equity gaps, we aligned the metrics and corresponding action plans; action plans are race-specific and include inquiry to facilitate a critical examination of the instructional and non-instructional practices, policies, and procedures of the institution, and an understanding of what is and is not working for our racially minoritized students.

For its 2022-2025 SEP, Cuesta College incorporated the key recommendations from the CUE, including integrating classroom-focused equity efforts and structural and capacity-building equity activities to foster institutional change (for examples, please refer to the action plan sections). Lastly, while the college is embracing its status as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), it recognizes that to be truly race conscious, the college must make progress toward forming and owning its identity as an HSI. Utilizing lessons learned from three previous HSI grants over the past five years, Cuesta will pursue future grants that will enable faculty, staff, and managers to think about and grapple with what "servingness" looks like in practice. As a starting point, the college will examine its structures for serving racially minoritized students (as recommended by Dr. Gina Ann Garcia, 2019). For example, the college will review and update its mission, vision, and values. Moreover, as noted throughout the 2022-2025 SEP, we will work toward a campus environment that is more positive and affirming of the race, ethnicity, language, and cultural experiences of Latinx and other racially minoritized students.

Key Initiatives

During the 2019-2022 period, Cuesta College's key initiatives to support student equity focused on structural and capacity-building equity activities in the areas of 1) targeted academic student support and engagement, and 2) faculty and staff professional development. A collaborative team of faculty, administrators, and Human Resources specialists attended the Center for Urban Education's Faculty Equity and Hiring Institute. Subsequently, Cuesta's materials were reviewed and improved to add equity-minded language, including an explicit statement of diversity on all job announcements, updated interview questions, and revised the application question on diversity. The JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion) Academy on Curriculum and Teaching provided two cohorts of faculty the opportunity to join in a collaborative review and redesign of

their courses with an emphasis on centering equity. Sessions, which were co-led by Cuesta faculty from various disciplines, supported development of equitable teaching practices for online and face-to-face courses. During the Academy, faculty focused on building community, developing cultural responsiveness, equity mindedness, anti-racism, creating engaging and relevant materials, and developing high impact practices.

In spring 2020, the abrupt transition to fully online instruction because of the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted students' engagement, enrollment, and retention in credit and non-credit courses. For example, enrollment reduced almost 50% in ESL and 35% in GED programs from fall 2019 to fall 2020. Outreach to students to solicit their input revealed that students lacked the necessary tools (e.g., computer, reliable Wi-Fi), were overwhelmed by online learning, and lacked experience with or confidence in using the technology (e.g., Zoom, Canvas). In response, Cuesta College provided access to technology with Chromebooks and Wi-Fi assistance, and staff and faculty collaborated to develop tailored thirty-minute technology workshops for credit and non-credit students. Targeted academic student support and engagement also included embedded tutors in first-year math courses. In collaboration with and under the instructor's guidance during class time, embedded tutors help students understand course concepts and model successful academic strategies and habits.

Evidence of Decreased Disproportionate Impact

Indications that Cuesta College's key initiatives to support equity have decreased disproportionate impact are reflected in the college's data. For its 2019-2022 SEP, Cuesta College identified female Latinx/Hispanic students as a disproportionately impacted (DI) student group regarding the metric "transfer to a four-year institution." Economically disadvantaged male students were identified as a DI student group regarding the metric "completed both transfer-level math and English." Current data indicate that as of 2021-2022 academic year, Cuesta College met and exceeded its desired goals for these two metrics. The intended goal for the metric "transfer to a four-year institution" was 140 (baseline of 134) and was exceeded by about 6% (i.e., it was 148 by 2021-2022). The proposed goal for the metric "completed both transfer-level math and English" was 50 (baseline of 36) and was surpassed by 100% (i.e., it was 86 by 2021-2022). Progress was also made for the metric "retained from fall to spring at the same college." For this metric, male Latinx/Hispanic students were identified as the DI group. While Cuesta College did not meet its desired goal of 827, it did experience a 0.5% increase (i.e., 823) from the baseline (i.e., 819). While we acknowledge that the observed correlations between the college's activities and the declining DIs are not indicative of direct causations, we do believe that focusing on structural and capacity-building equity activities is the appropriate approach. Cuesta College will continue to harness this approach for its 2022-2025 SEP.

2022-2025 Planning Efforts

As identified by CUE, while Cuesta College's 2019-2022 SEP is race conscious and includes activities that focus on supporting racially minoritized students, the 2019-2022 SEP had too many activities. Accordingly, for the 2022-2025 SEP, we focused on differentiating between new and existing efforts. For example, for each metric, we considered existing efforts that can be improved, leveraged, and/or scaled up. Similarly, instead of designing unilateral action plans for each metric by DI group, there were efforts to examine the report strategically and deliberately in its entirety and in its subcomponents so that when appropriate, action plans could address more than one metric and DI student group. These efforts align with CUE's recommendation to align our equity plan with the Vision for Success and recognize the intersectionality of our students. Regarding the former, except for one metric (i.e., enrollment), all other four metrics share one or more similar DI student group. For example, for the metric "primary term to secondary term persistence," the DI student groups are Black/African American, foster youth, and first-generation college students. Foster youth students and first-generation college students are also the DI groups for the metric "attained the vision for success definition of completion within three years." Given that a student's term to term persistence informs their path toward completing the vision for success, we believe streamlined action plans will support the college's work in closing equity gaps for both metrics. Concerning the latter, "first-generation" is just one identity marker. In fact, as of 2021-2022, about 63.4% of all first-generation college students at Cuesta College are from a racially minoritized group (Black/African American, Asian, Hispanic/Latinx, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, American Indian). Ignoring the intersectionality of our first-generation college students and only developing an action plan centered on one identity marker could reinforce and/or even create new inequities. Lastly, the previous equity plan cycle also reinforced the significance of focusing on structural and capacity-building equity activities to foster institutional change. As is noted in other sections of this report, we will continue to prioritize this approach.

Link to 2019-2022 Student Equity Plan

Synopsis of Metrics and Action Plans

For each of the five metrics – 1) Successful enrollment; 2) Completion of transfer level math and English; 3) Persistence from first primary term to secondary term; 4) Transfer within three years; and 5) Attained the Vision for Success definition of completion— Cuesta College identified the main student population(s) experiencing disproportionate impact.

There are five main student groups experiencing disproportionate impact (DI). They are:

- Female students;
- Black/African American students;
- Latinx/Hispanic students;
- Current or former foster youth students; and
- First-generation college students.

As depicted in Table 1 except for one metric (i.e., successful enrollment), all other four metrics share one or more similar DI student group. In fact, first-generation college students are a DI group in four of the five metrics.

For each metric and DI student group, the college identified:

- Target outcome(s)[1];
- Friction points;
- Institutional policies, processes, and/or practices that have produced inequitable outcomes (i.e., current structure);
- What an ideal structure would entail;
- The structural changes necessary to reach the ideal structure; and
- Action plans to achieve the target outcomes.

Table 2 presents the ideal target outcomes by 2024-2025 for each DI student group and associated metrics.

Instead of designing unilateral action plans for each metric by student DI group, there were efforts to examine the report strategically and deliberately in its entirety and in its subcomponents so that when appropriate, action plans could address more than one metric and DI student group. Accordingly, Table 3 provides a summary of our equity advancing strategies incorporated across all action plans.

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[1] Per the Chancellor's Office, all outcomes must be quantitative.

Table 1

Metrics and Main Student Population(s) Experiencing Disproportionate Impact

Metric	Student Group				
	Female	Black/African American	Latinx/Hispanic	Current/Former Foster Youth	First-Generation
Successful Enrollment	X				
Completion of Transfer Level Math & English		X	X		X
Persistence Primary to Secondary Term		X		X	X
Transfer within 3 Years		X	X		X
Vision Goal Completion				X	X

Table 2

Student Population(s) Experiencing Disproportionate Impact and Target Outcomes

Student Group	Metric	Target Outcome by 2024-2025
Female	Successful Enrollment	Increase by 13.9% (i.e., 112) the successful first year enrollment
Black/African American	Completion of Transfer Level Math & English	Increase by 1100% (i.e., 11) the completion of transfer level math and English
	Persistence Primary to Secondary Term	Increase by 23.7% (i.e., 9) the persistence from primary term to secondary term
	Transfer within 3 years	Increase by 125% (i.e., 5) the transfer to a four-year institution within three years
Latinx/Hispanic	Completion of Transfer Level Math & English	Increase by 53.5% (i.e., 46) the completion of transfer level math and English
	Transfer within 3 years	Increase by 29.1% (i.e., 25) the transfer to a four-year institution within three years
Current or Former Foster Youth	Persistence Primary to Secondary Term	Increase by 26.8% (i.e., 11) the persistence from primary term to secondary term
	Vision Goal Completion	Increase by 266.7% (i.e., 8) the Vision for Success definition of completion within three years
First-Generation	Completion of Transfer Level Math & English	Increase by 114.8% (i.e., 62) the completion of transfer level math and English
	Persistence Primary to Secondary Term	Increase by 13.5% (i.e., 67) the persistence from primary term to secondary term
	Transfer within 3 years	Increase by 173.3% (i.e., 78) the transfer to a four-year institution within three years
	Vision Goal Completion	Increase by 74.2% (i.e., 49) the Vision for Success definition of completion within three years

Table 3

Equity Advancing Strategies

Strategy	Focal Area(s)	Strategy Rationale	Desired Outcome
Inquiry	a. Continuous and timely review of student data disaggregated by race/ethnicity b. Focus group interviews with students	a. Understand reoccurring or new equity gaps b. Opportunities for students to share their views of the campus climate; articulate their expectations of faculty, staff, and administrators; and recommend ways the institution can enhance their learning, engagement, and sense of belonging	Progress toward meeting target outcomes for all metrics and student groups
Capacity Building (i.e., professional development)	a. Potential topics: facing and addressing microaggressions, culturally relevant curriculum development, facilitation methods for diversity, equity, and inclusion	a. Opportunities for staff, faculty, and administrators to enhance their equity-mindedness and capacity to critically assess existing practices for diversity, equity, inclusion, and cultural responsiveness	Progress toward meeting target outcomes for all metrics and student groups
Programmatic Enhancements	a. Examine models such as Puente, Umoja, Guardian Scholars, NextUp b. Capitalize current models (e.g., EOPS, Basic Needs Center)	a. Establish holistic support services b. Maximize support for DI student groups	Progress toward meeting target outcomes for all metrics and student groups

Metric - Successful Enrollment

For the metric successful enrollment, the main student population experiencing disproportionate impact is female students.

Student Group and Target Outcome

Student Group	Outcome by 2024-2025
Female	Increase by 13.9% (i.e., 112) the successful first year enrollment of female students.

Friction Points

Nationwide, successful female student enrollment in the first year is stronger than successful male student enrollment, the opposite trend is observed at Cuesta College. Thus, there must be specific friction points at Cuesta College that inhibit successful female student enrollment in the first year compared to male students. Currently, the Chancellor's Office does not disaggregate female enrollment data (e.g., students of color, Hispanic/Latinx, first-generation, cis- or trans-gender), therefore, Cuesta College representatives drew hypotheses on institutional policies, practices, and trends to discern why overall female enrollment is lower at Cuesta College. Cuesta representatives have identified the following friction points, with the intention of being all-encompassing of the female student populations: female students are not enrolling (1) because diverse course offering times/locations are limited or not successfully staying enrolled in their courses (beyond both the census date and the drop-deadline date) because of traditional, rigid academic policies and practices that assume all students have a four-year institutional transfer goal and no other educational and/or personal goals, responsibilities, or commitments; and/or female students have less successful enrollment (2) because student success and support services are limited in accessibility for diverse female students (e.g., digital literacy, Spanish services, extended hours), (3) because they do not feel safe or comfortable as themselves in the district site(s) environment and/or the lack of faculty racial, ethnic, and/or gender diversity, and (4) because female students receive messages they are "less capable" in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields yielding diminished self-efficacy with limited redress and interventions at K-12 institutions, referred to as systemic gender bias in STEM. In summary, we deduce fewer female students are enrolling in courses at Cuesta College (friction point 1) or female students have enrolled and are experiencing barriers to success (friction points 1-4) that disincentivize their continual enrollment. By addressing these four friction points, Cuesta College can increase female student enrollment. There is potential to serve a greater population of diverse female students, especially those who are working adults, those who serve in caregiver roles, and those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged and/or disenfranchised, many of whom are people of color.

Current Structure

Instruction

Limited course offering days, times, and/or locations inhibits potential female students from enrolling in courses at Cuesta College. Courses offered during evening, weekend, and/or online locations and times are not robust enough for female students with additional obligations (e.g., work, childcare) to complete their desired goals (e.g., certificate, degree, personal development skills). This barrier to enrollment comes down to scheduling that favors instructors instead of students and the lack of district support to implement strategies for post-pandemic enrollment growth, including running courses with lower enrollment numbers during times/locations that meet student needs (efficiency over equity).

The long-standing culture in the college system of rigid due dates and/or attendance policies and practice of assigning extensive out-of-classroom coursework as the only option when other methods could effectively meet curriculum goals is a serious barrier to success. These traditional practices are inequitable for all students, but particularly for female students who are more often caregivers or have other extensive out-of-classroom obligations that may require greater flexibility in attendance and/or due dates. The result of these rigid policies and practices is an assumed barrier to maintaining successful female student enrollment.

Female students enroll in STEM-based courses with variable base knowledge and/or experience. Instructional faculty and staff are making strides to not overlook systemic gender bias. Current examples include obtaining a National Science Foundation STEM grant targeting underserved students, providing research opportunities and research seminar classes led in-part by female STEM faculty, and college kids for STEM youth camps. There is more work to be done to provide female students access and support for self-efficacy improvements, to promote positive feelings towards themselves in STEM courses and fields, in turn increasing self-esteem and encouraging female students to persist in STEM courses. Students need instructors that represent them as individuals (e.g., ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality). Despite institutional changes in hiring practices that are more receptive to diversity, Cuesta College lacks diversity in faculty and there is more work to be done to continue to foster diversity and retain diverse faculty within the college.

Wraparound Services[2]

Communication is key to disseminating invaluable information to students, particularly those students within the first year who are navigating the ins and outs of the college. Without effective communication between wraparound services and instruction, students are likely to miss services, and thus, wraparound services are being underutilized. In the current structure, information about wraparound services is

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[2] Per the examples provided by the Chancellor's Office, wraparound services include counseling, support programs, textbook programs, etc.

disseminated to Division Chairs who then route it to instructors, and instructors share it with students and/or wraparound services send the information directly to students through digital formats. The current process from wraparound services to faculty to students relies on the prioritization of busy full-time faculty and generally less connected adjunct faculty to communicate such information. Further, there is an institutional assumption that students (largely first-year students) have the digital literacy to navigate and access wraparound services from digital communication. Moreover, when students are successful in accessing wraparound services, students have historically received inappropriate or unneeded services. Services to diverse students have often led to rerouting students to services they do not need but were assumed by the faculty/staff member's implicit bias (e.g., older adult students referred to Emeritus program, Hispanic/Latinx students referred to ESL, assumed student enrolled at Cuesta and referred to financial aid). The current practices assume Cuesta College faculty/employee know what the student needs rather than actively listening to the needs of the student, from the student themselves, first.

General Operations[3]

Cuesta College has beautiful campuses with nice buildings and landscaping. However, there is little art and/or other representations of diverse cultures displayed throughout the common spaces in student success and support programs. Visually, whether it be through art or marketing materials, minoritized students are not likely to see themselves reflected. Additionally, the buildings are spread out with little to no signage to help students and their families find their way. Current operations are lacking in robust lighting across physical district sites for evenings and/or early mornings. Individuals can navigate through district sites, but the distance between lights is too long. Illumination does not allow individuals to clearly observe any potential hazards or harms (e.g., mountain lion sightings, other individuals on the property [Cuesta community members or not]). Standard operating schedules are aligned with peak daytime courses (e.g., 10 am – 2 pm). As such, female students taking early morning, evening, and/or weekend courses have limited access to essential student resources (e.g., hot meals from the cafeteria, in-person counseling, mental health services) to assist with their basic needs and/or educational goals.

Ideal Structure

Instruction

Cuesta College faculty, staff, administrators, and managers are in a role of service to our students. For our students to be successful, we need to reflect on those areas that are inequitable to our students and recognize that when our students are not successful, we need to improve and to avoid putting the onus on students to improve. This recognition of our shortcomings as service providers to our students requires a cultural shift of perspectives. Accordingly, the ideal structure would include:

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[3] Per the examples provided by the Chancellor's Office, general operations include parking, campus police, etc.

- Class schedules are offered for multiple sites on a predictable and ongoing basis to support completion of student educational goals.
- District support and favor of access over efficiency for courses offered through an approved strategy to increase enrollments for DI groups, despite the possibility of decreased efficiency.
- Increase vocational and short-term certificate programs and workforce development opportunities.
- Instructors are current on student success resources, including what services are offered and how students can access services.
- Faculty are knowledgeable about student readiness and are prepared to provide transition help and refer students to success and support services when appropriate.
- Faculty are trained on student personal barriers. Faculty adapt their curriculum and course policies to support and recognize student personal barriers while maintaining college-level rigor (e.g., more flexible attendance policies, adjusting out-of-classroom coursework expectations, working with students to improve their self-efficacy to support their academic progress). Faculty mitigate what they can and refer students to success and support services as appropriate.
- Faculty design zero-cost textbooks and/or low-cost courses. Library resources have abundant access to textbooks that do not fall within zero-cost or low-cost categories for student access to borrow on all sites. Departments with supplemental required materials have access plans for students to reduce registration and completion barriers (e.g., reserve funds for art supplies, calculators for student loaning, etc.).
- Diverse faculty that represents the student population are hired and retained.
- Faculty acknowledge systemic gender bias in STEM and design curriculum and intentional pedagogy that addresses gender bias.

Wraparound Services

Cuesta College faculty, staff, administrators, and managers are in a role of service to our students. For our students to be successful, we need to reflect on those areas that are inequitable to our students and recognize that when our students are not successful, we need to improve and to avoid putting the onus on students to improve. This recognition of our shortcomings as service providers to our students requires a cultural shift of perspectives. Accordingly, the ideal structure would include:
- Student success managers/Deans, Cluster Deans, Division Chairs, and Department Leads collaborating with each other.
- All wraparound services are available by professionals in those fields fluent in Spanish, supplemental documents are provided in Spanish, and communications about wraparound services are provided and disseminated in Spanish.
- Students are provided service(s) necessary as described by them.

- Wraparound services (e.g., Welcome Huts, Fast Track Registration Days) are actively promoted to students beyond the beginning and end of a semester. Wraparound services are readily accessible on all district sites throughout the semester. Wraparound services are staffed and readily accessible for evening, weekend, and online students.
- Students with need are provided with laptops, hotspots and/or technology support.
- Students can readily access available support resources on district sites any time there are classes in session. Distance education students can readily access available support resources outside of standard business hours.
- Increased community outreach informed by culturally relevant practices to diverse female student populations.

General Operations

Cuesta College faculty, staff, administrators, and managers are in a role of service to our students. For our students to be successful, we need to reflect on those areas that are inequitable to our students and recognize that when our students are not successful, we need to improve and to avoid putting the onus on students to improve. This recognition of our shortcomings as service providers to our students requires a cultural shift of perspectives. Accordingly, the ideal structure would include:

- Remove the assumption that students will know how to purchase a daily or semester parking permit when they enter the district site. Provide multiple access points to semester parking permit registration forms. Public safety has a robust presence on district sites whenever courses are scheduled, including evenings and weekends. Students can access public safety offices (e.g., purchase parking permits, pay for parking tickets) whenever courses are scheduled, including evenings and weekends, and online payments are integrated.
- Signage is well-posted through major central site thoroughfares to access buildings and areas of interest. All signage is in English and Spanish. The signage also has braille. Routes/paths to buildings and areas of interest are marked and/or outlined on permanently posted maps throughout the district sites.
- District sites have abundant spaces available for students to build communities (e.g., multicultural centers, family rooms) where they feel safe and welcomed. Increase in the quantity and distribution of all-gender restrooms on district sites.
- Vibrant representations (e.g., murals, flags) of students and their cultural values are welcomed and proudly displayed across all district sites.

Necessary Transformation to Reach Ideal Structure

At the forefront of the transformation from current structure to ideal structure, the institution must undergo a cultural shift. Without this shift, any new or revised policies or practices will be in vain; we must not act in silos, we must unify to recognize our collective strengths and shortcomings and implement policies and practices that mitigate shortcomings. The institution is a complex system that relies on the intricacies and work from all branches; if one branch of the institution is not part of the cultural shift, the institution cannot make the transition to the ideal structure. The following are key elements to ignite and sustain the necessary cultural transformation:

- All institutional representatives are open, and not defensive, about changing what once worked, but no longer works, to advance the Mission of Cuesta College.
- Policies, practices, and processes need to be equitable for our students.
- Cuesta representatives must be equity-minded when assessing current policies, practices, and processes.
- We must learn from the successes and failures of past policies, practices, and processes.
- The entire institution must be willing to participate in learning activities with an intentional focus on supporting our disproportionately impacted students.
- Continuation of improvement in hiring policies that results in the hiring of exceptional classified staff, faculty, managers, and administrators that represent Cuesta College's student populations.
- Commitment to culturally responsive polices, practices, and processes, that involve expanded training and opportunities for collaboration and mentorship.
- From faculty to staff to managers to the Board of Trustees, the Cuesta College community embraces a culture that recognizes implicit and explicit biases, privileges, and the work that needs to continue to best serve Cuesta College students, and actively advances the institution's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

Once the institution acknowledges and accepts the changes central to the institutional cultural shift, the shift can begin. We must remember that we are bound to make mistakes, to have slower progress than we would prefer, or cause unintentional harm in the quest to improve; these challenges in the journey are part of the learning process. The greater good outweighs the discomfort we may feel throughout the process to achieve the transformation necessary to reach our ideal structure.

Action Plan

The following are commitments to advance equity and increase the enrollment of female students.

Instruction

Action steps include, but are not limited to:

- Monthly planning meetings are held with constituent groups to address student scheduling needs (e.g., campus childcare services) and to brainstorm solutions, including funding needs to actuate change, as necessary.
- A college hour restricted from scheduling classes is implemented.
- Guided Pathways Program Coordinators/Student Success Teams create Canvas modules, informational emails, and other outreach materials for their respective areas of study and reach out to Divisional representatives to disseminate information.
- Faculty professional development includes student readiness data, personal barrier data, and solutions for faculty to help address said data via mentorship and course design DEI centered training programs.
- All full-time, tenured faculty members have completed a JEDI program, or equivalent as approved by Faculty Professional Development, within 5 years and maintain this currency throughout their tenure.
- All faculty members who serve in leadership positions have completed a JEDI program, or equivalent as approved by Faculty Professional Development, within 5 years and maintain this currency throughout their tenure in the leadership position(s).
- Departments promote a culture of embracing and implementing contemporary curriculum and policies.
- Courses are updated with equity minded practices that support student success (e.g., flexible attendance policies, adjusting out-of-classroom coursework expectations, working with students to improve their self-efficacy to support their academic progress).
- Develop access plans, including allocating funds in annual budgets, for courses with supplemental required materials to eliminate registration/completion barriers.
- STEM departments assess their disaggregated student success data based on gender to develop a plan to recognize department friction points and action steps to reach an ideal structure.
- STEM departments invest in early education outreach events within the greater community to promote non-male representation in STEM.

Wraparound Services

Action steps include, but are not limited to:

- Presentations of wraparound services to each Division.
- Guided Pathways Program Coordinators have a standing report in Instructional Cabinet.
- Increase the number of bilingual (i.e., English and Spanish) professionals.
- A Spanish-speaking Enrollment Success Specialist is available during day, evening, and weekend hours.
- Contract with a company for all promotional and related marketing materials for non-English translations.
- Student communications and learning platforms are available in Spanish and English.
- Expand explicit and implicit trainings to address ageism, racism, and visible and non-visible disabilities.
- Increase tabling events at various times and district sites throughout the semester.
- Increase and expand affordable childcare services for students.
- Develop a system for students to request technology as part of the registration process.
- Increase evening and weekend hours of student support services across all district sites.
- Schedule and staff libraries, student success centers, and health centers during evenings and weekends.

General Operations

Action steps include, but are not limited to:

- Increase campus police presence by extending public safety hours of operation to include evenings and weekends.
- Increase parking permit purchase options and extend the timeframe for purchasing before citations begin.
- Revise job postings and interview packets for all positions to avoid implicitly discouraging diverse applicants.
- Add students to all hiring committees.
- Employ innovative models for visual navigation aids across district sites along prominent thoroughfares.
- Increase illumination at each district site.
- Prioritize the centralization of a multicultural center on all district sites.
- Increase the number of all-gender and family restrooms across all district sites.

- Survey students and community members to assess what cultural values or communities are underrepresented and where vibrant representations are lacking or should be enhanced.
- Develop a streamlined process for students to submit requests for cultural representations; incentivize students to contribute to these representations.

Institutional Culture

Action steps include, but are not limited to:
- Add bias recognition training to required yearly training to distinguish and recognize both implicit and explicit biases.
- Faculty evaluate disaggregated data each year to critically assess student success for implicit and explicit biases.
- Collective bargaining agreements and Management Senate collaborate with the district to ensure safe environments.
- College representatives recognize their shortcomings with DEI.
- Extend JEDI training to staff and management.
- Institutional-wide assessment of staff's role central to the student experience.
- Implement a nonmonetary, reoccurring recognition for classified staff to build morale and increase awareness of the excellence of our classified staff.

Metric - Completion of Transfer Level Math and English

For the metric successful enrollment, the main student populations experiencing disproportionate impact are Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and first-generation college students.

Student Groups and Target Outcomes

Student Groups	Outcomes by 2024-2025
Black/African American	Increase by 1100% (i.e., 11) the completion of transfer level math and English for Black/African American students.
Latinx/Hispanic	Increase by 53.5% (i.e., 46) the completion of transfer level math and English for Latinx/Hispanic students
First-Generation	Increase by 114.8% (i.e., 62) the completion of transfer level math and English for first-generation college students.

Friction Points

While Cuesta College has improved its compositional diversity (i.e., the numerical representation of various racial/ethnic groups) there continues to be an underrepresentation of people of color. For the 2021-2022 academic year, 38% of students were from a racially minoritized group (i.e., Black/African American, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander, American Indian); five years ago, 37% of students were from a racially minoritized group. For the same academic year, there were 390 students who identified as Black/African American. Though this represents about a 17.5% increase from five years ago, students will not see any full-time Black/African American faculty. Critical analyses of our data also inform us that a considerable proportion of our Black/African American male students are currently enrolled in courses at the California Men's Colony (CMC).

At Cuesta College, students who identify as first-generation college students are also more likely to be students of color. For the 2021-2022 academic year about 63.4% of all first-generation college students were from a racially minoritized group (i.e., Black/African American, Asian, Hispanic/Latinx, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, American Indian). For the same academic year, there were 5147 students who identified as Latinx/Hispanic students. Among these Latinx/Hispanic students about 39% were first-generation college students. Given the intersecting identities of students (i.e., the way students' salient identities and less salient identifies produce unique experiences with both opportunities and barriers) we believe their breadth of experiences require an intersectional approach. As such, we propose that the friction points for all three DI groups for this metric overlap.

Cuesta representatives have identified the following friction points:
1. The lack of compositional diversity among students and personnel contributes to a lack of sense of belonging for Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and other racially minoritized students. In fact, there has been a decline in the

Latinx/Hispanic student population. For the 2018-2019 academic term, 5935 students identified as Latinx/Hispanic. For the 2021-2022 academic year, 5147 students identified as such; a decline of about 13.3%. As noted by researchers, poor racial diversity contributes to stereotypical attitudes among individuals that affect perceptions and attitudes as well as intergroup relations on campus (Hurtado et al., 1998; this article is a seminal piece on campus climate for diversity).

2. Although the college has student success and support programs such as an Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS), it does not have an official program for Black/African American or Latinx/Hispanic students. The lack of official programs has not only limited the support services available to Latinx/Hispanic students, but it has also impacted their sense of belonging, especially given that Cuesta College is a Hispanic Serving Institution.

3. The college's hidden curriculum is embedded in practices in-and-out of the classroom.

4. While systems have been implemented to augment the student experience (e.g., the use of Canvas for the tracking of course content), for some students these systems are not easy to navigate. Similarly, academic support services, such as locating and accessing tutoring in-person or online may be burdensome and at the CMC students' access to and the availability of resources are often scarce given the operational complications of providing services in an incarcerated setting.

The structural and procedural factors (friction point 3 and 4), the college's environment (friction point 2), and a lack of sense of belonging (friction points 1 and 2) are friction points that have perpetuated inequitable outcomes in the completion of transfer-level math and English for Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and first-generation college students.

Current Structure

Instruction

The underrepresentation of Black/African American and Latinx/Hispanic students in classrooms lends itself to implicit and explicit biases (e.g., beliefs that certain racial groups have less ability to succeed academically) from peers and instructors. While unintentional, instructors may underestimate the importance of creating a welcoming environment where Black/African American and Latinx/Hispanic students feel they belong. Instructors may be unaware of their own internalization of the larger society's systemic oppressions including but not limited to patriarchy, misogyny, classism, homophobia, transphobia, racism, ableism, and xenophobia. This internalization may be evident to Black/African American and Latinx/Hispanic students in even the most subtle forms of interactions and communications.

Instructors' words and actions can also impact Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and first-generation college students' perceptions of their abilities (Gutierrez, 2022). Impostorization—a term coined by Angelica S. Gutierrez (2022) to refer to the policies, practices, and interactions in the college environment—can cause students to question their intelligence, ability, and sense of belonging. Instructors may unknowingly engage in impostorization and aggravate students' impostor feelings. For example, a remark such as, "This is basic; you should know this," may trigger imposter feelings and imply that the student is unintelligent (Gutierrez, 2022). In fall of 2020, all Cuesta College students were invited to participate in the National Assessment of Collegiate Campus Climates (NACCC) survey. Hispanic/Latinx and Black/African American students were more likely to report being viewed as naturally less capable, jokes related to race that made them uncomfortable, and experiencing or hearing about racist signs, symbols, or graffiti on campus. Such racial tensions can nurture feelings of isolation and negatively impact Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and first-generation college students' academic success. The lack of racial diversity also impacts Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and first-generation college students' connections to the curriculum. The traditional curriculum (e.g., textbooks) is often written from a white heteronormative patriarchal perspective with little representation from communities of color. This lack of inclusivity obstructs students' sense of belonging, which has consistently been linked to success in college including course completions and persistence.

The college's hidden curriculum—the tacit rules/practices of a campus that insiders (e.g., staff, faculty) consider to be natural and common (Gable, 2021)—is another factor impeding equitable outcomes for first-generation college students. For instance, on course syllabi, students will often find information about "office hours." First-generation college students may not know what office hours are, why they should visit an instructor during office hours, and/or how to prepare for and maximize their time with an instructor during office hours. Additionally, rigid course policies, for example, strict deadlines and penalties for late work as well as other unwelcoming language in syllabi can inform the extent to which African American, Hispanic/Latinx, and first-generation colleges students feel valued in their learning experiences and that they belong in the classroom. Lastly, the current structure as it pertains to course offerings at the CMC is not logistically sound; both English and math courses are not always offered during the first year

Wraparound Services

The Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) model supports the enrollment, retention, and transfer of low-income and educationally disadvantaged students, including first-generation college students. Students have access to wraparound services such as career, academic, and personal counseling; priority registration; and help with registration. While EOPS supports the academic success of first-generation college students, eligibility criteria (e.g., income limit) restrict the reach of the program. For instance, for the fall 2021 and spring 2022 academic semesters,

329 students and 190 students, respectively, applied to the program and 111 and 52 students, respectively, were eligible.

The structure of the Cuesta Community College District is such that it has three physical locations, San Luis Obispo Campus, North County Campus, and the South County Center. Cuesta College also provides academic courses at the CMC. While multiple locations facilitate the reach of the institution, it can also be problematic because not all locations have equivalent student academic and support services, which can perpetuate inequities. Across campuses, key success services, such as the Writing Center and Math Lab may not be sufficiently visible and integrated into the student experience. Currently, there is little art and/or other representations of diverse cultures displayed throughout the common spaces in student success and support programs. Visually, whether it be through art or marketing materials, Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and first-generation college students are not likely to see themselves reflected. Additionally, the buildings are spread out with little to no signage to help students and their families find their way. The aesthetics of the physical environment in addition to adequate spaces for students to gather to comfortably socialize and study are important because they contribute to, inform, and reveal the campus culture. The campus culture can be a powerful tool for socialization; students are socialized through their perception of the campus' values (i.e., respect for individuals of racial/ethnic backgrounds,) and their participation in communal events. Such participation and engagement inside and outside of the classroom contribute to students' academic success and sense of belonging. Yet, despite programming efforts at Cuesta College, equity gaps still exist for Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and first-generation college students in this metric.

Ideal Structure

Instruction

In an ideal structure, Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and first-generation college students would encounter classrooms (physical and online) that recognize, celebrate, and nurture their multiple identities, especially those marginalized by larger societal forces. Accordingly, the curriculum would value the objective of liberating students from external and internal oppressions. All instructors would employ equity-minded, anti-racist, culturally responsive pedagogy, and high-impact active learning practices. English and math faculty would be sufficiently trained in the needs of Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and first-generation college students, specifically as it pertains to their psychosocial needs associated with first year transfer-level English and math. English and math faculty would continually receive disaggregated data on how Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and first-generation college students are progressing in English and math classes; faculty would use the data for continuous improvement of their courses. In English and math disciplines, Black/African American and Latinx/Hispanic full-time faculty would make up a representative percentage to the percentage of Black/African American and Latinx/Hispanic students. White instructors would have training about how their own

racialized identities are experienced and understood by Black/African American and Latinx/Hispanic students. Syllabi and other messages students receive about course expectations would be modified to create and promote an asset-based culture and convey that all students belong at Cuesta College. Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and first-generation college students would have access to, be familiar with, and utilize resources intended to enhance their first-year experience (e.g., Writing Center, Math Lab, Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, Disability Support Programs and Services, Student Health Services, etc.). Every student at the CMC would be enrolled in both English and math during the first semester. Lastly, as recommended by Associated Students of Cuesta College: a) there would be a concentrated effort to encourage faculty to return to teaching in-person courses and b) students would be able to provide feedback about instructors/courses every semester (instead of once every three years) and this feedback would be used by faculty for the continuous improvement of their courses.

Wraparound Services

The ideal campus structure would include diversity-minded, and equity minded practices across all sectors of all three campus locations. Faculty and staff would critically examine their practices to determine if historically underserved and racial/ethnic groups are equitably served. Campus spaces (in-and-out of the classroom) and at all three locations would reflect and promote a welcoming and safe environment for Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and first-generation college students; it would be an environment that validates their identities and nurtures their academic and personal development. Art and/or other representations of diverse cultures would be visible throughout the common spaces at all three campus locations. There would be aesthetically pleasing and bilingual (i.e., English and Spanish) signs throughout the campus locations to help direct students and their families. There would be comfortable and inviting spaces for students to gather to study and socialize. Continuous efforts would be made to ensure success and support services' practices and environmental factors enable engagement among racially diverse groups of students. The institution—classified staff, faculty, managers, and administrators—would accept responsibility for minoritized student engagement and success (Harper, 2009); instead of focusing on what students do to become engaged, key academic support services (e.g., tutoring, writing support, Counseling, etc.) would examine what it is doing to engage Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and first-generation college students. Accordingly, there would be efforts to maximize Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and first-generation college students' participation in communal events (e.g., opportunities for them to engage with their peers, staff, and faculty) to enhance their sense of belonging. The college would assess and leverage existing tools (e.g., Student Educational Plans) and programs (e.g., Extended Opportunity Programs and Services) to validate Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and first-generation college students' identities, nurture their academic and personal development, and promote their advancement and excellence. Black/African American students at the CMC would have access to and receive equitable academic and support services. Institutional policies, practices, documents, and communications to students would be

audited to guarantee campus priorities and values are equity-minded and race-conscious.

Necessary Transformation to Reach Ideal Structure

To shift Cuesta College's culture toward a more equity-minded one, the college will need to move from solely diversity-minded practices (e.g., increasing access and representation; celebrations of cultural traditions) toward equity minded practices (e.g., naming the racial/ethnic groups experiencing gaps in outcomes; all personnel are trained on culturally inclusive practices). To ignite and sustain the necessary transformation:

- All campus stakeholders—faculty, classified staff, managers, and administrators—will need to recognize their roles in producing (even if unintentionally) unequitable outcomes for Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and first-generation college students.
- All stakeholders will need to participate in regular and ongoing racial equity education, on topics such as how to embrace equity education; put into practice anti-racist efforts; and dismantle structures and/or policies that perpetuate inequities.
- Stakeholders will need to be invested in creating and maintaining a culture of inclusivity and belonging so that all individuals—students, faculty, classified staff, managers, and administrators—feel like they belong and matter and are valued.
- Instructional policies (e.g., guidelines for late work) and non-instructional policies (e.g., registration holds) need to be assessed to ensure that they are student and human-focused and equity-minded.
- An inventory and assessment of the support services at the CMC would be needed to understand how to provide equitable services within the permissible parameters.
- The college will need to critically assess the current services available to Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and first-generation college students and move forward with data-informed and equity-grounded changes that nurture students' academic and personal development.

Action Plan

Cuesta College's action plan for 2022-2025 will involve inquiry; capacity building; analyses of practices, policies, and structures; and programmatic enhancements.

Inquiry

Beginning the 2023 academic semester, the Guided Pathways Program's Student Success Teams (SSTs)—teams are managed by a Dean of Instruction with the support of a Guided Pathways Program Coordinator (GPPC)—will be leveraged to conduct inquiry. The GPPCs will facilitate semi-structured focus group interviews with

Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and first-generation college students. Students will have opportunities to describe their experiences in-and-out of the classroom; share their perspectives of the campus climate; disclose how they spend their time outside of the classroom; articulate their expectations of faculty, staff, and administrators; and recommend practical ways the institution can share and provide information (beyond the use of emails and text messages) and enhance their learning and success in English and math courses, engagement, and sense of belonging.

Capacity Building

Capacity building will occur over the three years (i.e., 2022-2025) and involve professional development (PD) for staff (including student employees), faculty, managers, and administrators. Potential topics include empathy; trauma informed foundations; cultural awareness; acceptance and belonging; neurodiversity; facing and addressing microaggressions; allyship; individual storytelling; culturally relevant curriculum development; and evidence-based strategies for supporting Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and first-generation college students. The college will build on the work of the JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) Academy by conducting an evaluation of the JEDI Academy to reflect on lessons learned and assess how it can be improved and scaled up to reach faculty who have not yet participated while continuing to engage those who have completed the program.

Analyses of Current Practices, Policies, and Structures

Aligned with inquiry and capacity building, there will be PD opportunities to expand individuals' capacities to critically assess existing practices, policies, and structures—for instance, audits of campus spaces (e.g., communal spaces); reviews of student success and support programs' (SSSPs) materials, practices, and procedures; curriculum documents such as Course Outlines of Record; and staff and faculty hiring policies and processes—for diversity, equity, and inclusion and cultural responsiveness. While this type of PD will occur as needed over the three years (i.e., 2022-2025), the college will begin its review of practices, policies, and structures during the 2023-2024 academic year.

Programmatic Enhancements

The college will build on the work of its embedded peer tutoring for first-year math courses by conducting an evaluation to reflect on lessons learned and assess how it can be improved and/or expanded (e.g., similar model with embedded peer tutors in first-year English courses). The college's SSSPs (e.g., EOPS, Outreach and Enrollment Services, Counseling, Disability Support Programs and Services, Financial Aid, etc.) will assess its current programming, practices, policies, and structures to better understand the experiences of Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and first-generation college students from entry through completion. For example, SSSPs will evaluate and assess the current student onboarding process to remove barriers and begin revamping the student experience. This will include a critical review of the application, orientation, pre and core-requisites, and student support referrals. Moreover, to better serve our

Black/African American students at the CMC, an inventory and assessment of the support services at CMC may be initiated to understand how to provide equitable services within the permissible parameters. Additional efforts will be made to investigate potential resources and programs designed to specifically address the needs of formerly incarcerated individuals.

Additional action steps include (but are not limited to):

- Review recommended guidelines for course caps for English and math courses, keeping in mind the objectives of AB705 and AB1705.
- Educate instructional faculty about campus resources for Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and first-generation college students. Develop a Canvas page that faculty can incorporate in their courses. At the very least, ensure there are effective web pages faculty can link within their Canvas courses.
- Arrange for faculty teaching entry-point English and math courses to collaborate on effective ways to orient students to college life at Cuesta and the resources that are available—and then incorporate the relevant information and strategies into their courses.
- Gather and disseminate disaggregated data by racially minoritized group, including Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and first-generation college students' success rates in transfer-level English and math courses.
- Require students to complete a Comprehensive Student Educational Plan.
- Designate a staff position as a specialist or liaison for Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, and first-generation college students.
- Add a "Black/African American," "Latinx/Hispanic," and "First-Generation College Student" link to the Cuesta College home page pop-up resources in multiple locations.
- Utilize the SSTs to develop plans for systematic outreach to Black/ African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and first-generation college students to support them as they navigate all aspects of their curricular and co-curricular experiences at the college.

Metric - Persistence from Primary Term to Secondary Term

For the metric persistence from primary term to secondary term, the main student populations experiencing disproportionate impact are Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and first-generation college students.

Student Groups and Target Outcomes

Student Groups	Outcomes by 2024-2025
Black/African American	Increase by 23.7% (i.e., 9) the persistence from primary term to secondary term for Black/African American students.
First-Generation	Increase by 13.5% (i.e., 67) the persistence from primary term to secondary term for first-generation college students.
Foster Youth	Increase by 26.8% (i.e., 11) the persistence from primary term to secondary term for foster youth students.

Friction Points

While Cuesta College has improved its compositional diversity (i.e., the numerical representation of various racial/ethnic groups) there continues to be an underrepresentation of people of color. In fact, in 2021-2022, 38% of students were from a racially minoritized group (i.e., Black/African American, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander, American Indian); 5 years ago, 37% of students were from a racially minoritized group. For the same academic year, there were 390 students who identified as Black/African American. Though this represents about a 17.5% increase from 5 years ago, students will not see any full-time Black/African American faculty. At Cuesta, racially minoritized students are more likely to be first-generation college students and/or foster youth. For example, for the 2021-2022 academic year, about 47% (i.e., 138 of 294) of foster youth students were from a racially minoritized group and about 31% (i.e., 90 of 294) were first-generation college students. Among the 90 foster youth students who were also first-generation college students, about 51% (i.e., 46) were from a racially minoritized group. In addition to race/ethnicity, it is also important to consider additional intersecting identities such as ability status, language, and legal status. For the 2021-2022 academic year, 140 students identified as both first-generation and undocumented and about 84% (i.e., 118 of the 140) were from a racially minoritized group.

Given the intersecting identities of students (i.e., the way students' salient identities and less salient identifies produce unique experiences with both opportunities and barriers) we believe their breadth of experiences require an intersectional approach. As such, we propose that the friction points for all three disproportionately impacted groups for this metric overlap.

Cuesta representatives have identified the following friction points:
1. The lack of compositional diversity has contributed to a lack of sense of belonging for racially minoritized students. As has been noted by researchers,

poor racial diversity contributes to stereotypical attitudes among individuals that affect perceptions and attitudes as well as intergroup relations on campus (Hurtado et al., 1998; this article is a seminal piece on campus climate).

2. The college's environment and online entrance points do not explicitly welcome Black/African American, foster youth, and first-generation college students. Students may not see the presence of groups that represent, welcome, and support them.
3. The college's hidden curriculum is embedded in practices in-and-out of the classroom.
4. While systems have been employed to augment the student experience (e.g., the use of Canvas for the tracking of course content), for some students these systems are not easy to navigate. Similarly, academic services, such as locating and accessing tutoring in-person or online may be burdensome.
5. While Cuesta College has student success and support programs such as a Basic Needs Center, Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, and Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education, it does not have an official program for foster youth. The lack of an official program has not only limited the support services available to foster youth students, but it has also impacted their sense of belonging.

Structural and procedural factors (friction point 3 and 4), low sense of belonging (friction point 1, 2, and 5) and the college environment (friction point 2) have perpetuated inequitable outcomes in the primary term to secondary term persistence of Black/ African American, foster youth, and first-generation college students.

Current Structure

Instruction

While unintentional, instructors may underestimate the importance of creating a welcoming environment where Black/African American, foster-youth, and first-generation college students feel they belong. The underrepresentation of racially minoritized students in a classroom lends itself to implicit and explicit biases (e.g., beliefs that certain racial groups cannot succeed academically) from peers and instructors. Similarly, instructors' words and actions can impact students' perceptions of their abilities (Gutierrez, 2022). Impostorization—a term coined by Angelica S. Gutierrez (2022) to refer to the policies, practices, and interactions in the college environment— can cause students to question their intelligence, ability, and sense of belonging. Instructors may unknowingly engage in impostorization and aggravate students' imposter feelings. For example, a remark such as, "This is basic; you should know this," may trigger imposter feelings and imply that the student is unintelligent (Gutierrez, 2022). Black/African American students who are exposed to blatant, implicit, and/or institutional racism are less likely to persist (Banks & Dohy, 2019). In fall of 2020, all Cuesta students were invited to participate in the National Assessment of Collegiate

Campus Climates (NACCC) survey. Black/African American students were more likely to report being viewed as naturally less capable; jokes related to race that made them uncomfortable; and experiencing or hearing about racist signs, symbols, or graffiti on campus. Such racial tensions on a predominately white campus can nurture feelings of isolation, which can increase the chances that a student will drop out (Banks & Dohy, 2019).

The college's hidden curriculum—the tacit rules/practices of a campus that insiders (e.g., staff, faculty) consider to be natural and common (Gable, 2021)—is a factor impeding equitable outcomes for first-generation college students. For instance, on course syllabi, students will often find information about "office hours." First-generation college students may not know what office hours are, why they should visit an instructor during office hours, and/or how to prepare for and maximize their time with an instructor during office hours. Moreover, rigid course policies, for instance, strict deadlines and penalties for late work as well as other unwelcoming language in syllabi can inform the extent to which Black/African American, foster-youth, and first-generation college students feel valued in their learning experiences and that they belong in the classroom.

Wraparound Services

While Cuesta College has student success and support programs such as a Basic Needs Center, Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS), and Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE), the college does not have a formal program dedicated to supporting the development and excellence of Black/African American students. The lack of an official program has not only limited the support services available to Black/African American students, but it has also impacted their sense of belonging. Similarly, the college does not have a formal program for foster youth. As has been highlighted in the research targeted support for foster youth is necessary to serve the unique needs of this student population (Gross, 2021). For example, foster youth students may be less likely than other first-generation and low-income students to complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) application. They may be more likely to struggle with mental health issues related to past trauma and lack the adult support and mentorship they need to navigate enrolling in and attending college (Gross, 2021). The absence of a designated program has not only limited the targeted support provided to foster youth students; it has also contributed to a lack of sense of belonging for foster youth students

Although Cuesta College has beautiful campuses with nice buildings and landscaping, there is little art and/or other representations of diverse cultures displayed throughout the common spaces of student success and support programs. Visually, whether it be through art or marketing materials, Black/African American, foster youth, and first-generation college students are not likely to see themselves reflected. Additionally, the buildings are spread out with little to no signage to help students and their families find their way. The aesthetics of the physical environment in addition to insufficient or adequate spaces for students to gather to comfortably socialize and study are important

because they contribute to, inform, and reveal the campus culture. The campus culture can be a powerful tool for socialization; students are socialized through their perceptions of the campus' values (i.e., respect for individuals of racial/ethnic backgrounds,) and their participation in communal events. Students' participation in communal events provides them with opportunities to engage with their peers, staff, and faculty. Moreover, a campus culture in which the campus' values are salient can help support students' understanding of their own cultural backgrounds and their understanding of and respect for unfamiliar cultures. Such social interactions and engagement contribute to students' sense of belonging and persistence. Yet, despite programming efforts at Cuesta College, equity gaps still exist for Black/African American, foster youth, and first-generation college students in this metric.

Ideal Structure

Instruction

The ideal structure would include classroom and other non-instructional environments that instill a powerful sense of belonging for Black/African American, foster youth, and first-generation college students. This would be partially achieved by a strong representation of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color among the faculty, classified staff, managers, and administrators. Hiring, tenure, retention, and promotion policies would promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and include accountability for the implementation and sustainability of DEI initiatives and policies. Instructors across disciplines would be well-versed in cultural humility, cultural competence, and culturally inclusive practices; faculty would adopt a growth mindset where a focus on improvement is the norm. Similarly, instructors would make conscious efforts to evade impostorization, including (but not limited to) avoiding comments such as "this is basic," and/or "you should know this;" asking a student to shorten or anglicize their name; and being fully attentive and present when a student is asking course-related questions during one-on-one interactions. Instructors would recognize that a Black/African American student who is in the numeric minority may already feel like an imposter, and their underrepresentation in the course content may exacerbate the imposter feelings. Accordingly, to ameliorate imposter feelings and enhance students' sense of belonging, course curriculum would reflect diverse cultural, racial, and ethnic perspectives. Syllabi and other messages students receive about course expectations would be modified to create and promote an asset-based culture and convey that all students belong in the classroom and at Cuesta College. All instructors would employ equity-minded, anti-racist, culturally responsive pedagogy, and high-impact active learning practices. There would also be ongoing and productive dialogues among faculty, staff, students, managers, and administrators to eliminate microaggressions and blatant, implicit, and institutional racism.

Wraparound Services

The ideal campus structure would include diversity-minded, and equity minded practices. Faculty and staff would critically examine their practices to determine if historically underserved racial/ethnic groups are equitably served. The college would

work toward developing and maintaining an environment that welcomes and validates Black/African American, foster youth, and first-generation college students' identities and nurtures their academic and personal development. This welcome, validation, and nurturing would come in part from faculty and staff who share similar identities and can serve as role models; the ideal structure would have racially/ethnically diverse personnel. There would be comprehensive and cohesive programs to empower Black/African American and foster youth students. Such programs would provide holistic wrap-around services such academic support, both formal (e.g., tutoring centers) and informal (e.g., peers, staff, faculty); food and housing support; direct connections to social workers and health care and mental health care providers, and financial aid, among other assistance. Similarly, the infrastructure of the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services model would be leveraged and augmented to enhance and maintain first-generation college students' academic and personal development. Black/African American, foster youth, and first-generation college students would have peer mentors support to help them navigate the hidden curriculum, including how to be successful in college (e.g., how to prepare for college courses, how to seek out academic and non-academic support).

Art and/or other representations of diverse cultures would be visible throughout the common spaces in student success and support programs. Campus spaces would reflect and promote a welcoming and safe environment for all students of color. All individuals—classified staff, managers, administrators, and faculty—would recognize their role and responsibility in learning about and implementing approaches that foster safe spaces and reject any form of racism. There would be comfortable and inviting spaces for students to gather to study and socialize. There would also be aesthetically pleasing and bilingual signs throughout the campus to help direct students and their families. Continuous efforts would be made to ensure success and support services' practices and environmental factors enable engagement among racially diverse groups of students. The institution—staff, managers, faculty, and administrators—would accept responsibility for minoritized student engagement and success (Harper, 2009); instead of focusing on what students do to become engaged, the institution would examine what it is doing to engage Black/African American, foster youth, and first-generation college students.

Necessary Transformation to Reach Ideal Structure

To shift Cuesta College's culture toward a more equity-minded one, the college will need to move from solely diversity-minded practices (e.g., increasing access and representation; celebrations of cultural traditions) toward equity minded practices (e.g., naming the racial/ethnic groups experiencing gaps in outcomes; all personnel are trained on culturally inclusive practices). To initiate and maintain the necessary transformation:

- All campus stakeholders—faculty, classified staff, managers, and administrators—will need to recognize their roles in producing (even if unintentionally) unequitable outcomes for Black/African American and other racially minoritized

students and critically examine practices to determine if Black/African American, foster youth, and first-generation college students are equitably served.

- All stakeholders will need to participate in regular and ongoing racial equity education, on topics such as how to embrace equity education; put into practice anti-racist efforts; and dismantle structures and/or policies that perpetuate inequities.
- Stakeholders will need to be invested in creating and maintaining a culture of inclusivity and belonging so that all individuals—students, faculty, classified staff, managers, and administrators—feel like they belong and matter and are valued.
- Instructional policies (e.g., guidelines for late work) and non-instructional policies (e.g., registration holds) also need to be assessed to ensure that they are student and human-focused and equity-minded.
- The college will need to intentionally include, value, and utilize racially minoritized students' input on processes that directly impact them (e.g., Student Complaint Resolution Process).
- The college will need to establish and properly maintain programs that validate Black/African American and foster youth students' identities, nurtures their academic and personal development, and promotes their advancement and excellence.
- The college will need to critically assess the current services available to first-generation college students and move forward with data-informed and equity-grounded changes that nurture first-generation college students' academic and personal development.

Action Plan

Cuesta College's action plan will focus on inquiry; capacity building; analyses of practices, policies, and structures; and programmatic enhancements.

Inquiry

During the 2023 academic semester (and subsequent semesters as needed), the Guided Pathways Program's Student Success Teams (SSTs)—teams include both classroom and non-classroom faculty and classified staff and are managed by a Dean of Instruction with the support of a Guided Pathways Program Coordinator (GPPC)—will be leveraged to conduct inquiry. To prioritize Black/African American, foster youth, and first-generation college students' intersecting identities (i.e., race/ethnicity, ability status, language, legal status, etc.) the GPPCs will organize and facilitate semi-structured focus group interviews. For example, while first-generation college students may share some similar experiences, the paths toward degree attainment will be distinct for those who are also undocumented. Focus-group interviews will provide students with opportunities to describe their experiences in-and-out of the classroom; share their perspectives of the campus climate/environment; disclose how they spend their time outside of the classroom; articulate their expectations of faculty, staff, and

administrators; and recommend practical ways the institution can share and provide information (beyond the use of emails and text messages) and enhance their learning, personal development, engagement, sense of belonging, and persistence.

Capacity Building

Capacity building will occur over the three years (i.e., 2022-2025) and involve professional development (PD) for staff (including student employees), faculty, managers, and administrators. Potential topics include facilitation methods for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI); trauma informed foundations; empathy; cultural awareness; acceptance and belonging; neurodiversity; facing and addressing microaggressions; allyship; individual storytelling; and culturally relevant curriculum development. The college will build on the work of the JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) Academy by conducting an evaluation of the JEDI Academy to reflect on lessons learned and assess how it can be improved, leveraged, and/or scaled up to reach faculty who have not yet participated while continuing to engage those who have completed the program. There will also be a process for soliciting and collecting feedback on why individuals opt out DEI professional development (e.g., what could the college do to encourage attendance from various stakeholders?).

Analyses of Current Practices, Policies, and Structures

Aligned with inquiry and capacity building, the college will seek to introduce professional development opportunities that provide best practices on how to expand individuals' capacities to critically assess existing practices, policies, and structures—for instance, audits of communal spaces; reviews of student success and support programs' (SSSPs) messaging, materials, practices, and procedures; curriculum documents such as Course Outlines of Record; and staff and faculty hiring policies and processes—for DEI and cultural responsiveness. While this type of PD will occur as needed throughout the three years (i.e., 2022-2025), the college will begin its review of practices, policies, and structures during the 2023-2024 academic year. These efforts will focus on supporting the primary term to secondary term persistence of Black/African American, foster youth, and first-generation college students as well as the retention of racially minoritized faculty, staff, and managers.

Programmatic Enhancements

By 2023-2024, Cuesta College will have a strategic plan that outlines how it will leverage its current SSSPs in conjunction with the Umoja community model to establish holistic support services for Black/African American students. The Umoja model includes matriculation, academic pathways, wrap-around support services, and culturally responsive curriculum and practices. Research on the Umoja Community program reveals that the model is successful in strengthening students' sense of belonging and academic outcomes, including, transferrable units earned, course success rate, movement from basic skills to transfer level English and math, and persistence (Messier, Williams, Hall, & Visueta, 2018). Similarly, by 2023-2024 the college will understand what is needed to have a program modeled after Guardian Scholars and/or

NextUp. Both Guardian Scholars and NextUp emphasize holistic wrap-around services, including advocacy, creating vibrant communities to engage current and former foster youth, empowerment, degree completion, and career-paths to employment. The college will examine know it can leverage Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS), Basic Needs Center, and Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE) to maximize support for foster youth and first-generation college students. Cuesta College's SSSPs (e.g., Outreach and Enrollment Services, Counseling, Disability Support Programs and Services, Financial Aid, etc.) will assess its current programming, practices, policies, and structures to better understand the experiences of racially minoritized students from entry through completion. These assessments will help classified staff and faculty understand what factors are stifling or enabling Black/African American, foster youth, and first-generation college students' primary term-to-secondary persistence and inform what changes need to be made to move toward equity-minded and race-conscious engagement practices.

Metric - Transfer

For the metric successful enrollment, the student populations experiencing disproportionate impact are Black/African American, first-generation, and Latinx/Hispanic students.

Student Groups and Target Outcomes

Student Groups	Outcomes by 2024-2025
Black/African American	Increase by 125% (i.e., 5) the transfer to a four-year institution within three years for Black/African American students.
First-Generation	Increase by 173.3% (i.e., 78 additional transfers) the transfer to a four-year institution within three years for first-generation college students.
Latinx/Hispanic	Increase by 29.1% (i.e., 25) the transfer to a four-year institution within three years for Latinx/Hispanic students.

Friction Points

While Cuesta College has improved its compositional diversity (i.e., the numerical representation of various racial/ethnic groups) there continues to be an underrepresentation of people of color. For the 2021-2022 academic year, 38% of students were from a racially minoritized group (i.e., Black/African American, Asian, Hispanic/Latinx, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander, American Indian); five years ago, 37% of students were from a racially minoritized group. There has also been a decline in the Latinx/Hispanic student population. For the 2018-2019 academic term, 5935 students identified as Latinx/Hispanic. For the 2021-2022 academic year, 5147 students identified as such; a decline of about 13.3%. For the same academic year, there were 390 students who identified as Black/African American and while this represents about a 17.5% increase from five years ago, students will not see any full-time Black/African American faculty. Critical analyses of our data also inform us that a considerable proportion of our Black/African American male students are currently enrolled in courses at the California Men's Colony (CMC).

At Cuesta College, students who identify as first-generation college students are also more likely to be students of color. For example, for the 2021-2022 academic year about 63.4% of all first-generation college (FGC) students were from a racially minoritized group (i.e., Black/African American, Asian, Hispanic/Latinx, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, American Indian). In addition to race/ethnicity, it is also important to consider students' intersecting identities such as ability status, language, and legal status. For the 2021-2022 academic year, 140 students identified as both first-generation and undocumented and about 84% (i.e., 118 of the 140) were from a racially minoritized group. Given the intersecting identities of our students (i.e., the way students' salient identities and less salient identifies produce unique experiences with both opportunities and barriers) we propose that the friction points for all three disproportionately impacted groups for this metric overlap.

Cuesta representatives have identified the following friction points:

1. The lack of compositional diversity among students and personnel has contributed to a lack of sense of belonging for racially minoritized students. As has been noted in the research, poor racial diversity contributes to stereotypical attitudes among individuals that affect perceptions and attitudes as well as intergroup relations on campus (Hurtado et al., 1998; this article is a seminal piece on campus climate).
2. Although Cuesta College has student success and support programs such as an Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, it does not have an official program for Latinx/Hispanic students. The lack of an official program has not only limited the support services available to Latinx/Hispanic students, but it has also impacted their sense of belonging, especially given that Cuesta College is a Hispanic Serving Institution.
3. The college's hidden curriculum is embedded in practices in-and-out of the classroom.
4. The college's physical environment and online entrance points do not explicitly welcome first-gen, and Latinx/Hispanic students. Black/African American, first-gen, and Latinx/Hispanic students may not see the presence of groups that represent, welcome, and support them.
5. Strict course and campus policies and procedures can become barriers for students to continue their educational pathways.

Policies and procedures (friction point 5), the hidden curriculum (friction point 3) and a lack of sense of belonging (friction point 1, 2, and 4), have perpetuated inequitable outcomes in the transfer rates of Black/African American, first-generation, and Latinx/Hispanic students.

Current Structure

Instruction

The underrepresentation of Black/African American and Latinx/Hispanic students in classrooms lends itself to implicit and explicit biases (e.g., beliefs that certain racial groups have less ability to succeed academically) from peers and instructors. While unintentional, faculty may underestimate the importance of creating a welcoming environment where Black/African American and Latinx/Hispanic students feel they belong. Faculty may be unaware of their own internalization of the larger society's systemic oppressions including but not limited to patriarchy, misogyny, classism, homophobia, transphobia, racism, ableism, and xenophobia. This internalization may be evident to students in even the most subtle forms of interactions and communications. Instructors' words and actions can also impact students' perceptions of their abilities (Gutierrez, 2022). Impostorization—refers to the policies, practices, and interactions in the college environment—can cause students to question their intelligence, ability, and sense of belonging (Gutierrez, 2022). Instructors may unknowingly engage in

impostorization and aggravate students' impostor feelings. For example, a remark such as, "This is basic; you should know this," may trigger imposter feelings and imply that the student is unintelligent (Gutierrez, 2022). In fall of 2020, all Cuesta College students were invited to participate in the National Assessment of Collegiate Campus Climates (NACCC) survey. Sixty-two percent of students of color indicated that they mattered in classes with white professors, compared to 70% of white students. Students of color were also significantly less likely to report receiving messages of affirmation from white professors. Less than half (42%) of students of color felt encouraged about having discussions about race, and only 29% of white students felt encouraged to have discussions about race. Not being able to name and understand racial disparities means that students are not receiving the relevant preparation for work and study in a diverse society.

The lack of racial diversity also impacts Black/African American, first-generation, and Latinx/Hispanic students' connections to the curriculum. The typical curriculum is often written from a white heteronormative patriarchal perspective with little representation from communities of color. This lack of inclusivity obstructs Black/African American, first-generation, and Latinx/Hispanic students' sense of belonging, which has consistently been linked to academic success outcomes. The college's hidden curriculum—the tacit rules/practices of a campus that insiders (e.g., staff, faculty) consider to be natural and common (Gable, 2021)—is another factor impeding equitable outcomes for first-generation college students. For instance, on course syllabi, students will often find information about "office hours." First-generation college students may not know what office hours are, why they should visit an instructor during office hours, and/or how to prepare for and maximize their time with an instructor during office hours. Moreover, rigid course policies, for instance, strict deadlines and penalties for late work as well as other unwelcoming language in syllabi can inform the extent to which Black/African American, first-generation, and Latinx/Hispanic students feel that they belong in the classroom and valued in their learning experiences.

Wraparound Services

The existing structural and procedural systems heavily put the onus on students to seek out support, be well-informed, and decipher information. For example, the current onboarding structure for students focuses on applying to the college and registering for courses and lacks a focus on placing the student on a transfer pathway. Though the current online orientation platform is meant to facilitate accessibility (i.e., students do not need to physically be on campus) it provides students with a lot of overwhelming information that may or may not apply to the unique needs of the student.

While Cuesta College has student success and support programs such as a Basic Needs Center, Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, and Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education to support Black/African American and Latinx/Hispanic students who are also first-generation and/or low-income, the college does not have formal programs dedicated to supporting the development and excellence of Black/African American and Latinx/Hispanic students. The lack of an official program has not only

limited the support services available to Black/African American and Latinx/Hispanic students, but it has also stifled their sense of belonging. Across campuses, key success services, such as the Transfer Center and Career Center may not be sufficiently visible and integrated into the student experience. Currently, there is little art and/or other representations of diverse cultures displayed throughout the common spaces in student success and support programs. Visually, whether it be through art or marketing materials, Black/African American, first-generation, and Latinx/Hispanic students are not likely to see themselves reflected. Additionally, the buildings are spread out with little to no signage to help students and their families find their way. The aesthetics of the physical environment in addition to adequate spaces for students to gather to comfortably socialize and study are important because they contribute to, inform, and reveal the campus culture. The campus culture can be a powerful tool for socialization; students are socialized through their perceptions of the campus' values (i.e., respect for individuals of racial/ethnic backgrounds,) and their participation in communal events. Such participation and engagement inside and outside of the classroom contribute to students' academic success. Yet, despite programming efforts at Cuesta College, equity gaps still exist for Black/African American, first-generation, and Latinx/Hispanic students in this metric.

Ideal Structure

Instruction

In an ideal structure, Black/African American, first-generation, and Latinx/Hispanic students would encounter classrooms (physical and online) that recognize, celebrate, and nurture their multiple identities, especially those marginalized by larger societal forces. This would also include an institutional practice of incorporating anti-racism practices and addressing the outside conditions affecting students and their communities (Felix & Gonzalez, 2022). This would be partially achieved by a strong representation of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color among the faculty, classified staff, managers, and administrators. Hiring, tenure, retention, and promotion policies would promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and include accountability for the implementation and sustainability of DEI. Syllabi and other messages students receive about course expectations would be modified to create and promote an asset-based culture and convey that all students belong in the classroom and at Cuesta College. Instructors would make conscious efforts to evade impostorization, including (but not limited to) avoiding comments such as "this is basic," and/or "you should know this;" asking a student to shorten or anglicize their name; and being fully attentive and present when a student is asking course-related questions during one-on-one interactions.

To contribute to Black/African American, first-generation, and Latinx/Hispanic students' engagement and sense of belonging there would be robust learning communities, including peer relationship-building, mentoring, staff and faculty support, and access to campus resources (Baronian, 2022). These factors are key to students developing "transfer capital" over time, which contributes to persistence towards the transfer

outcome (Jabbar et al., 2022). In an ideal structure, this would be complemented through the development of a comprehensive Black Studies and Latinx Studies curriculum in line with the development of an Ethnic Studies graduation requirement for all community college students (Adams, 2005; Mayasa, 2020).

Wraparound Services

The ideal campus structure would include diversity-minded, and equity minded practices. Faculty and staff would critically examine their practices to determine if Black/African American, first-generation, and Latinx/Hispanic students are equitably served. The college would work toward developing and maintaining an environment that welcomes and validates students' identities and nurtures their academic and personal development. This welcome, validation, and nurturing would come in part from faculty and staff who share similar identities and can serve as role models; the ideal structure would have racially/ethnically diverse personnel. There would be official support programs providing wraparound services and focused on the advancement and excellence of Black/African American and Latinx/Hispanic students. The infrastructure of the Extended Opportunity Program and Services model would be leveraged to enhance and maintain an environment that welcomes and validates first-generation college students' identities and nurtures their academic and personal development. This welcome, validation, and nurturing would come in part from a formal peer mentoring program. Through such a program, first-generation college students would have peer mentor guidance to help them navigate the hidden curriculum, including how to be successful in college (e.g., how to prepare for college courses, how to seek out academic and non-academic support).

There would be a dedicated counselor to support students with a Comprehensive Student Education Plan at the start of their educational journey, help map their transfer journey according to their transfer interest to a University of California or California State University campus and provide TAG (transfer admission guarantee) eligibility and review the course requirements needed to apply and be eligible for a successful transfer. Ideally, orientation would be structured according to the individual student status, such as, new, returning, or transfer student, for the information to be applicable. Ideally, orientation would be structured according to the individual student status, such as new, returning, or transfer student, for the information to be applicable. Art and/or other representations of diverse cultures would be displayed and visible throughout the common spaces in student success and support programs. Campus spaces would reflect and promote a welcoming and safe environment for Black/African American, first-generation, and Latinx/Hispanic students. There would be comfortable and inviting spaces for students to gather to study and socialize. There would also be aesthetically pleasing and bilingual signs throughout the campus to help direct students and their families. Continuous efforts would be made to ensure success and support services practices and environmental factors enable engagement among racially diverse groups of students. The institution—staff, faculty, managers, and administrators—would need to accept responsibility for minoritized student engagement and success (Harper, 2009); instead of focusing on what students do to become engaged, the institution

needs to examine what it is doing to engage students. Lastly, institutional policies and documents would be audited to guarantee campus priorities and values are equity-minded and race-conscious.

Necessary Transformation to Reach Ideal Structure

To shift Cuesta College's culture toward a more equity-minded one, the college will need to move from solely diversity-minded practices (e.g., increasing access and representation; celebrations of cultural traditions) toward equity minded practices (e.g., naming the racial/ethnic groups experiencing gaps in outcomes; all personnel are trained on culturally inclusive practices). To initiate and sustain the necessary transformation:

- All campus stakeholders—faculty, classified staff, managers, and administrators—will need to recognize their roles in producing (even if unintentionally) unequitable outcomes for racially minoritized students and critically examine their practices to determine if Black/African American, first-generation, and Latinx/Hispanic students are equitably served.
- All stakeholders will need to participate in regular and ongoing racial equity education, on topics such as how to embrace equity education; put into practice anti-racist efforts; and dismantle structures and/or policies that perpetuate inequities.
- Stakeholders will need to be invested in creating and maintaining a culture of inclusivity and belonging so that all individuals—students, faculty, classified staff, managers, and administrators—feel like they belong and matter and are valued.
- Instructional policies (e.g., guidelines for late work) and non-instructional policies (e.g., registration holds) need to be assessed to ensure that they are student and human-focused and equity-minded.
- The college will need to intentionally include, value, and utilize racially minoritized students' input on processes that directly impact them (e.g., Student Complaint Resolution Process, academic probation, curriculum of the Ethnic Studies program, etc.).
- The college will need to establish and properly maintain programs that validate Black/African American and Latins/Hispanic students' identities, nurtures their academic and personal development, and promotes their advancement and excellence.
- The college will need to critically assess the current services available to first-generation college students and move forward with data-informed and equity-grounded changes that nurture first-generation college students' academic and personal development.

Action Plan

Cuesta College's action plan will focus on inquiry; capacity building; analyses of practices, policies, and structures; and programmatic enhancements.

Inquiry

Beginning the 2023 academic semester, the Guided Pathways Program's Student Success Teams (SSTs)—teams are managed by a Dean of Instruction with the support of a Guided Pathways Program Coordinator (GPPC)—will be leveraged to conduct inquiry. Each SST will participate in data exploration (quantitative and qualitative) to holistically understand the experiences—potential barriers as well as the strengths/assets—of Black/African American, first-generation, and Latinx/Hispanic students. The GPPCs will facilitate semi-structured focus group interviews with Black/African American, first-generation, and Latinx/Hispanic students. Students will have opportunities to describe their experiences in-and-out of the classroom; share their perspectives of the campus climate; disclose how they spend their time outside of the classroom; articulate their expectations of faculty, staff, and administrators; and recommend practical ways the institution can share and provide information (beyond the use of emails and text messages) and support their educational goals, personal development, engagement, and sense of belonging.

Capacity Building

Capacity building will occur over the three years (i.e., 2022-2025) and involve professional development (PD) for staff (including student employees), faculty, managers, and administrators. Potential topics include facilitation methods for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI); trauma informed foundations; empathy; cultural awareness; acceptance and belonging; neurodiversity; inclusion of people with disabilities; facing and addressing microaggressions; allyship; individual storytelling; and culturally relevant curriculum development. The college will build on the work of the JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) Academy by conducting an evaluation of the JEDI Academy to reflect on lessons learned and assess how it can be improved and scaled up to reach faculty who have not yet participated while continuing to engage those who have completed the program.

Analyses of Current Practices, Policies, and Structures

Aligned with inquiry and capacity building, there will be PD opportunities to expand individuals' abilities to critically assess existing practices, policies, and structures—for instance, audits of communal spaces; reviews of student success and support programs' (SSSPs) materials and messages to students; curriculum documents such as Course Outlines of Record; and staff and faculty hiring policies and processes—for DEI and cultural responsiveness. While this type of PD will occur as needed over the three years (i.e., 2022-2025), the college will begin its review of practices, policies, and structures during the 2023-2024 academic year. For example, SSSPs will evaluate and assess the current student onboarding process to remove barriers and begin revamping the

student experience. This will include a critical review of the application, orientation, pre and core-requisites, and student support referrals.

Programmatic Enhancements

Cuesta College will build on the work of its University Bound program by conducting an evaluation to reflect on lessons learned and assess how it can be improved, leveraged, and/or scaled up. By 2023-2024, the college will have a strategic plan that outlines how it will leverage its current SSSPs in conjunction with the Umoja community model to establish holistic services for Black/African American students. The Umoja model includes matriculation, academic pathways, wrap-around support services, and culturally responsive curriculum and practices. Research on the Umoja Community program reveals that the model is successful in strengthening students' sense of belonging and academic outcomes, including, transferrable units earned, course success rate, movement from basic skills to transfer level English and math, and persistence (Messier et al., 2018). By 2023-2024, the college will also understand what is needed to have a program modeled after the Puente Project as part of its SSSPs and how it can leverage it in conjunction with the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services model to maximize support for first generation college students. The Puente Project's framework includes a mentoring component as well as cross-disciplinary and multicultural approaches to promoting first generation college students' success and degree completion. The college's SSSPs (e.g., Outreach and Enrollment Services, Counseling, Disability Support Programs and Services, Financial Aid, etc.) will assess its current programming, practices, policies, and structures to better understand the experiences of racially minoritized students from entry through completion. These assessments will help classified staff and faculty understand what factors are stifling or enabling the transfer experiences of Black/African American, first-generation, and Latinx/Hispanic students and inform what changes need to be made to move toward equity-minded and race-conscious engagement practices.

Additional action steps include (but are not limited to):
- Development of a comprehensive Black Studies and Latinx Studies curriculum aligned with the development of Ethnic Studies.
- Establishment of a peer mentoring program.
- Utilize the SSTs to ensure students have a Student Education Plan at the start of their educational journey.
- Redesign orientation to the individual student status, such as new, returning, or transfer student, for the information to be applicable.

Metric - Vision for Success Definition of Completion

For the metric successful enrollment, the student populations experiencing disproportionate impact are Black/African American, first-generation, and Latinx/Hispanic students.

Student Groups and Target Outcomes

Student Groups	Outcomes by 2024-2025
First-Generation	Increase by 74.2% (i.e., 49) the Vision for Success definition of completion within three years for first-generation college students.
Foster Youth	Increase by 266.7% (i.e., 8) the Vision for Success definition of completion within three years for foster youth students.

Friction Points

At Cuesta College, 9% of individuals who identify as first-generation college students achieve the Vision for Success definition of completion within three years, compared to 16% of subsequent-generation students. Under 4% of students who identify as foster youth or former foster youth achieve the Vision for Success definition of completion within three years, compared to almost 14% of non-foster-youth students. Several friction points for first-generation college students and foster youth at Cuesta College are present and recognized throughout the established institutional culture, practices, and policies in place. One persistent friction point is the physical location and isolation of the main campus from affordable and available housing for all students; many students face a one-way commute of 45 minutes via private vehicle and twice that via public transportation. While the instructional culture is becoming more student-centered with foundations based in diversity, equity, and inclusion frameworks through professional development, practices related to lack of representation in content, a dearth of bilingual outreach and engagement materials, instructional resistance to accommodations for students with disabilities, and rigid grading structures continue to exist and perpetuate success barriers for first-generation and foster youth students.

Students who identify as foster youth are also more likely to be first-generation college students. While there is a formal program available for students who identify as first-generation college students, the college does not have an official student success and support program for foster youth. The lack of a designated program has contributed to a lack of sense of belonging for foster youth students. Finally, we recognize that faculty and staff are not representative of our racial and ethnic student populations. Numerous studies demonstrate the importance of demographic match between students and the faculty, staff, and administration in the educational setting, and Cuesta's lack of match creates obstacles including language, imposter syndrome, and a general lack of understanding of what and how to ask for help.

Current Structure

Instruction

As has been noted by researchers, instructors' words and actions can impact students' perceptions of their abilities (Gutierrez, 2022). Impostorization—a term coined by Angelica S. Gutierrez (2022) to refer to the policies, practices, and interactions in the college environment—can cause students to question their intelligence, ability, and sense of belonging. Instructors may unknowingly engage in impostorization and aggravate students' impostor feelings. For example, a remark such as, "This is basic; you should know this," may trigger imposter feelings and imply that the student is unintelligent (Gutierrez, 2022). For foster youth and first-generation college students who also identify with a racially minoritized group, the lack of racial diversity in the classroom not only impacts whether they see themselves among their peers and instructors, it also effects their connections to the curriculum. The typical curriculum is often written from upper-middle class, white, heteronormative, and patriarchal perspectives with little representation of social classes, minoritized communities, and/or LGBTQ+ perspectives. This lack of inclusivity obstructs students' sense of belonging, which has consistently been linked to success including persistence and well-being. The college's hidden curriculum— the tacit rules/practices of a campus that insiders (e.g., staff, faculty) consider to be natural and common (Gable, 2021)—is an additional element impeding equitable outcomes for first-generation and foster youth students. For instance, on course syllabi, students will often find information about "office hours." Foster youth students may not know what office hours are, why they should visit an instructor during office hours, and/or how to prepare for and maximize their time with an instructor during office hours.

Another issue that affects first-generation college students is a focus on the Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADTs). The number of ADTs offered at Cuesta is one of the highest in the state, and while ADTs are designed to give students the quickest path to transfer, the degree requirements leave no room for support courses that might benefit first-generation college students, such as College Success Studies. Finally, the concept of "rigor" is still misapplied by some instructional faculty at the college. As a result, some courses create power dynamics via rigid grading, testing, and attendance practices, along with an emphasis on complex academic vocabulary and content over culturally relevant pedagogy. Such rigid course policies and other unwelcoming language in syllabi can inform the extent to which first-generation and foster youth students feel they belong in the classroom and valued in their learning experiences.

Wraparound Services

While Cuesta College has student success and support programs such as a Basic Needs Center, Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, and Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education, it does not have a formal program for foster youth. As has been highlighted in the research targeted support for foster youth is necessary to serve the unique needs of this student population (Gross, 2021). For example, foster youth students may be less likely than other first-generation and low-income students

to complete the FAFSA application. They may be more likely to struggle with mental health issues related to past trauma and lack the adult support and mentorship they need to navigate enrolling in and attending college (Gross, 2021). The absence of a designated program has not only limited the targeted support provided to foster youth students; it has also contributed to a lack of sense of belonging for foster youth students.

Cuesta College has beautiful campuses with nice buildings and landscaping. However, there is little art or other representations of diverse cultures displayed throughout the common spaces. Visually, whether it be through art or marketing materials, first-generation and foster youth students who also identify as students of color are not likely to see themselves reflected. Additionally, the buildings are spread out with little to no signage to help students and their families find their way. Compounding the wayfinding challenges, several services were eliminated (e.g., coffee cart) or reduced (e.g., bookstore hours, cafeteria service) due to the pandemic, and these have not yet returned. The aesthetics of the physical environment, in addition to adequate spaces for students to gather to comfortably socialize and study, are important because they contribute to, inform, and reveal the campus culture. The campus culture can be a powerful tool for socialization; students are socialized through their perception of the campus' values (i.e., respect for individuals of racial/ethnic backgrounds,) and their participation in communal events. A campus culture in which the campus' values are salient can help support students' understanding of their own cultural backgrounds and their understanding of and respect for unfamiliar cultures. Consequently, students' participation in communal events provides them with opportunities to engage with their peers, staff, and faculty on campus. Such social interactions are associated with enhancing students' sense of belonging and aligned with students' sense of belonging is their engagement. Students actively engaged inside and outside the classroom are more likely to persist. Yet, despite programming efforts at Cuesta College, equity gaps still exist for first-generation and foster youth in this metric.

Ideal Structure

Instruction

The ideal structure would include classroom environments that instill a powerful sense of belonging for first-generation and foster youth students. Instructors across disciplines would be well-versed in trauma informed foundations, cultural humility, cultural competence, and culturally inclusive practices; faculty would adopt a growth mindset where a focus on improvement is the norm. All instructors would employ equity-minded, anti-racist, culturally responsive pedagogy and high-impact, active learning practices. Similarly, instructors would make conscious efforts to evade impostorization, including (but not limited to) avoiding comments such as "this is basic," and/or "you should know this;" asking a student to shorten or anglicize their name; and being fully attentive and present when a student is asking course-related questions during one-on-one interactions. Accordingly, to ameliorate imposter feelings and enhance first-generation and foster youth students' sense of belonging, course curriculum would

reflect diverse cultural, racial, and ethnic perspectives. Syllabi and other messages students receive about course expectations would be modified to create and promote an asset-based culture and convey that all students belong in the classroom and at Cuesta College. The college would provide instructional support services through a variety of media (e.g., written guides, video tutorials, peer mentors) that demystify the hidden curriculum. There would also be ongoing and productive dialogues among faculty to educate themselves about the challenges first-generation and foster youth students face and then take steps to mitigate those challenges.

Wraparound Services

The ideal structure would include a comprehensive and cohesive program to empower foster youth students. Such a program would provide holistic wrap-around services such academic support, both formal (e.g., tutoring centers) and informal (e.g., peers, staff, faculty); food and housing support; direct connections to social workers and health care and mental health care providers, and financial aid, among other assistance. First-generation and foster youth students would have peer mentors support to help them navigate the hidden curriculum, including how to be successful in college (e.g., how to prepare for college courses, how to seek out academic and non-academic support). Art or other representations of diverse cultures would be displayed and visible throughout the common spaces in student success and support programs. Campus spaces would promote a welcoming and safe environment for first-generation college students and students of color. There would be comfortable and inviting spaces for students to gather to study and socialize. There would also be aesthetically pleasing and bilingual signs throughout the campus to help direct students and their families. The institution—staff, faculty, and administrators—would need to accept responsibility for minoritized student engagement and success (Harper, 2009); instead of focusing on what first-generation college students do to become engaged, the institution needs to examine what it is doing to engage them. Similarly, institutional policies and documents would be audited to guarantee campus priorities and values are equity-minded and race-conscious.

Necessary Transformation to Reach Ideal Structure

To transform the institution, we need to look at the structural elements of Cuesta's policies, practices, and procedures that create barriers to student success. Current strategies reflect color-averse choices and other deficit thinking that further separate students, faculty, and staff. As we learned throughout the pandemic, it is imperative that we humanize the educational experience and communicate to everyone in our community that they matter and that they belong. This includes our faculty and staff, but especially our students for whom college is a new experience. We need to review and revise practices and policies that prioritize efficiency and comfort over humanism and relationships. This means ensuring we refer to qualitative data as seriously as we do quantitative data. Numbers alone will not help us understand why first-generation and foster youth students are facing barriers to success, and we must learn to create spaces for students to share their experiences in their own voices. We also must choose

to interrogate our own biases in processes such as hiring and course design rather than employ color-averse strategies to avoid them (i.e., masking identities in hiring process). A transparent, inclusive decision-making process would also provide more opportunity for first-generation college student success. Providing all stakeholders, the opportunity to engage in (or have representation in) decisions affecting the college community would ensure that new practices meaningfully address needs and goals across minoritized student populations.

Action Plan

Cuesta College's action plan will focus on inquiry; capacity building; analyses of practices, policies, and structures; and programmatic enhancements.

Inquiry

During the 2023 academic semester (and subsequent semesters as needed), the Guided Pathways Program's Student Success Teams (SSTs)—teams include both classroom and non-classroom faculty and classified staff and are managed by a Dean of Instruction with the support of a Guided Pathways Program Coordinator (GPPC)—will be leveraged to conduct inquiry.

The GPPCs will organize and facilitate semi-structured focus group interviews to capture first-generation and foster youth students' voices. Focus-group interviews will be instrumental in highlighting students' intersecting identities; the way both their salient identities (i.e., race/ethnicity, ability status, language, legal status) and less salient identities produce unique experiences with both opportunities and barriers. For example, while foster youth students may share some similar experiences, the paths toward degree attainment will be distinct for those who are also from a racially minoritized group. Focus-group interviews will provide first-generation and foster youth students with opportunities to describe their experiences in-and-out of the classroom; share their perspectives of the campus environment; disclose how they spend their time outside of the classroom; articulate their expectations of faculty, staff, and administrators; and recommend practical ways the institution can share and provide information (beyond the use of emails and text messages) and enhance their learning, personal development, engagement, sense of belonging, and persistence.

Capacity Building

Capacity building will occur over the three years (i.e., 2022-2025) and involve professional development (PD) for staff (including student employees), faculty, managers, and administrators. Potential topics include facilitation methods for Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI); trauma informed foundations; empathy; cultural awareness; acceptance and belonging; neurodiversity; facing and addressing microaggressions; allyship; individual storytelling; and culturally relevant curriculum development. The college will build on the work of the JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) Academy by conducting an evaluation of the JEDI Academy to reflect on lessons learned and assess how it can be improved, leveraged, and/or scaled up to

reach faculty who have not yet participated while continuing to engage those who have completed the program.

Analyses of Practices, Policies, and Structures

Aligned with inquiry and capacity building, the college will seek to introduce PD opportunities that provide best practices on how to expand individuals' capacities to critically assess existing policies and structures—for instance audits of campus spaces (e.g., communal spaces); reviews of student success and support programs' (SSSPs) messages to students, materials, practices, and procedures; curriculum documents such as Course Outlines of Record; and staff and faculty hiring policies and processes—for DEI and cultural responsiveness. While this type of PD will occur as needed throughout the three years (2022-2025), the college will begin its review of policies and structures during the 2023-2024 academic year. These efforts will focus on supporting the persistence of first-generation college students and minoritized students and retention of minoritized faculty, classified staff, and managers.

Programmatic Enhancements

By 2023-2024, the college will understand what is needed to have a program modeled after Guardian Scholars and/or NextUp as part of its SSSPs and how it can capitalize on the Educational Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS), Basic Needs Center, and Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE) models to maximize support for first-generation and foster youth students. Both Guardian Scholars and NextUp emphasize holistic wrap-around services, including advocacy, creating vibrant communities to engage current and former foster youth, empowerment, degree completion, and career-paths to employment. Cuesta College's SSSPs (e.g., EOPS, Outreach and Enrollment Services, Counseling, Disability Support Programs and Services, Financial Aid, etc.) will assess its current programming, practices, policies, and structures to better understand the experiences of first-generation college students and other minoritized students from entry through completion. For example, SSSPs will evaluate and assess the current student onboarding process to remove barriers and begin revamping the student experience. This will include a critical review of the application, orientation, pre and core-requisites, and student support referrals. This assessment will help classified staff and faculty understand what factors are stifling or enabling first-generation college students' attainment of the Vision for Success (i.e., completion within three years) and inform what changes need to be made to move toward equity-minded and race-conscious engagement practices.

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