Decolonizing the Mind: Building Equity Through Courageous Leadership

6th Annual Forum on the Latino Community

Dr. Lisa Aguñera Lawrenson, Vice President of Instruction, American River College
Education of Latinos: A Brief History
Hispanic, black high school dropout rates reach record lows

% of 18- to 24-year-olds dropping out of high school

Notes: The dropout rate shown refers to the share of 18-to 24-year-olds who were not enrolled in school and had not completed high school. Blacks and Asians include the Hispanic portions of those groups. Whites include only non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
College enrollment by race and ethnicity

% of 18- to 24-year-olds enrolled in college

- Asians: 64%
- Whites: 42%
- Hispanics: 35%
- Blacks: 33%

Notes: Blacks and Asians include the Hispanic portions of those groups. Whites include only non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race.
PEW RESEARCH CENTER
College completion by race and ethnicity

% ages 25-29 with a bachelor’s degree or more, 2014

- Asians: 63%
- Whites: 41%
- Blacks: 22%
- Hispanics: 15%

Note: Whites, blacks and Asians include only non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race.

Pew Research Center
Segregated Schools for Latinos

RULING GIVES MEXICAN CHILDREN EQUAL RIGHTS

Segregation of Mexican schoolchildren of the State. He held that parents of Mexican children in separate districts in violation of the Constitution. The opinion was written in a suit filed by the U.S. Judge Paul J. McCormick to be a violation of the rights under the 14th Amendment. The opinion states that the methods of segregating children in the districts foster adverse conditions for relief and an injurious record that the method of segregation is not the result of the inability of the children to learn English by lack of opportunity or because of lack of educational qualifications. The ruling, according to the opinion, overruled a determination that the results of the previous suit were not a barrier to intervention.
Historical Attitudes About Educating Latinos

“There would be a revolution in the community if the Mexicans wanted to come to White schools. . . . Sentiment is bitterly against it” an educator said.

Educators prepared Hispanic children to labor in the fields and take the place of their parents, and superintendents and school boards did not enforce compulsory attendance for Hispanics.

A Texas farmer said this about educating Hispanics: “Educated Mexicans are the hardest to handle. . . . I will be frank. They would make more desirable citizens if they would stop about the seventh grade.”

The school years in Mexican schools were shortened by up to two and half years.

Ronald Takaki, A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America 1993
"Since 2009, Canyon High School in Anaheim, California has celebrated ‘Seniores and Senoritas Day.’ Encouraged to don Latino-themed attire, students came to school dressed as gang members, gardeners, and border patrol agents. Some wore moustaches and sombreros; another came as a pregnant woman with a stroller. The tradition ended after the complaints of a former student, Jared Garcia-Kessler, 19. School officials now say they are committed to diversity."

NBC Latino
Raul R. Reyes

"Discrimination Against Latinos Still a Major Problem"
It is widely accepted that racism is supported and sustained in American higher education institutions...White privilege is part of the substructure of racism; the “hidden infrastructure” that imperceptibly guides and propels all aspects of the educational process: from admissions to student retention, and even the curricula.

Addressing White Privilege in Higher Education
China Jenkins, Houston Community College System, TX
“Every system is perfectly designed to get the result that it does.”

— W. Edwards Deming
LATINO REPRESENTATION

17.8 % of the U.S. Population

1% of the nearly 500,000 elected officials in federal, state, and local governments
US CONGRESS

• 38 Latinos out of 435 members in the House of Representatives (Parity=74)

• 4 Latinos out of 100 senators in the Senate (Parity=17)
Health Care
5.5% of doctors are Latino according to the Office of Minority Health

4.8% of nurses are Latino according to Minority Nurse
In 2017, the Census Bureau reported that 49.0 percent of Hispanics had private health care insurance, as compared to 75.4 percent for non-Hispanic whites.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health Profile: Hispanic/Latino Americans
Latinas are 17 times more likely to die from diabetes than non-Hispanic white women.

Center for American Progress, “Fact Sheet: The State of Latinas in the United States”
“Every system is perfectly designed to get the result that it does.”

— W. Edwards Deming
Colonized Mindset
“A colonial mentality is the internalized attitude of ethnic or cultural inferiority felt by people as a result of colonization, i.e. them being colonized by another group. It corresponds with the belief that the cultural values of the colonizer are inherently superior to one's own.”

1. Nunning, Vera. Fictions of Empire and the Un-making of Imperialist Identities
Decolonization Process

Rediscovey and Recovery → Mourning → Dreaming → Commitment → Action
Steps to Decolonizing Our Minds
Step One: Unpack Your Colonized Mindset

Recognize internalized racism
- Buying into stereotypes about your own group
- Identifying with the majority culture
- Denying/hiding your own

Learn about your history, culture, language, and identity

Ask questions:
- What is the history of your organization and the land it sits on?
- Who was it named after?
- How does this history impact how your organization operates today?

Share your knowledge
American River College Indigenous Land Statement

We acknowledge the land which we occupy today as the traditional home of the Maidu and Miwok tribal nations. These sovereign people have been the caretakers of this land since time immemorial. Despite centuries of genocide and occupation, the Maidu and Miwok continue as vibrant and resilient Federally recognized tribes and bands. We take this opportunity to acknowledge the generations that have gone before as well as the present-day Maidu and Miwok people.
Step Two: Feel It, Name It, (Re)claim It

• Recognize the impact of colonization on you:
  “My colonized mindset has caused me to not identify with being Latinx. The cost to me is anxiety, loss of connection to who I am”

• Educate others about what the impacts of colonization are on the community

• Seek others who are/are not like-minded, build trust, and then organize

• Learn about your culture and find inspiration and wisdom in the voices of your community
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<th>Don’t know what to do (DK)</th>
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<td>Willing to employ practices (W)</td>
<td>The Allies</td>
<td>The Choir</td>
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<td>Unwilling to employ practices (UW)</td>
<td>The Resisters</td>
<td>The Defiant</td>
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Dr. Luke Wood
Step Three: Create a Vision

- Envision what is possible. Think BIG.
- Work collaboratively
- Build Capacity: Gather Allies and the Choir to educate the Oblivious and Passive Resisters and redirect the Defiant and the Active Resisters
- **YOU** can lead and create a vision and implement it
Achieving the Dream

Build capacity to sustain change
Step Four: Build Leadership

Seek out a Mentor
- Can be anyone
- Further on career path than you
- Ask for mentorship

Self Mentoring
- Assess your skills, seek training
- Study leadership and leaders
- Volunteer to lead (community efforts, work projects, teams)

Mentor Latinos and Others Dedicated to Social Justice
- Build new leadership with an equity framework
- Job shadow
- Identify leadership potential, especially among the historically marginalized

Develop youth leaders
Step Five: Action Planning

Create action plan
- identify and commit to goal(s)
- timelines and milestones
- deliverables
- who does what
- success measures
- constraints
- communication plan

Remain focused on the plan, track milestone progress
American River College strives to uphold the dignity and humanity of every student and employee. We are committed to equity and social justice through equity-minded education, transformative leadership, and community engagement. We believe this commitment is essential to achieving our mission and enhancing our community.
• **Students First** - The College engages and connects students early and often to people, programs, and services as an integrated educational experience. **By providing personalized, proactive support, the College fosters relationships that ensure all students, particularly the historically underserved and marginalized, persist, learn, and succeed.**
Strategic Goal 3

- **Exemplary Teaching, Learning & Working Environment** - The College ensures an equitable, safe, and inclusive teaching, learning, and working environment. Culturally relevant curriculum, innovative, high-quality instructional methods and technologies, exemplary academic and student support services, and comprehensive and integrated professional development create the best conditions for teaching and learning. The College promotes liberation and honors the dignity, humanity, and contributions of all members of our community.
American River College - Definition of Liberation

*Liberation* is the act of dismantling systems of oppression and disrupting systems of power and privilege. This process includes the voices of those who have been excluded or marginalized. Liberation strives beyond equity through social justice to pursue true freedom. (ARC’s Institutional Equity Plan)
Step Six: Implement Action Plan

- Connect action to the strategic plan/goals
- Hold others and yourself accountable
- Compromiso: Co-promise to find the best way forward
- Make the case for change (show data, tell the story)
- Disrupt the norm of the colonized mindset - Ask Why??
- Ask courageous questions
- Focus on equity outcomes and systems of power and privilege
  - Who benefits?
  - Who loses?
Cuídate - Self Care

• BE A RADICAL AND ENGAGE IN SELF CARE
• CREATE BOUNDARIES
• KNOW YOUR LIMITS
• ASK FOR HELP
• THRIVE
• TAKE BREAKS