The RP Group
Workshop Series: Building IRPE Capacity to Advance Equity-Driven Change
January 21, 28, and February 4, 2022

Research analysts from the Citrus College Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness (IRPE) department attended the RP Group's *Building IRPE Capacity to Advance Equity-Driven Change* virtual workshop series in early 2022. The series focused on methods and practices IRPE offices can utilize to promote dialogue and foster campus cultures to act on racial equity data and inspire positive change for racially minoritized students. Each workshop within the series covered approaches and strategies to assess the data culture at institutions, facilitate equity data conversations, and cultivate inquiry and curiosity. The three workshops included the following topics:

> Workshop #1 – Strategies to Foster Your Campus' Data Identity and Data Culture
> Workshop #2 – How to Establish an Equity-Driven Culture of Inquiry
> Workshop #3 – Facilitating Conversations About Race, Racial Equity, and Racism Stemming From Data

Workshop #1 – Strategies to Foster Your Campus' Data Identity and Data Culture

For purposes of this workshop, *equity-mindedness* is defined as a framework for understanding the causes of equity gaps and what is needed to close them. Being equity-minded involves five components:

- Being race-conscious
- Using disaggregated data to identify racial inequities
- Viewing racial inequities as problems of practice
- Feeling a personal and institutional responsibility to address inequities
- Knowing the difference between equality vs. equity

Building trust in data and identifying a data culture at institutions was also discussed. An assessment tool called *College's Data Culture* was shared as a way to explore various facets of an institutions' support of and use of evidence. The four dimensions of the assessment tool are:

1. Sufficient funding to support data and inquiry (data leadership),
2. Presence of data within decision-making and continuous improvement,
3. Availability of data to non-researchers, and
4. Professional development

Each domain offers an opportunity to enhance equity and inclusion:

1. Data champions (*Funding*)
2. Surveys with disaggregated data (*Presence*)
3. Instructor-level data (*Availability*)
4. Making sense of data/Responding to evidence (*Professional Development*)

Examples of strategies for addressing data culture challenges were shared:
1. Using data to enhance literacy and engagement
2. Avoiding analysis paralysis
3. Getting out of technical weeds

Workshop #2 – How to Establish an Equity-Driven Culture of Inquiry

The session emphasized applying an equity-minded approach to promote inquiry and the importance of asking *purposeful* questions before going into action and implementing solutions. The following case study was provided as an example:

> A college experienced a 35% math course success rate which led to required tutoring as a solution to increase this percentage. However, a later outcome showed no subsequent change in the success rate. After an inquiry process and survey were administered, it was discovered that the tutors were never trained on how to be an effective tutor.

An ideal inquiry process:
1. Identify the issue: What challenge are we trying to address for students?
2. Gather data: Formulate questions and gather additional data to understand the issue, and diagnose root causes of the gap.
3. Evaluate: Assess the impact of implemented solutions. Was progress made on the outcome/metric?
4. Act and launch: Develop data-informed solutions and implement purposeful changes.

There are critical concepts in communicating equity data. Groups or individuals should use an equity-minded (not deficit-minded) approach when discussing or analyzing equity data. Dialogues should be approached from a standpoint of how the institution can improve in its practices and policies and not on what the students are lacking, such as academic preparedness.

It is important to realize that overall rate/number outcomes are not evidence of equity. Data must be disaggregated by race/ethnicity.

After layers of asking "Why?", institutions may conclude that there is more within their power to change thus prompting evidence of change:
a. Why is the problem happening?
b. And why is that (answer from previous question) happening?
c. And why is that (answer from previous question) happening?
d. And why is that (answer from previous question) happening?
e. And why is that (answer from previous question) happening?
f. **Final answer concludes that it is something the institution can control**

The college's governance processes can be a springboard to foster inquiry-based conversations which includes the college's governance principles and philosophy. Weaving disaggregated demographic data throughout the program review data dashboards and enhancing specificity of disaggregated data are some examples of solid foundational practices.

Colleges should focus on process assessments to ensure that purposeful remedies are implemented. Lastly, colleges should identify deficit-minded rhetoric and reframe conversations that reflect an equity-minded approach.

Workshop #3 – Facilitating Conversations About Race, Racial Equity, and Racism Stemming from Data

The last session of the workshop series focused on how to facilitate conversations about equity data. It is important to take steps before the start of the conversation to lighten the atmosphere of what may sometimes be a tense and sensitive topic. This is especially true when there are members of the group who are mere acquaintances with each other, or there are people who are meeting others for the first time at the meeting. Building trust and rapport among participants is important.

To ease the atmosphere and promote a fruitful discussion, the following pre-discussion strategies were shared for trust-building:
- Ice-breaking activities which will allow group members to engage in conversation not related to the meeting topic
- Setting community agreements to promote a level of trust among members
- Making sure there is equality among participants

How to navigate and engage resistance on sensitive topics was discussed. Workshop participants learned that not all resistance is an indication of opposition. The perceived resistance may due to the way how people are trying to engage in deeper thinking and articulate their thought process. It can be an opportunity for researchers to listen, address concerns and build coalition.