

AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH TO IMPROVING BLACK MALE STUDENT PERSISTENCE  
AT FOUR CORNERS COMMUNITY COLLEGE: REFRAMING THE ISSUES

A disquisition presented to the faculty of the Graduate School of  
Western Carolina University in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Educational Leadership.

By

Rebecca G. Childs

Committee Chairs:

Dr. Kofi Lomotey, PhD

Chancellor John Bardo & Deborah Bardo Distinguished Professor of Educational Leadership

Human Services Department

Dr. Aarti Bellara, PhD

Assistant Professor Educational Research

Human Services Department

Committee Members:

Dr. Munene F. Mwaniki, PhD

Associate Professor

Department of Anthropology and Sociology

Natasha Lipscomb, MPA

Vice President of Student Success Services

Four Corners Community College

February 2024

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

– Romans 12:2

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I praise God for working all things together for my good and His divine purpose. I also thank...

@ My husband, Jose, my daughters Annah and Gabriella, and my stepdaughters Michel and Margarita, for being my biggest fans and allowing me the opportunity to embark on this three-year academic adventure.

@ Mom for teaching me how to be a woman of faith, and for all those trips to Kinko's where I learned how to turn passion into publications.

@ Dad for teaching me to dream big dreams and to never give up on academic ambitions.

@ Chris and Jon for teaching me to be tough and for always having my back.

@ Grammy for representing true wisdom, creativity, and longevity.

@ Adrienne for being my running-mate from USC to doctoral degrees.

@ La República Dominicana for the opportunity to cultivate my craft as an educator.

@ Dr. Kofi Lomotey for modeling respected leadership that never shouts but always shows up.

@ Dr. Aarti Bellara for guiding the methods and keeping me grounded.

@ Dr. Brandi Hinnant-Crawford for affirming my place and modeling scholarly brilliance.

@ Dr. Darrius Stanely for the 8-minute challenge that set the stage for what is to come.

@ Dr. Emily Virtue for seeing me as a writer and showing me that persistence drives enrollment.

@ Natasha Lipscomb for opening doors, shining light, and sharing practical knowledge.

@ Dr. Munene Mwaniki for offering your expertise in support of my disquisition process.

@ Equity Scorecard Initiative Design Team for your authentic feedback and encouragement.

@ Four Corners Community College colleagues for partnering with me in this equity work.

@ Family and friends for checking in and reminding me that this degree is bigger than me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables .....	vi
List of Figures .....	vii
Abstract .....	viii
Introduction.....	1
Michael’s Choice.....	1
A National Issue.....	1
A Problem-Solving Approach.....	2
Disquisition Roadmap.....	3
Literature Review.....	4
Review Process.....	4
Problem of Practice.....	5
Underling Contexts.....	7
Theoretical Framework .....	8
Literature Opening.....	9
Local Context .....	11
Four Corners Community College.....	11
History of the Problem.....	15
Causal Analysis .....	18
My Role and Positionality.....	21
The Equity Scorecard Re-Imagined.....	23
Background Information .....	23
Equity Scorecard Initiative .....	27
Methods.....	36
Data Collection.....	36
Data Analysis.....	40
Results.....	47
Participants.....	47
PDSA Cycles.....	50
Driver Measures.....	51
Process Measures.....	68
Outcome Measures .....	74
Balance Measures.....	83
Hidden Findings.....	85
Discussion and Implications.....	88
Equity Scorecard Initiative.....	88
Policy.....	92
Practice.....	92
Future Research.....	93
Lessons Learned.....	94
Black Male Student Persistence.....	94
Equity Work and Improvement Science.....	94
The Disquisition Process.....	95

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

Conclusion .....	96
Summary of the Work.....	96
Limitations.....	96
Future Equity Work at FCCC.....	99
Bottom Line.....	100
References.....	102
Appendix A. Equity Scorecard Qualtrics Survey Instrument.....	110
Appendix B. Semi-Structured Participant Interview #1 Protocol (After 3 Weeks).....	117
Appendix C. Semi-Structured Participant Interview #2 Protocol (After 6 Weeks).....	118
Appendix D. Pre Equity-Mindedness Survey Instrument .....	119
Appendix E. Post Equity-Mindedness Survey Instrument .....	121
Appendix F. Implementation Timeline .....	123
Appendix G. Student Satisfaction Survey Instrument.....	124
Appendix H. Equity Scorecard Plain Text Survey Instrument .....	125
Appendix I. Email Templates .....	127
Appendix J. Informed Consent for Interviews .....	134
Appendix K. Informed Consent for Surveys.....	137
Appendix L. Fidelity Checklist.....	140
Appendix M. Participant Orientation Presentation .....	141
Appendix N. Participant Closing Meeting Presentation.....	148
Appendix O. PDSA Cycle Modifications (PDSA 1 to PDSA 2) .....	154
Appendix P. Equity Scorecard Initiative Recruitment Graphics .....	156
Appendix Q. Bank of Equitable Service Delivery Practices.....	158
Appendix R. Equity Scorecard Initiative Mitigation Strategies .....	159
Appendix S. Driver Diagram of Black Male Student Persistence at FCCC.....	160
Appendix T. Data Collection and Analysis Overview .....	161
Appendix U. Fishbone Diagram.....	162
Appendix V. Persistence Data Visualizations.....	163

**List of Tables**

Table 1	Participant Demographics.....	48
Table 2	Student Satisfaction Survey Results for Did We Answer Your Question PDSA 1.....	56
Table 3	Student Satisfaction Survey Results for Did We Answer Your Question PDSA 2.....	64
Table 4	Fidelity Checklist Data for PDSA 2.....	74
Table 5	Pre and Post Equity-Mindedness Survey Totals for PDSA 1 and PDSA 2.....	78
Table 6	Paired Samples T-Test for PDSA 1 and PDSA 2 Combined.....	79
Table 7	Paired Samples T-Test Descriptives for PDSA 1 and PDSA 2 Combined.....	79
Table 8	FCCC Black Male Student Persistence Rates for 2019 – 2023.....	83
Table 9	FCCC Black Female Persistence Rates for 2019 – 2023.....	85
Table 10	FCCC Black Male Curriculum Program Enrollment for Summer 2023.....	87

**List of Figures**

Figure 1	FCCC Fall 2021 Cohort First-Year Progression By Sex & Race/Ethnicity.....	12
Figure 2	FCCC First-Year Persistence Rates for Males by Race/Ethnicity.....	13
Figure 3	Success Metrics for FCCC Male Students by Race.....	16
Figure 4	My Problem of Practice Statement.....	16
Figure 5	Black Male Student Persistence Fishbone (Ishikawa) Diagram.....	19
Figure 6	Driver Diagram of Black Male Student Persistence at FCCC.....	25
Figure 7	Theory of Improvement Statement.....	26
Figure 8	Theory of Improvement Diagram.....	27
Figure 9	Equity Scorecard SMART Goals Diagram.....	28
Figure 10	Equity Scorecard Initiative Process.....	31
Figure 11	Equity Scorecard Initiative Timeline.....	33
Figure 12	Equity Scorecard Initiative Recruitment Graphic.....	34
Figure 13	Qualitative Coding Categories.....	43
Figure 14	Data Collection and Analysis Overview.....	46
Figure 15	Participant Demographics by Race and Gender.....	49
Figure 16	Equity Scorecard Weekly Modes for PDSA 1.....	51
Figure 17	Sample of Equity Scorecard Open-Response Answers PDSA 1.....	53
Figure 18	Student Satisfaction Survey Results for Did We Answer Your Question PDSA 1.....	56
Figure 19	Student Satisfaction Survey Results for How Would You Rate Your Service PDSA 1.....	58
Figure 20	Equity Scorecard Weekly Modes for PDSA 2.....	59
Figure 21	Sample of Equity Scorecard Open-Response Answers PDSA 2.....	62
Figure 22	Student Satisfaction Survey Results for Did We Answer Your Question PDSA 2.....	64
Figure 23	Student Satisfaction Survey Results for How Would You Rate Your Service PDSA 2.....	66
Figure 24	Equity Scorecard Question Modes for PDSA 1 and PDSA 2 Combined.....	67
Figure 25	Interviews at a Glance for PDSA 1.....	70
Figure 26	Interviews at a Glance for PDSA 2.....	72
Figure 27	Fidelity Checklist Data for PDSA 2.....	73
Figure 28	Percentage of Participants with Gains by Domain in PDSA 1.....	75
Figure 29	Percentage of Participants with Gains by Domain in PDSA 2.....	76
Figure 30	Percentage of Participants with Gains by Domain in PDSA 1 and PDSA 2 Combined.....	77
Figure 31	Selected Post Equity-Mindedness Survey Open-Ended Responses for PDSA 1 and PDSA 2.....	80
Figure 32	FCCC Black Male Persistence Rates for 2019 – 2023.....	82
Figure 33	FCCC Black Female Persistence Rates for 2019 – 2023.....	84
Figure 34	FCCC Black Male Curriculum Program Enrollment for Summer 2023.....	86

### **Abstract**

Most Black males envision community colleges as a gateway to higher education and upward mobility. Unfortunately, success metrics from across the United States reveal that community colleges fail to facilitate equitable outcomes for these students. A combination of factors creates campus climates that are not conducive to Black male student sense of belonging and persistence. Efforts to address this problem of practice often include mentoring initiatives and other student-focused programming. Less attention is given to mitigating the systemic root causes that create the conditions that perpetuate low Black male student persistence rates. In this disquisition, I examine the implementation of an Equity Scorecard initiative at a regional community college. The initiative was designed to improve educator equity-mindedness and service delivery, which impact Black male student sense of belonging and persistence. Using the Improvement Science framework, I incorporated two Plan-Study-Do-Act (PDSA) cycles and utilized practical measures to evaluate how structured practitioner reflection impacted staff member equity-mindedness and service delivery. By reframing the issue of Black male student persistence as a matter of institutional responsibility, the findings of this study have important practice and policy implications that can support equity work in institutions of higher education.

*Keywords:* persistence, equity-mindedness, Black male student, sense of belonging, Improvement Science, Equity Scorecard, community college



## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

*“It actually causes me to stop and reflect, because I feel like I operate with like guiding principles. But with this, with this scorecard, it gives me a chance to really stop and think about the execution of those guiding principles.” - Paul*

### **The Problem: Black Male Student Persistence in Community Colleges**

#### **Michael’s Choice**

As he cautiously walks down the familiar bus steps, Michael turns back and looks at the driver, who offers a nod of encouragement. Once on the ground, Michael’s feet falter again. He looks out at the seemingly endless parking lot and sees a modern-day moat – yet another barrier to pursuing his academic dreams. He has envisioned this day countless times in his mind, but now that he is faced with the reality of a new semester, doubts bombard his thoughts and challenge his will. Will he belong? Will he succeed? Will they see *him*? Determined to defy the stereotypes of a Black man in America, he pushes down the doubts and makes the 200-yard trek to the registration building of his local community college. As he reaches for the door, the magnitude of the moment and his decision to continue fighting for his family’s future through education causes him to pause once more. Can this place really provide a pathway to a better life?

#### **A National Issue**

While over 70% of Black male students who pursue public higher education turn to community colleges as a gateway to higher education and upward mobility (Harris et al., 2015; Baber et al., 2015; Wood & Harris, 2017; Harrison & Palacios, 2014), key outcome metrics show substantial persistence challenges for this student group in community colleges across the United States. Literature on the topic reveals limited institutional capacity to create environments that

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

foster Black male students' sense of belonging and success (Bush & Bush, 2010; Brooks et al., 2013). More specifically, these open access institutions fail to leverage “critical moments” (Wood & Harris, 2017, p. 85) with Black male students as opportunities to affirm initial enrollment decisions, increase enrollment satisfaction, and deliver institutional services that support completion and success (Hotchkins et al., 2021).

Recent national events, including the 2020 murder of George Floyd at the hands of law enforcement officials, have shined light on the Black male experience and systemic injustice that disproportionately limits their opportunities for success. Since degree completion impacts critical life outcomes including earning potential, economic mobility, social mobility, incarceration likelihood, and life expectancy (Bush & Bush, 2010; State Community College System, 2019), inequities perpetuated by community colleges can have lifelong impacts on Black male students, their families, and their communities. Addressing Black male persistence disparities in community colleges is, therefore, a matter of national importance.

### **A Problem-Solving Approach**

In this disquisition, I address Black male student persistence in community colleges. While many doctoral programs utilize the dissertation process as the culminating academic opportunity for students to conduct research, analyze, and present their findings, the disquisition process empowers students with the opportunity to grow as researchers and problem solvers within their unique professional context (Lomotey, 2020). By focusing on scholarly inquiry guided by improvement science, the Educational Leadership doctoral program at Western Carolina University embraces the disquisition as a vehicle to address issues of equity, social justice, and ethics within educational systems (Lomotey, 2020). The disquisition's practical use

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

and application make it an appropriate tool to study and promote lasting improvement in Black male student persistence.

### **Disquisition Roadmap**

The following disquisition is divided into eight main sections. I begin with a literature review that lays the groundwork for my problem of practice and includes the key contextual considerations, theoretical framework, and openings in the literature that I attempt to fill with this disquisition. Next, I provide an overview of the local context, Four Corners Community College<sup>1</sup>, where the improvement initiative took place. Then, I describe the improvement initiative, including my theory of improvement and the initiative design. I follow with an explanation of the criteria for evaluation and describe the data collection and analysis methods. In the subsequent results section, I provide an overview of the participants' demographics and the major findings of the two implementation cycles of my change idea. Next, I offer a summary of the implications of this work for policy, practitioners, and future research. After discussing the overarching lessons learned, I conclude with the limitations of the study and opportunities for future equity work at Four Corners Community College.

---

<sup>1</sup> Four Corners Community College (pseudonym) requested anonymity as a condition of approval for this intervention. Names, citations, and references that could reveal the institution's identity have been masked or redacted.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

*“I feel like, you know, during the moment of service delivery, I am more aware of picking up on key, you know, like little keys or clues, that maybe there are things that are making their experience different than other students.” – Rob*

### **Literature Review**

In this section, I offer a review of foundational literature related to Black male student persistence in community colleges. After briefly summarizing my literature review process, I examine the elements most directly tied to the problem, including sense of belonging and equity-mindedness. Then, I explain the underlying contexts related to the problem, from historical, equity and justice, and policy perspectives. Next, I introduce the theoretical framework I use in this disquisition and explain why it is an appropriate lens. Finally, I conclude this section with a discussion of how, in this study, I address an opening in the existing literature related to this problem of practice.

### **Review Process**

To better understand the issue of Black male student persistence in community colleges, I searched existing literature using Western Carolina University’s Hunter Library *OneSearch* discovery tool. I filtered results for peer-reviewed journal articles related to this problem of practice. In my search, I used key terms such as: *Black men, African American men, community college, persistence, sense of belonging, student experience, student success, student services, critical race theory, reflective practice, equity, and service delivery*. I narrowed the search by using a combination of these terms, which evolved as I refined the causal analysis. While certain scholars were more prolific in their contributions to the discourse, I was intentional about trying to include a variety of authors who offer different perspectives on the topic. I used the *Mendeley*

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

website as a reference manager, which allowed me to organize, annotate, and refer to the articles throughout the disquisition process.

### **Problem of Practice**

#### ***Black Male Student Persistence***

What is persistence? According to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (2023), persistence is the percentage of students who return to college for a second year. Research shows that 71% of Black male students look to community colleges as their gateway to public higher education and upward mobility (Harrison & Palacios, 2014); however, less than one-third of these students achieve their academic objectives – including certificate, degree, or transfer goals – within six years (Wood & Harris, 2017). Though they enter educational institutions with goals and ambitions, Black male students face unwelcoming environments that lack supports to cultivate their success and achievement (Bivens & Wood, 2016). This is significant because college degree attainment impacts critical life outcomes including economic and social mobility, professional resilience, incarceration likelihood, and even life expectancy (Bush & Bush, 2010). As a result, Black male student success impacts families, communities, and ultimately society. While some community colleges have taken steps that, on the surface, appear to address Black male student persistence, many of these programs, such as mentoring programs, are based on deficit thinking and seek to “fix” the students rather than the systemic inequities within the institution. Ultimately, a combination of factors creates environments that are not conducive to Black male student sense of belonging. When students lack connections to the institution, they are less likely to persist (Strayhorn, 2019).

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

### *Sense of Belonging*

Student sense of belonging is a significant factor that impacts Black male student persistence. If students of color do not feel a sense of connection or belonging in the institution, they are less likely to realize their potential and persist to completion (Harris & Wood, 2013). Strayhorn (2019) defines sense of belonging as, “students’ perceived social support on campus, a feeling or sensation of connectedness, and the experience of mattering or feeling cared about, accepted, respected, valued by, and important to the campus community or others on campus such as faculty, staff, and peers” (p. 4). This definition highlights the complex and critical nature of sense of belonging that has far-reaching consequences for how students see themselves within the institutional context. While Black male students at historically Black institutions report stronger feelings of institutional support and connection, Black males who enroll in predominantly White institutions report increased feelings of being undervalued and subject to racist treatment (Bush & Bush, 2010). Hotchkins et al. (2021) found that, “For Black students to be successful within community colleges, it is essential for institutional agents to promote the development of sense of belonging” (p. 64). The actions of educators form perceptions, and those perceptions fuel Black male student enrollment satisfaction and sense of belonging (Hotchkins et al., 2021).

### *Equity-Mindedness*

Equity-mindedness is a critical concept that influences educator action and inaction on community college campuses. Dowd et al. (2012) define equity-mindedness as a cognitive frame that enables educators to see disparate student outcomes as issues of institutional responsibility. Rather than blame students when gaps occur, equity-minded educators look inward to identify individual and collective policies, practices, and processes that hinder

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

equitable student outcomes (Bensimon, 2007) and strive to address matters from their systemic roots. This systemic approach to change is necessary to address profound disparities such as Black male student persistence.

### **Underlying Contexts**

#### *History*

To deconstruct the challenges that impact Black male student persistence in community colleges, I consider the underlying historical context that perpetuates this problem of practice. Beginning in the Jim Crow era, in response to fears of increased mobility for Blacks (Smiley & Fakunle, 2016), the image of Black men in the United States has intentionally been portrayed as one of “savages and brute monsters” (p. 353) who pose an imminent threat to society in general and White women in particular (Smiley & Fakunle, 2016). Works of late 19th-century and early 20th-century writers perpetuated this baseless caricature of Black men through, “anti-black propaganda that found its way into scientific journals, local newspapers, and best-selling novels focused on the stereotype of the black brute” (Pilgrim, 2000, para. 5). The remnants of this deliberate act of deception are revealed in the tense and fearful receptions Black male students receive when they step onto the campus and engage with institutional agents. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that a significant portion of faculty and staff in higher education are White women. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (n.d.), 35% of full-time faculty in 2021 were White women, a rate second only to White men. As a result, the systemically embedded “brute” caricature that led to horrific lynchings in the not-so-distant past provides the backdrop of Black male student service experiences today.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

### *Policy, Equity, and Justice*

Community colleges are state-funded and state-sanctioned institutions designed to offer open access programs that expand opportunities for educational advancement and workforce development. Noticeable shifts in discourse during the height of the *Black Lives Matter* movement in 2020 and 2021 sparked conversations regarding racist policies and practices that hindered minoritized student success (Perez-Lopez, 2022). Minority male initiatives increased across campuses, with an intensified focus on equitable outcomes. Policies articulated the need for equitable outcomes as a metric of institutional effectiveness and organizations, like the Lumina Foundation, advanced race-based institutional efforts in higher education, like the REACH Collaborative, which is designed to create sustainable career pathways for adults of color (Lumina Foundation, 2024). As I write this disquisition, however, the policy context for community colleges is tenuous. After two years of seemingly forward-moving agendas, like targeted initiatives designed to promote the retention and success of men of color within community colleges, the political pendulum has swung in the opposite direction. In the wake of the Supreme Court's decision to ban affirmative action in higher education (Avery, 2023), state legislatures are wielding their power to counter recent equity advancement. Now, institutions are bracing for the impact of new legislation that essentially prohibits state governments and community colleges from creating workplaces that address issues of White supremacy and issues of power with respect to race.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### *Critical Race Theory*

Evolving out of a need to address diminishing civil rights progress in the 1970s, Critical Race Theory (CRT) began as a movement in legal studies that brought attention to the interplay



## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

between race, racism, and power (Delgado et al., 2017). The CRT lens reveals the underlying mechanisms at work within the community college context. Just as the law "reproduces, reifies, and normalizes racism" (Capper, 2019, p. 103), community colleges reproduce and normalize low persistence rates for Black male students. This reality is evident in the discourse, which emphasizes the failure of the students rather than the failure of the system. Since systems are fundamentally designed to achieve the results they achieve (Langley et al., 2009; Hinnant-Crawford, 2020; Wood & Harris, 2017), the synthesis of these concepts suggests that the community college system is constructed to produce low persistence among Black male students.

### ***Appropriateness***

CRT is an appropriate framework for this disquisition because it offers important insights into how this problem of practice is perpetuated within institutions of higher education. The *Whiteness as property* tenet of CRT (Capper, 2019) helps us understand how embedded and institutionalized racism creates educational spaces that were not thoughtfully designed with historically marginalized students in mind and are therefore inherently exclusionary. This translates into college campuses where microaggressions and hostility cause students to feel like outsiders or even trespassers, which negatively impacts the student experience (Smith et al., 2007). The *interest convergence* tenet of CRT (Bell, 1980; Capper, 2019) helps us understand that actions that benefit Black male students will be supported only when those objectives simultaneously benefit Whites. This idea is critical when considering change initiatives that will require institutional support for implementation and sustainability.

### **Literature Opening**

While there is a considerable amount of literature that addresses equity audits (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020) and Equity Scorecard initiatives (Bensimon, 2012), which are efforts that focus

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

on change at the institutional and departmental level, my review of the literature did not yield results on similar approaches to assess practitioner equity-mindedness on an individual level. Change across divisions and campuses is critical, but that change must be sustained by intentional shifts in thinking and practice at the micro level. In this disquisition, I offer an approach to effectively engage educators in reflective practice that is firmly rooted in individual responsibility for service delivery and equitable student outcomes.

Another opening in the literature lies in the fact that much of what has been studied centers on the work of faculty and advisors but neglects the broader spectrum of student support and student success professionals that play a vital role in the delivery of services, campus climate, and student experience (Hotchkins et al., 2021). To effectively address this problem of practice, an all-hands-on-deck approach is needed to increase the equity-mindedness of all institutional agents.

Finally, much of the focus related to improving Black male student persistence centers the problem around the students, rather than the institution. This perspective tends toward a deficit view of the students and works to find solutions to “fix” them rather than to fix the institutional policies and practices that contribute to their lack of success. In this disquisition, I place the burden of change on the shoulders of the educators who serve as change agents through their daily interactions with students.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

*“Trying to make that conscious effort to even if I'm not providing a service at that moment... Give a friendly face, and maybe if they don't need anything right now, maybe they will come back later just because of that when they do need something.” – Librarian*

### **Local Context: Four Corners Community College**

#### **Four Corners Community College**

In this section, I provide background information on Four Corners Community College (FCCC). I begin with an overview of the institution including the community, demographics, and relevant stakeholders. Next, I provide a brief history of Black male student persistence disparities at FCCC. I conclude this section with a discussion of how my positionality and role at FCCC connect with my improvement initiative.

Operating with the mission to "improve lives and build community through public higher education and workforce development," FCCC is a two-year public institution of higher learning located in the southeastern region of the United States that enrolls approximately 20,000 students each year in curriculum and continuing education courses (Four Corners Community College, n.d.). FCCC's Strategic Plan states that the College is an "open door" institution with a primary focus on workforce development (para. 1, para 2). Objective 4.3 of the 2018-2023 strategic plan stated that the institution would, "Strive for continuous improvement by challenging the status quo" (Four Corners Community College, 2018-2023). In Fall 2023, FCCC released a new strategic plan for 2023-2028 and Objective 4.3 now states that the institution will, "Drive innovation by striving for continuous improvement." It is notable that this rewording abandons the challenge to the status quo. A walk-back of this magnitude signals that while the ideal of transformational change was woven into the strategic fabric of the institution in the past, the

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

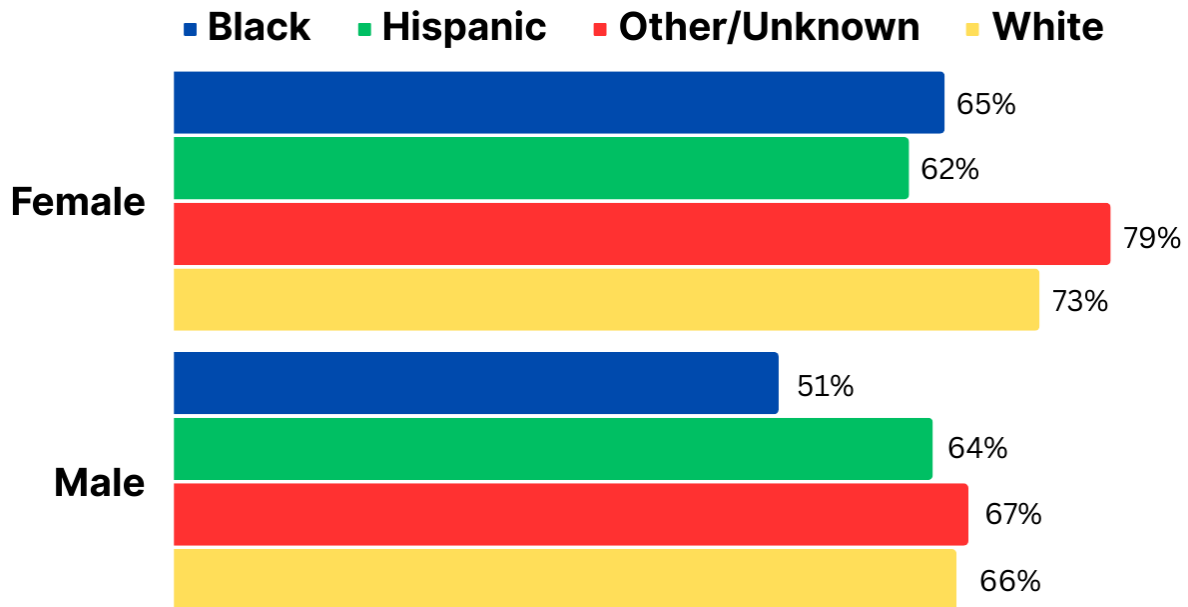
current external pressures against diversity, equity, and inclusion threaten the pursuance of this intent going forward.

Rather than shy away from equity work, FCCC faces disparities that warrant action.

Figure 1 reveals that at just 51%, Black males have the lowest first-year persistence rate of all groups (State Community Colleges, 2023). This disparity is not new. As Figure 2 demonstrates, Black male persistence rates (blue line) are historically the lowest of all male race/ethnicity groups at FCCC (State Community Colleges, 2023).

**Figure 1**

*FCCC Fall 2021 Cohort First-Year Progression By Sex & Race/Ethnicity*

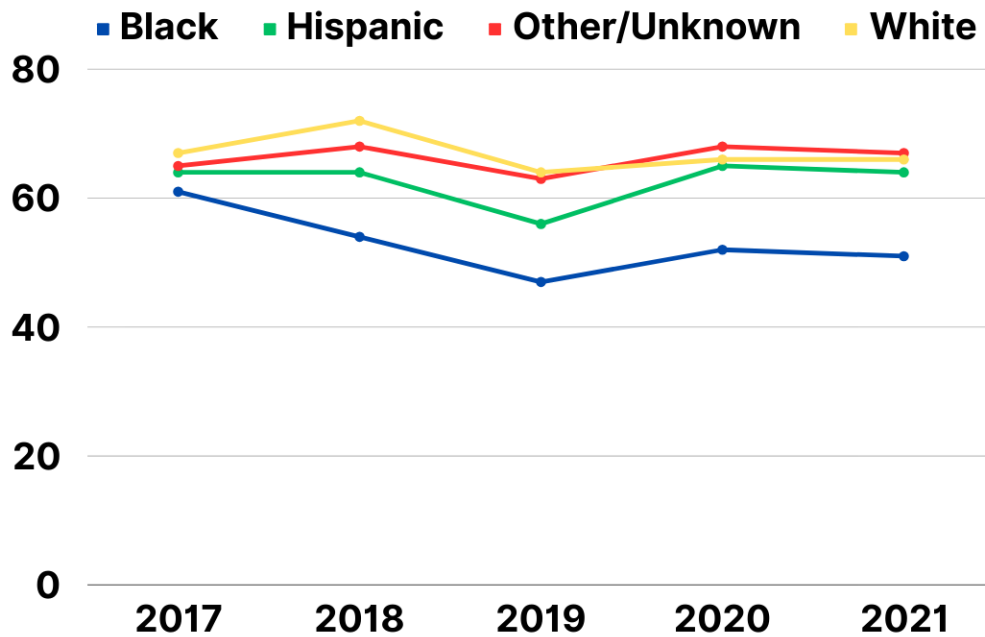


*Note.* Data were retrieved from the State Community Colleges' data dashboard on December 13, 2023.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

**Figure 2**

*FCCC First-Year Persistence Rates for Males by Race/Ethnicity*



*Note.* Data were retrieved from the State Community Colleges' data dashboard on December 13, 2023. Data represent the persistence rates for Fall cohorts of male students at FCCC.

Despite the shift in the strategic plan, there is still potential for transformational change as a variety of stakeholders have publicly expressed concerns regarding Black male student outcomes in recent years. During a campus-wide meeting with faculty and staff in spring 2022, FCCC's President identified Black male student persistence rates as an area in need of improvement, and keynote speaker (FCCC Black faculty, and FCCC alum) implored his colleagues to, "See me in the faces of the students who come in the office" (Four Corners Community College, 2022, February 28). Asked about FCCC's equity, diversity, and inclusion conference the College President stated, "Higher education – and in fact, society in general – must be equipped to address historical racial inequalities and model values of inclusion and be a catalyst for equity. We hope to celebrate achievements, be inspired by best practices, and learn

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

how to drive change” (Redacted, 2021, October 26). Equity initiatives at FCCC are needed now more than ever to ensure that the external contexts at the state and national level will not deter FCCC’s leadership from this worthy pursuit.

### ***Community***

Serving two counties, FCCC has seven campuses located across the region (Four Corners Community College, n.d.). Administrative leaders actively pursue partnerships with an array of community entities to enhance and expand program offerings. These partners include K-12 school districts, chambers of commerce, county commissions, city councils, social service agencies and organizations, businesses, and four-year colleges and universities. In some instances, FCCC offers programs in community partner facilities to increase access for residents. Overall, FCCC is positioned as a community leader, often celebrated for maintaining a comprehensive catalog of academic and workforce development opportunities.

### ***Demographics***

While FCCC is highly respected within the State Community College System (SCCS<sup>2</sup>) as an innovative institution focused on helping community members build better lives through education, the success rates of Black male students shown in Figure 4 do not support this distinction. FCCC has campuses across three cities that have an average Black population of 26% (United States Census Bureau, 2019). Still, Black males represent only 8% of basic skills, 7% of continuing education, and 5% of the enrollment in curriculum programs at FCCC (State Community Colleges, 2022). According to FCCC’s 2020-2021 *Fact Sheet*, the institution has 150 full-time faculty members and 718 part-time faculty members; FCCC has an additional 244

---

<sup>2</sup> State Community College System (SCCS) is a pseudonym.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

full-time employees and 158 part-time employees. These figures show that while most educators at FCCC are part-time faculty, the majority of the full-time educators are staff members.

### *Stakeholders*

FCCC offers a broad spectrum of education and training in three primary areas: curriculum (associate degree and certificate programs), corporate and continuing education (workforce development programs), and basic skills (adult basic education, adult high school, and high school equivalency programs). As a result, a variety of stakeholders influence the policies and agenda of the institution. Institutional stakeholders include students, faculty, staff, and the Board of Trustees. Community-level stakeholders include residents, organizations, agencies, municipalities, businesses, K-12 school systems, and 4-year higher education institutions. Government stakeholders include state and federal legislatures, accrediting bodies, the State Board of Community Colleges, and the SCCS office. The priorities of these stakeholder groups are distinct, with some areas of overlap. Increasing equitable student outcomes, however, has become increasingly important across the spectrum as more people recognize that student success spreads outward and ultimately impacts stakeholders at all levels.

### **History of the Problem at FCCC**

The student outcome indicators for Black male students at FCCC reveal a gap in multiple success indicators. The SCCS Dashboard data displayed in Figure 3 provide a glimpse into the severity of the disparity. Black male students at FCCC enroll at a rate that is 28% less than their White male peers and have a completion rate that is 23% less than White male students (State Community Colleges, 2023). With fewer than 20 total students in the denominator, transfer rates for Black male students in the most recent cohort exit year are not even calculable. The highlighted cell in column 2, row 2 reveals that Black male students at FCCC have a first-year

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

retention rate of 51% – the lowest persistence rate of all student groups, supporting my problem of practice statement in Figure 4.

### Figure 3

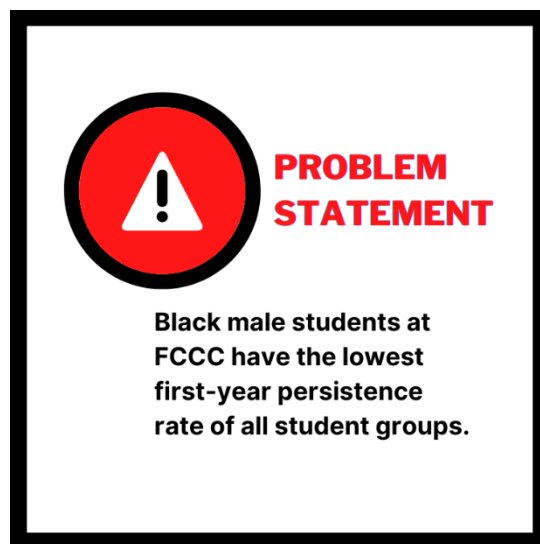
*Success Metrics for FCCC Male Students by Race*

Success Metric	Black	White	Hispanic	Other/Unknown
Enrollment	6%	34%	5%	5%
First-Year Persistence	<b>51%</b>	66%	64%	67%
Curriculum Completion	32%	55%	38%	55%
Transfer	--	87%	--	--

*Note.* Data were retrieved from the State Community Colleges' data dashboard on December 13, 2023. The percentages in the figure represent the most current cohort data available. Enrollment rates are for 2022-2023. First-Year Persistence rates are for the Fall 2021 cohort. Curriculum Completion rates are for the Fall 2018 cohort. Transfer rates are for the 2020-2021 exit year. Races without a percentage listed had fewer than 20 students in the denominator.

### Figure 4

*My Problem of Practice Statement*





## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

FCCC has taken some steps to address these success disparities. One effort that FCCC made to better serve Black male students and minority males collectively was the creation of the M.I.S.T.E.R. (Men Inspiring Success through Education and Role modeling) student organization. This group was designed to cultivate relationships that encourage and support minority male students. Unfortunately, involvement and awareness have been limited. Moreover, while mentoring programs can foster a sense of belonging, access to resources, motivation, and enhanced understanding of self (Brooms, 2018), only a small portion of Black male students benefit and the burden of change rests on the students instead of the institution.

FCCC also secured a grant for the Male Minority Student Success Initiative sponsored by the State Community College System. The funding was earmarked for programming and a part-time coordinator to develop activities tailored to the needs of male minority students. Unfortunately, the fact that the position is only part-time 1) limits the potential to attract a strong pool of candidates, 2) decreases the opportunity to adequately serve students, and 3) indirectly reflects the value that the institution places on this work.

While the executive leadership at FCCC is aware of the need to address Black male student outcomes, the approach thus far has been limited and [arguably] misdirected. To effectively decrease disparities and increase persistence rates for Black male students, FCCC should reframe the issue and embrace a more reflective approach to institutional change.

Implementing efforts to support men of color results in institutional changes that benefit all students (Wood & Harris, 2017). By focusing an improvement initiative on one of the most marginalized populations within the institution, FCCC can apply the lessons learned from this initiative to serve other minoritized populations, thereby maximizing the ultimate impact of this change idea. Additionally, because persistence is directly tied to enrollment and completion

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

rates, focusing improvements on this particular outcome measure can lead to residual gains across multiple student and institutional success measures. These benefits represent what CRT refers to as *interest convergence* (Bell, 1980; Capper, 2019), or points of alignment between what benefits Black male students and what benefits the College. These overlapping interests can potentially build support for initiatives across stakeholder groups.

### **A Causal Analysis**

A critical step in the improvement process is identifying and articulating the root causes of the problem. This helps leaders avoid the trap of designing solutions that are ineffective because they fail to address the real issue (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020). In this section, I provide a causal analysis of the Black male student persistence disparities in community colleges.

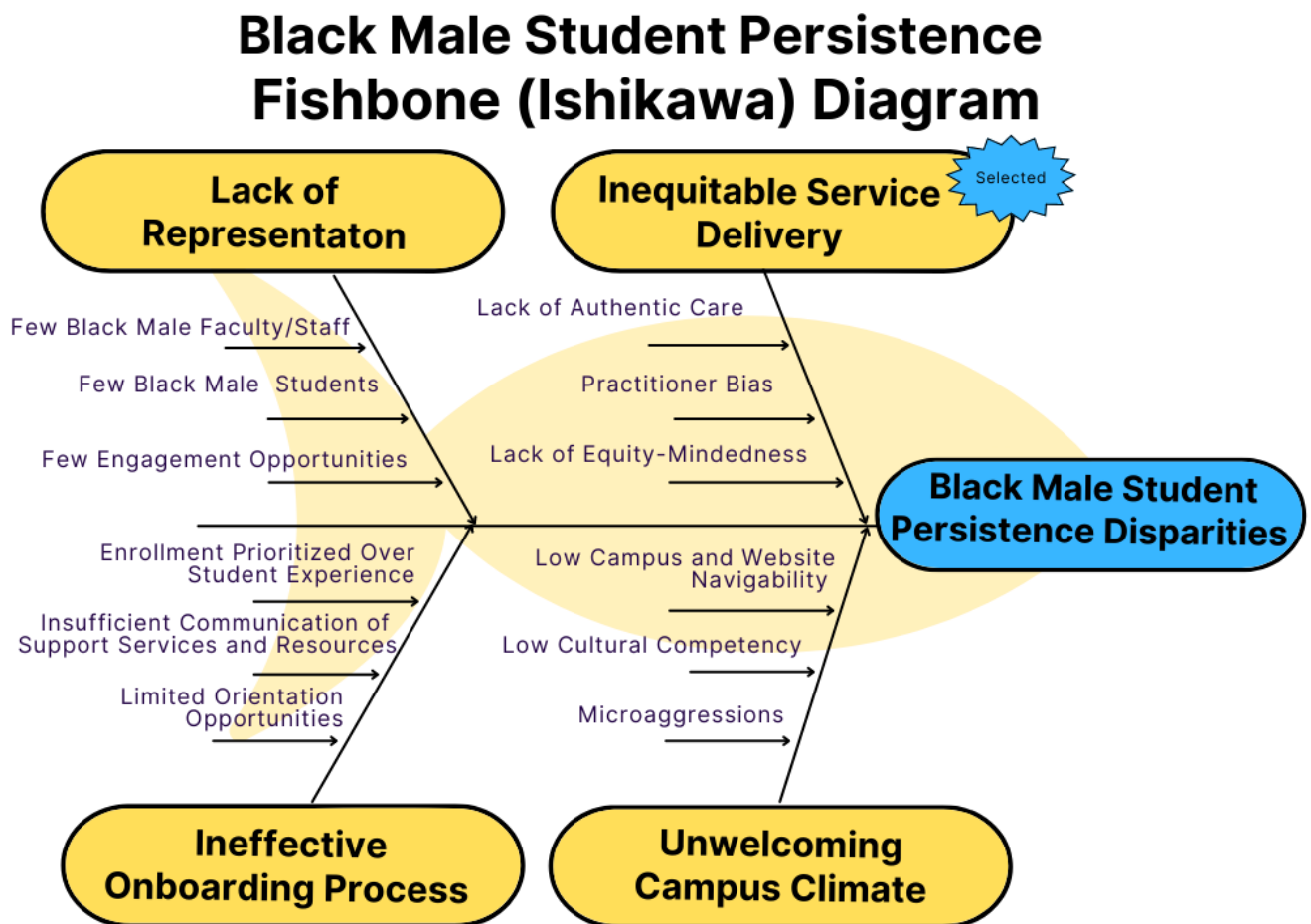
Disparities in Black male student persistence stem from a complex combination of causes (Strayhorn, 2012). Much of the literature on the topic emphasizes student factors that impact persistence outcomes such as competing priorities, financial obligations, employment demands, responsibilities for dependents, part-time enrollment, and low-income status (Wood & Harris, 2017; Harris et al., 2015). Successfully addressing disparate persistence rates, however, requires a thorough examination of institutional factors that perpetuate this problem of practice. Figure 5 outlines four potential causes, within the control of community colleges, that negatively impact Black male student persistence. These factors include a lack of representation, inequitable service delivery, ineffective onboarding processes, and an unwelcoming campus environment (Bush & Bush, 2010; Coney, 2017; Wood & Harris, 2017; Hotchkins et al., 2021; Johnson et al., 2019).

***Lack of Representation***

The presence of other Black males on campus allows students to establish micro-communities that provide extended learning opportunities, support, and encouragement that promote student sense of worth and purpose (Brooms, 2019; Brooks et al., 2013). Unfortunately, Black male students often find themselves in classrooms and on campuses with few occasions to engage with faculty, staff, or students who share their racial identity. This lack of representation can intensify feelings of isolation that negatively impact sense of belonging and student success (Strayhorn, 2015).

**Figure 5**

*Black Male Student Persistence Fishbone (Ishikawa) Diagram*



## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

### ***Inequitable Service Delivery***

Service delivery entails how institutions and institutional agents provide services to students. Each action and inaction on the part of the institutional agents reflects the perspectives of educators and can have a significant impact on Black male student experience and satisfaction, which is a positive indicator of persistence (Strayhorn 2012). Students who encounter service delivery that reflects a lack of authentic care, practitioner bias, or a lack of equity-mindedness are less inclined to access support services that are critically important to overall success (Johnson et al., 2019; Bush & Bush, 2010; Wood & Harris, 2017).

### ***Onboarding Process***

Onboarding includes the activities that occur before and during the first weeks of class such as recruitment, application, advising, enrollment, financial aid, and orientation. Institutional practices that revolve around getting students into classes omit opportunities to connect students with support services and professionals who can facilitate a successful student experience. Ineffective communication about the availability of services, few direct introductions to help students feel comfortable using services in the future, and limited orientation opportunities are particularly detrimental to Black male students who have the most challenging time accessing institutional resources (Bush & Bush, 2010; Wood & Harris, 2017).

### ***Campus Environment***

Black male students encounter campus climates that they perceive as isolating, harmful, racist, and criminalizing (Hotchkins et al., 2021). This is evidence of the CRT tenet of *whiteness as property* (Capper, 2019), which has such exclusionary force that Black students seemingly enter higher education arenas “in the role of intruders – who have been granted special permission to be there” (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 60). Even open access institutions

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

reproduce environments that exude exclusivity, race-based bias, and privilege. From a logistical standpoint, community college campuses and websites are often difficult to navigate without previous experience or insider assistance. This presents a barrier to critical information and resources that is particularly problematic for first-time and first-generation students who may not have access to an institutional representative who can help them navigate the nuances of higher education and college success (Strayhorn, 2015).

### **My Role & Positionality at FCCC**

As a Black woman and an educator, I feel a particular connection to and concern for the outcomes of Black male students. I have symbolically witnessed their struggles and successes in the lives of my husband, father, brothers, and extended community. Serving as a scholar practitioner in this initiative allowed me to collaborate with colleagues in an improvement effort that is grounded in scholarly research, equity-driven, and potentially replicable in contexts beyond FCCC.

In my current role as a program manager within the Corporate and Continuing Education Division, I oversee the entire process of program delivery including program design, recruitment, hiring, supervision, and student support (advising, enrollment, scholarship assistance, etc.). The responsibilities of my position require frequent interactions with colleagues across all divisions of the College. This positionality helped me create a network of allies and to develop productive working relationships that provided additional support for the improvement initiative.

As a scholar-practitioner doing work within my organizational context, I enjoyed the positionality of an institutional insider; however, I also operated in the role of an outsider to the Student Success Division of the College, which presented unique challenges. Most notably, I had to rely more heavily on this network of allies for credibility and knowledge of the inner workings

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

of the Division that was required to design, implement, and advance the Equity Scorecard initiative.

Finally, as an educator of color implementing an equity initiative in a state where the future of this type of work is threatened, I had to implement multiple mitigation strategies to ensure the Equity Scorecard initiative could continue. When I received minimal responses to my invitations to participate, I had to reframe the silence and make an intentional decision not to take it personally. Instead, I welcomed feedback from my colleagues when offered and worked to incorporate design enhancements that increased the effectiveness of the initiative overall. When creating the recruitment and orientation materials, I was intentional about communicating the information in a way that was objective, non-accusatory, and easy to understand. This approach increased the receptivity of the participants and kept the focus on working collaboratively to address the issue of Black male student persistence within our organization.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

*“If you do it so many times twice a week for 6 weeks, it does automatically make you think – what you're doing, how you're acting, how could you go a little further, be more equitable instead of equal.” – Jules*

### **The Equity Scorecard Re-Imagined**

Effectively addressing the problem of Black male student persistence requires a strategic institutional approach that is both practical and impactful. I proposed a re-imagined Equity Scorecard intervention as an effective approach to address my problem of practice. In this section, I provide a brief overview of traditional Equity Scorecard initiatives. I also introduce my re-imagined Equity Scorecard initiative including the improvement goals, design, and implementation timeline. I conclude this section with a discussion of implementation challenges and barriers, including how I overcame those barriers/obstacles to implement the Equity Scorecard initiative.

#### **Background Information**

##### ***Traditional Equity Scorecard Initiatives***

Traditionally, Equity Scorecard initiatives facilitate the convening of a designated team of institutional agents who meet regularly to review and analyze practices, policies, and outcomes through an equity lens. Typical objectives include increasing organizational awareness and learning, creating recommendations for institutional leaders, and identifying specific actions to support equitable student outcomes (Bensimon, 2012; Dowd et al., 2012; Lorenz, 2012; Felix et al., 2015). Equity Scorecard initiatives promote institutional change by increasing practitioner equity-mindedness through a collaborative process that critically examines disparate outcomes, such as persistence rates for Black males and other traditionally marginalized students, from the perspective of institutional responsibility (Harris & Bensimon, 2007; McNair et al., 2019).

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

Equity-mindedness is defined as, “a cognitive frame of reference for understanding disparities in student outcomes that views those problems as a matter of institutional responsibility” (Dowd et al., 2012, p. 204). Developing equity-mindedness requires opportunities for authentic reflection on mindsets, beliefs, and priorities (McNair et al., 2019). My change idea, which I describe in detail in the sections that follow, was to implement an adaptation of the Equity Scorecard initiative as a means to increase equity-minded practitioner reflection and service delivery.

### *Stakeholder Involvement*

Effective change initiatives solicit input from stakeholders who are directly impacted by the change idea. In addition to my own observations regarding this problem of practice, as part of my coursework in the Ed.D. program, I had the opportunity to meet with critical stakeholders who offered valuable insights regarding the state of service delivery and Black male student persistence challenges on campus. These individuals included members of the FCCC faculty and staff who have direct interactions with students and are aware of the barriers to success that they face. Due to IRB limitations, I was not able to include current Black male students as part of my stakeholder engagement; however, I did speak with Black educators at FCCC, and I also incorporated a Black male recent graduate as a member of my design team.

### *Change Idea*

The Driver Diagram in Figure 6 provides a visual map of the improvement objective, also referred to as the aim, and the strategies to achieve it (Spaulding & Hinnant-Crawford, 2019). Here, the aim – increasing first-to-second semester persistence rates for Black male students at FCCC – is followed by four primary drivers that include the onboarding process, service delivery, campus climate, and culture representation. Each of these primary drivers has related

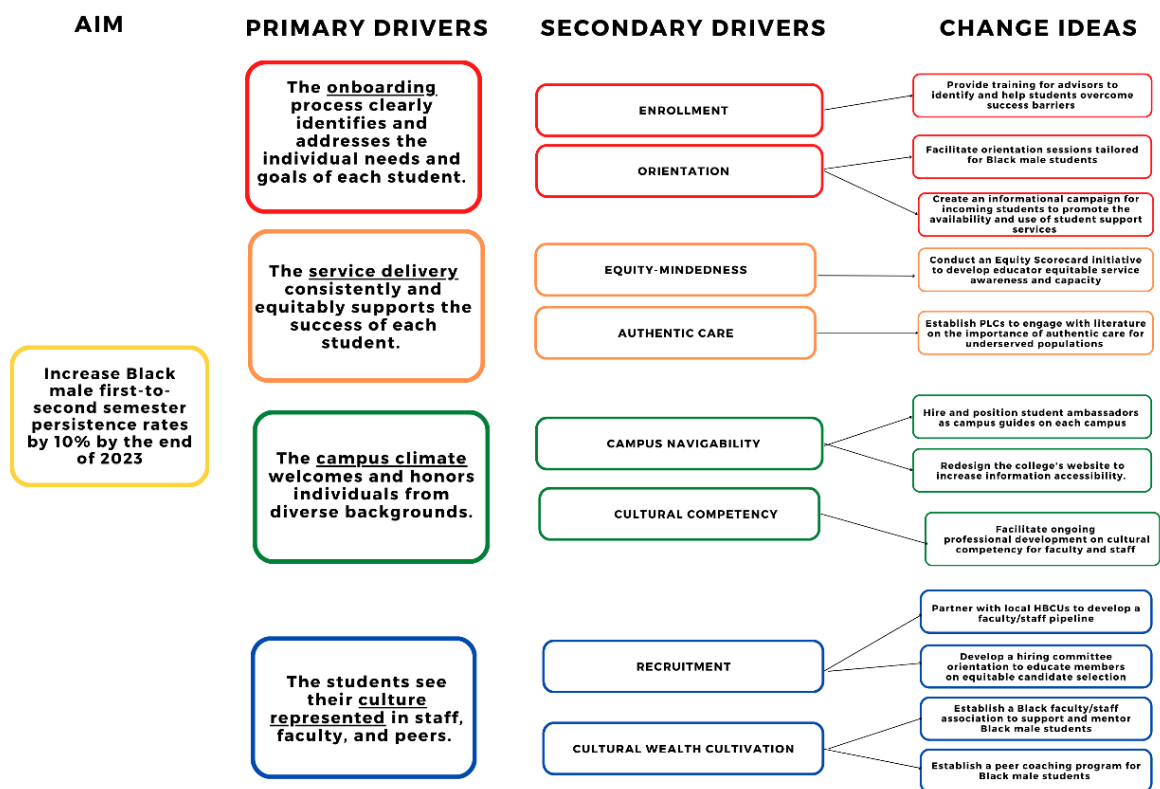


## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

secondary drivers that represent underlying aspects that affect the primary driver. Finally, the change ideas on the far right indicate critical activities that have the potential to positively impact secondary and primary drivers to achieve the aim. I selected the Equity Scorecard change idea as the basis of my improvement initiative. In the following section, I explain my theory of improvement.

**Figure 6**

*Driver Diagram of Black Male Student Persistence at FCCC*



### *Theory of Improvement*

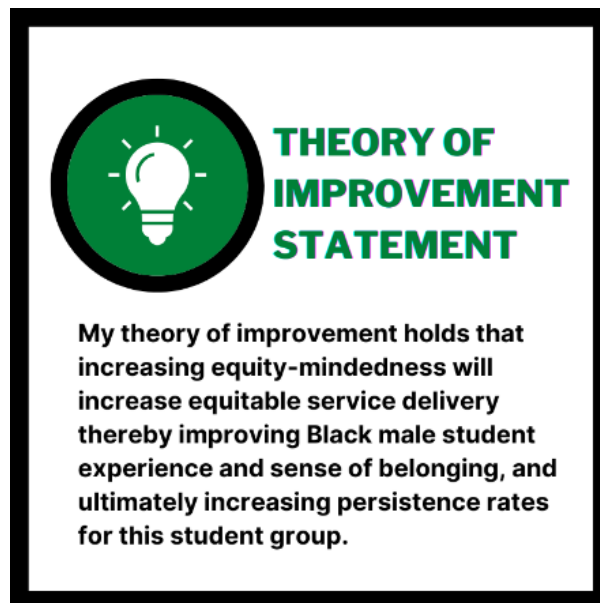
My theory of improvement holds that increasing educator equity-mindedness will increase equitable service delivery, thereby improving Black male student experience and sense of belonging, which will ultimately increase persistence (see Figure 7). Figure 8 illustrates how these improvement steps are connected and sequential. While the end goal is to increase Black male student persistence, we must first look in the mirror as institutional agents and assume

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

responsibility for our equity-mindedness and the service conditions that impact Black male student sense of belonging and persistence. By engaging in self-reflection and assessment of our professional practice, we can establish a system of service delivery that supports equitable student outcomes (McNair et al., 2019; Coney, 2017). This Equity Scorecard initiative is an opportunity to facilitate reflective practice that improves individual and collective equity-mindedness.

### **Figure 7**

#### *Theory of Improvement Statement*

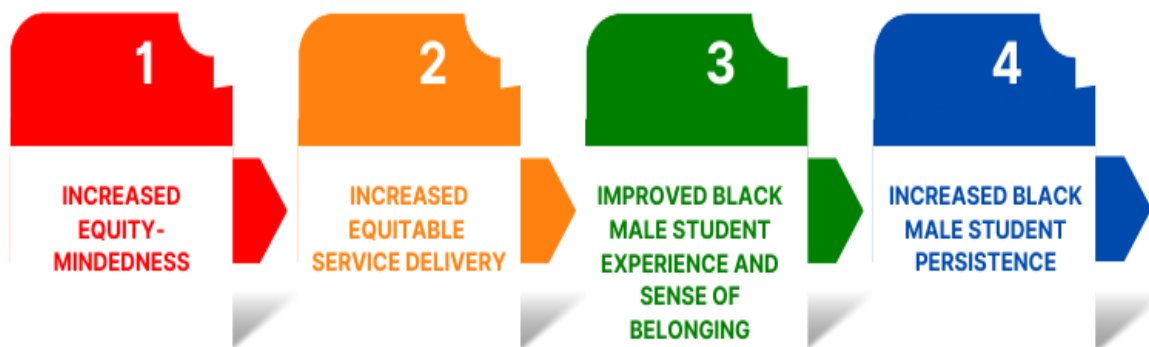


By locating the problem of Black male persistence within the operations and performance of the institution rather than the students, this theory of improvement offers the potential for systemic change that benefits Black males and other underserved student groups at FCCC. Additionally, starting with a single division of the College, the Student Success Division, will increase the feasibility and scalability of the initiative as the participants become ambassadors for this transformational approach to increase student outcomes across the institution.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

**Figure 8**

*Theory of Improvement Diagram*



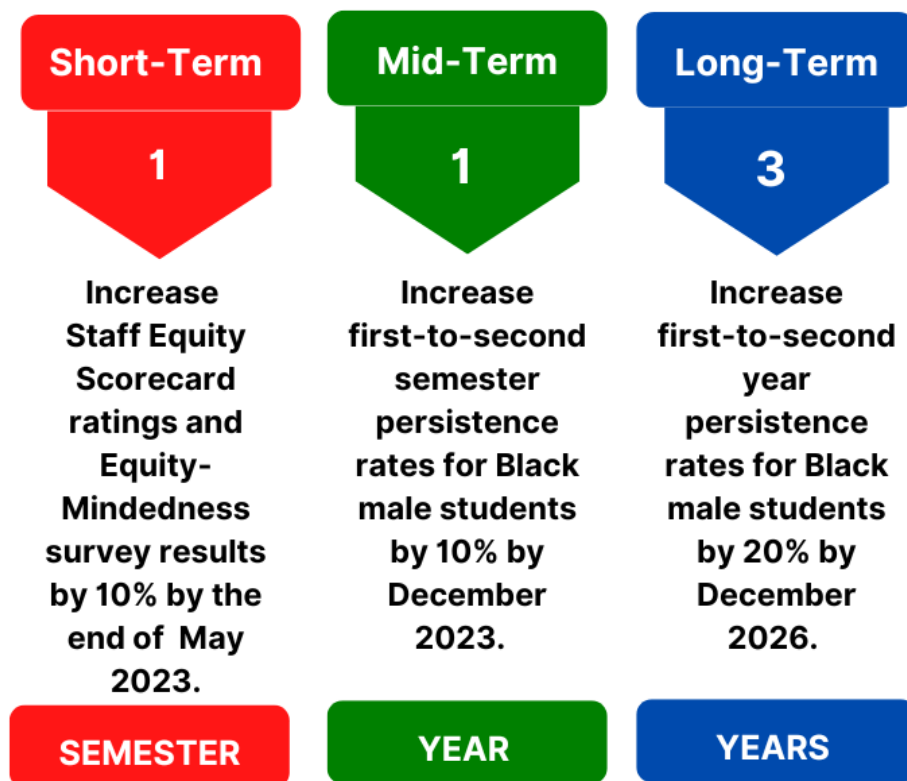
### **Equity Scorecard Initiative**

#### ***Improvement Initiative Goals***

Figure 9 outlines the short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals of my Equity Scorecard improvement initiative. The short-term goal of the initiative is to increase the staff member Equity Scorecard ratings and Pre/Post Equity-Mindedness survey results, which indicate the participants' awareness and implementation of equity-minded practices, by 10% by May 2023. This timeframe coincides with the completion of the first implementation cycle of the intervention. Aligned with the theory of improvement and achievement of the short-term goal, the mid-term goal is a 10% increase in first-to-second semester persistence rates for Black male students by December 2023. Since first-semester persistence is fundamental in overall persistence, tracking improvement during this period is appropriate (Johnson et al., 2019). The long-term goal of this initiative is to increase first-to-second year persistence rates for Black males by 20%, from 51% to 71%, by December 2026. This increase represents an elimination of the existing persistence disparity between Black and White male students that is highlighted in Figure 3.

**Figure 9**

*Equity Scorecard SMART Goals Diagram*



***Improvement Initiative Design***

Improvement Science is a powerful research method that offers an ideal framework for an initiative to increase persistence rates for FCCC’s Black male students because it is built on the concept that lasting improvements are only realized when we fundamentally change the system itself (Langley et al., 2009). This framework functions well with the concept of equity-mindedness in which equitable improvements result from changes at the institutional [system] level (Lorenz, 2012). With fundamental design elements that facilitate collaboration, anticipate adjustments, and incorporate customization (Cohen-Vogel et al., 2015), Improvement Science lends itself to the dynamic work of equity-building. The intentional effort to include the perspectives of those involved and impacted by the issue provides researchers with the knowledge needed to analyze, refine, and scale improvements more effectively (Cohen-Vogel et

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

al., 2015; Hinnant-Crawford, 2020). By encouraging a deeper understanding of what works and under what conditions (Cohen-Vogel et al., 2015), Improvement Science fosters flexibility that embraces the uniqueness of individual settings and recognizes “trial-and-learning” (Langley et al., 2009, p. 107) as a path toward continuous, iterative improvement. I incorporated the plan, do, study, and act (PDSA) cycles from Improvement Science (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020) as the procedural framework for my study.

My change idea was to implement an Equity Scorecard initiative to cultivate equity-mindedness and promote equitable service delivery that supports Black male student sense of belonging and persistence. This change activity fosters awareness and institutional responsibility (Harris & Bensimon, 2007) that can help educators assess their professional practice to identify individual and collective actions for improvement that support Black male student first-to-second semester persistence rates. Limiting the scope of the initiative to the student service delivery process, rather than addressing all institutional operations at once, kept the implementation manageable while providing a clear assessment of factors directly tied to student satisfaction, which drives persistence (Strayhorn, 2012). Beginning the initiative within a single division also enhanced feasibility and empowered participants to become institutional leaders of equity-mindedness on campus, ultimately increasing the level of institutional accountability and overall impact of the initiative (Bensimon et al., 2004). Focusing on first-to-second semester persistence rates facilitated relatively timely collection of outcome data from a pivotal phase in the academic progression when Black male students may need additional support (Johnson et al., 2019).

First impressions matter, and FCCC’s Student Success Navigators are uniquely positioned and frequently called upon to engage in initial interactions with students that shape perceptions and support ongoing success. For this reason, I began the Equity Scorecard initiative

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

with the Student Success Navigators in PDSA 1 and expanded to other key players in the Student Success Division in PDSA 2. Rather than use the traditional Equity Scorecard design of collaborative practitioner inquiry followed by recommendations for improvement (Felix et al., 2015; Lorenz, 2012), this initiative included a design adaptation that incorporated individual practitioner reflection combined with participant interview sessions to explore participant equity-mindedness and actions for improvement. Critical reflection that centers on equity can provide educators with the opportunity to identify systems that perpetuate these deficit mindsets (Biag, 2019), thereby promoting systemic change. My re-imagined Equity Scorecard design cultivates critical reflection and individual equity-mindedness, which is a fundamental element in improving overall departmental performance, practices, and policies in support of Black male student persistence.

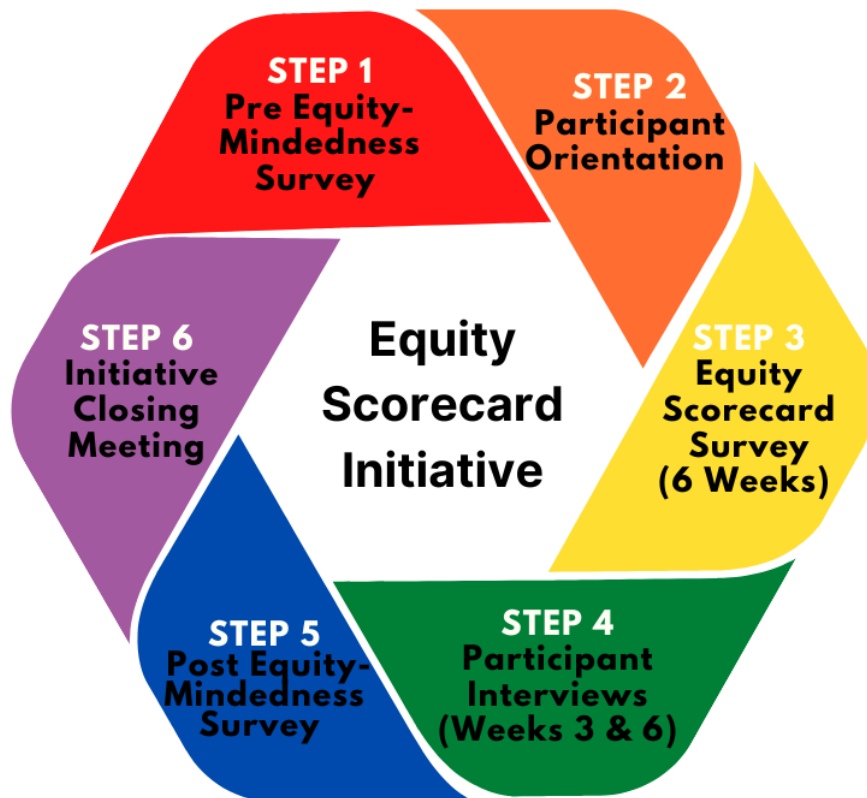
After completing a Pre Equity-Mindedness survey (see Appendix D) and the participant orientation (see Appendix M), participants were asked to complete an Equity Scorecard survey at least two times per week for six weeks where they reflected on their service delivery, self-reported on 10 survey items, and responded to an open-ended reflection question (see Appendix A and Appendix H). The Equity Scorecard survey included a graphic that explained the difference between equity and equality (Reproduced with permission of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Princeton, N.J.). A sample of participants also engaged in semi-structured participant interview sessions to foster deeper exploration of the impact of the initiative and specific actions to improve equitable service delivery. At the end of the six-week Equity Scorecard implementation, all participants completed a Post Equity-Mindedness survey to assess their equity-minded growth since the beginning of the initiative (see Appendix E). The initiative concluded with an Initiative Closing Meeting (see Appendix N). No data were collected during

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

the meeting, but it served as an opportunity for participants to collectively debrief and fostered the sustainability of equity-mindedness beyond the Equity Scorecard initiative. Figure 10 illustrates the Equity Scorecard process.

**Figure 10**

*Equity Scorecard Initiative Process*



### *Design Team*

My four-member design team was comprised of FCCC faculty and staff members from divisions across the College. It included the Testing Center Director/Title IX Deputy, the Director of Student Success Operations & Compliance (who is also the supervisor of the Student Success Navigators), the Coordinator of Work-Based Learning, and an adjunct faculty member who was a recent FCCC graduate. The latter two members of the design team are both Black

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

males. This was significant and intentional to ensure that the Black male voice and perspective were embedded within the initiative design and implementation.

### *Implementation Plan and Timeline*

Figure 11 outlines my implementation timeline, which consists of four major phases. The timeframe at the top of the figure shows my proposed timeline and the bottom reflects the actual implementation timeline. The first phase included the pre-intervention steps involved in designing and obtaining approval for the improvement initiative. The second and third phases included two separate iterations of the improvement intervention. The final phase of the implementation was designated for final analysis and presentation of the findings.

Phase One took place from June 2022 through March 2023. During this time, I completed the disquisition proposal process, obtained IRB approval from my university and FCCC, formally convened my design team, and built support for my improvement initiative within the College campus. Phase Two of the implementation (the first iteration of the improvement initiative) took place from March 2023 to July 2023, and followed the PDSA cycle with six weeks dedicated to participants doing the intervention of completing the Equity Scorecard. I chose a six-week intervention duration to allow sufficient time to collect data, without exhausting participant commitment. To complete the PDSA cycle, Phase Two also included several weeks for studying the data (performing data analysis) and acting on the data (refining the intervention for the second iteration). Phase Three of the implementation timeline (second iteration of the improvement initiative) incorporated the lessons from Phase Two, followed the same PDSA cycle, and took place from July 2023 to November 2023. The span of Phase Three was longer than Phase Two due to the added time needed during the “plan” phase to recruit participants. Specifically, because the phase was slated to begin during the transition between

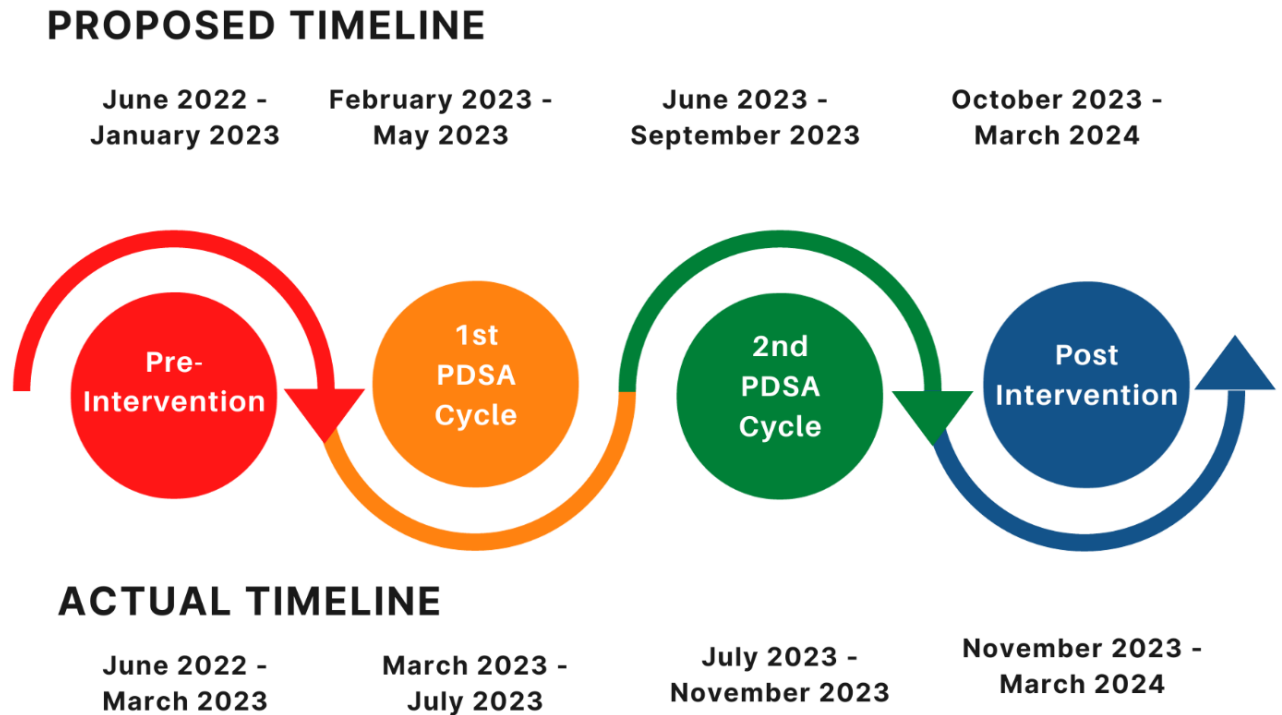


## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

summer and fall semesters at FCCC, securing participation required additional time and coordination. After sending out recruitment emails with minimal response and unexpected resistance, I used feedback and input from prospective participants to revise the email templates sent to prospective participants and included an additional graphic with a more specific overview of the steps and estimated time commitment (see Figure 12). This modification required additional approval from IRB before proceeding. Phase four of the initiative began in November 2023 and concluded with the presentation of my findings to my disquisition committee.

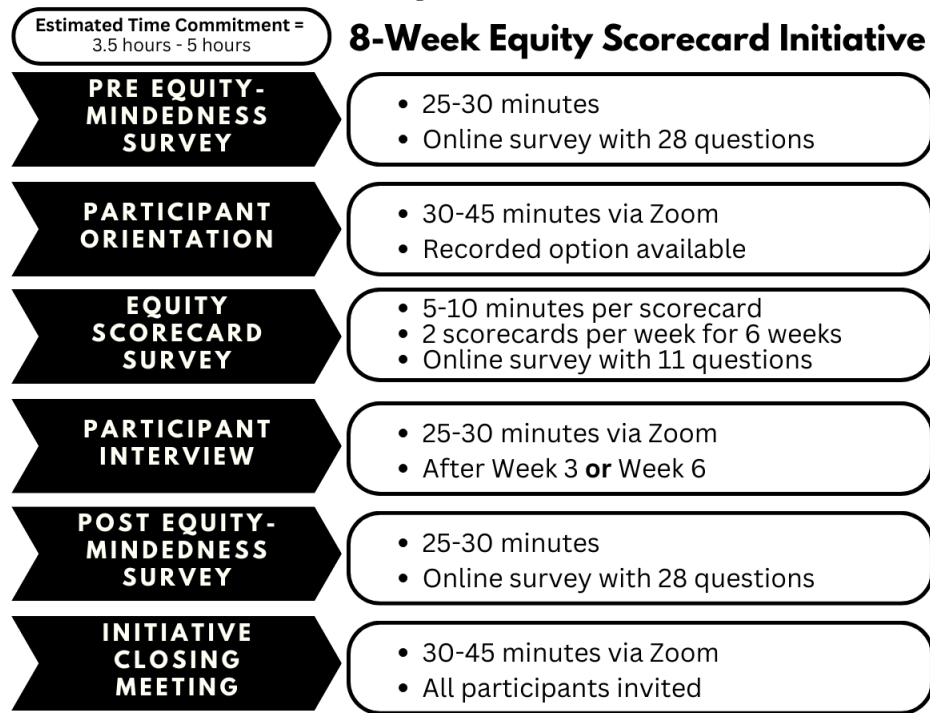
**Figure 11**

*Equity Scorecard Initiative Timeline*



**Figure 12**

*Equity Scorecard Initiative Recruitment Graphic*



### *Challenges and Barriers*

One challenge for this initiative was ensuring reliability on the Equity Scorecard and Equity-Mindedness surveys. This was important to demonstrate that the results of the surveys offered a true representation of the participants' progress and equity-mindedness. Some participants may have been inclined to submit ratings that reflect what they thought I and/or other stakeholders wanted to see. To limit the impact of this challenge, the Equity Scorecard and Equity-Mindedness survey instruments included one open-response reflection question where participants could elaborate on their self-reported ratings. This helped provide deeper insight into what may or may not be reflected in their responses to the other survey items. I also used semi-structured interviews with the staff members to triangulate the information provided on the Equity Scorecard and the Equity-Mindedness surveys, which helped substantiate evidence of growth in equity-mindedness.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

Another barrier was the apprehension of some participants to engage with their colleagues or report their perspectives on matters of equity. These individuals may have had experiences, perspectives, and/or biases that could have impacted their willingness to participate. To minimize this potential barrier to change, I utilized the participant orientation session to proactively address potential concerns and provide participants with the information they needed to clearly understand the purpose and process of the initiative and to reiterate my availability to address any questions or concerns during the duration of the implementation.

Ensuring that participants successfully completed the Equity Scorecard each week was another challenge. I attempted to mitigate this concern by ensuring that the Equity Scorecard survey instrument was user-friendly and could be completed in less than five minutes. This allowed participants to easily incorporate the survey into their daily routines with minimal disruption. I also sent out weekly emails to participants, using the schedule send feature in Outlook, with a reminder to complete the Equity Scorecard survey at least two times during the week (see Appendix I).

Although these barriers were present, they did not stop the implementation of the Equity Scorecard initiative. Appendix R offers an overview of mitigation strategies that were useful to ensure the successful implementation of the initiative, despite the challenges that arose.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

*“So just I guess myself learning from the surveys just kind of like reflecting on different things, reflecting on those questions and then thinking about them during the time that I’m interacting with students.” – Elizabeth*

### **Methods**

Designing an improvement initiative is an important part of addressing systemic inequities and problems of practice. These efforts, however, must integrate structured opportunities for the collection and analysis of data that demonstrate the degree to which the change initiative resulted in an improvement. Creating and deploying a detailed plan for measurement is essential for refining and scaling the change idea (Bryk et al., 2015). In this section, I define practical measures and explain their role in Improvement Science. Next, I (1) describe each of the practical measures I used in this improvement initiative, (2) explain their purpose, and (3) discuss how they were collected. Then, I provide an overview of the qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods I used to analyze the data and the overall effectiveness of the initiative.

### **Data Collection**

#### ***Practical Measures***

One of the benefits of the Improvement Science framework is the set of unique yet interconnected measures that provide short-term, mid-term, and long-term evidence of the overall impact of the improvement initiative and progress toward transformational change within the institution. In other words, these practical measures help you know if the change results in an improvement (Hinnant-Crawford, 2019). A driver measure is a leading indicator that is collected frequently and demonstrates if we are making progress toward the desired outcome (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020). A process measure indicates if the change initiative is implemented as

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

designed and is referred to as a measure of fidelity (Hinnant-Crawford, 2019). Outcome measures are considered lagging measures that indicate if the change worked (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020). Balance measures are important counterparts to outcome measures and help ensure that improving one part of the system does not have unintended consequences on another part of the system (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020; Hinnant-Crawford, 2019).

The Equity Scorecard initiative included the collection and analysis of two driver measures, two process measures, two outcome measures, and one balance measure. Figure 14 provides an overview of the practical measures integrated within this improvement initiative design and outlines the stakeholder groups involved, timeline for collection, measure type, analysis strategy, and information collected.

### *Driver Measures*

One driver measure, and the namesake for the intervention, was the Equity Scorecard survey (see Appendix A and Appendix H). The Equity Scorecard survey was a driver measure that tracked progress toward equity-mindedness, practitioner reflection, and equitable service delivery practices. Because I did not find a comparable survey that had already been created, I used key concepts identified during my literature review process to design my own Equity Scorecard. Then, I worked with my Chair and Methodologist to finalize the wording of the questions. Participants were instructed to complete the Equity Scorecard survey at least two times per week for six weeks. Establishing a minimum frequency of completion provided participants with the option to complete the survey more frequently if they preferred to do so. I used the schedule send feature in Outlook to email the participants each Monday at 8:30 am with a reminder to complete the Equity Scorecard at least two times during the week (see Appendix I).

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

The second driver measure was the Student Satisfaction survey (see Appendix G), which was administered to students by FCCC's Student Success Services Division as part of their existing protocol. The Student Satisfaction survey data were used to provide additional evidence of service delivery improvements that corresponded with the implementation timeframe of the Equity Scorecard initiative. The administrator of the Student Satisfaction survey, who was also a member of the design team, modified the administration process for the survey in April 2023, one week after the start of Equity Scorecard completion in PDSA 1. For this reason, Student Satisfaction survey data were not available in Week 1 or Week 2 of PDSA 1. As of April 2023, the survey was sent out to all students who had an appointment. While the survey is not specifically administered to Black males only, incorporating the survey does allow for the integration of student voice within the research design and provides insights into the overall service level during the time of the improvement initiative.

### *Process Measures*

One of the process measures was semi-structured interviews with staff member participants. Interview data provided a measure of how the initiative went, substantiated self-report ratings of equity-mindedness reported on Equity Scorecard surveys, and facilitated the collection of examples of equitable service delivery that were used to create a bank of equitable practices for FCCC institutional agents (see Appendix Q). I used the "Wheel of Names" website to select a random sample of two to three interviewees after the third and sixth weeks of the initiative. In PDSA 1, the participants were randomly selected with replacement, meaning the same participants could be interviewed after weeks three and six. In PDSA 2, I modified the selection protocol and used random selection with replacement to increase the number of participant perspectives included in the interview data. The semi-structured interviews were

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

conducted using an interview protocol (see Appendix B and Appendix C) and follow-up questions that emerged during the discussion. With the help of the design team, the interview protocol was modified after PDSA 1 and prior to the start of PDSA 2 to reduce the redundancy and increase the effectiveness of the instrument. Each interview was recorded using Zoom to help facilitate the analysis process.

The second process measure in this study was a Fidelity Checklist (see Appendix L). This instrument was implemented as a design enhancement in PDSA 2 (there was no Fidelity Checklist in PDSA 1). The purpose of this instrument was to provide weekly updates on the number of participants who were completing the Equity Scorecard and to offer insights into whether or not the initiative was being implemented as planned.

### ***Outcome Measures***

One of the outcome measures for this initiative was the Equity-Mindedness survey that was designed to track changes in staff member equity-mindedness before and after participation in the change initiative. I designed the Equity-Mindedness survey instrument after I was unable to find a comparable survey that already existed. I used key elements of equitable service delivery, as identified in my literature review, and feedback from my Chair to guide the item writing process. The instrument contained 27 Likert-style questions with responses that ranged from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*, and one open-ended question. With the exception of the demographic information that was included in the Pre Equity-Mindedness survey, the Pre and Post surveys contained the same questions. Participants were asked to complete the Pre Equity-Mindedness survey (see Appendix D) before attending the participant orientation session, and they completed the Post Equity-Mindedness survey (see Appendix E) at the end of the initiative.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

The second outcome measure for this initiative was the first-to-second semester persistence rates for Black male students. The purpose of these data was to determine if the persistence rates improved during the semesters when the Equity Scorecard initiative was implemented. This aligns with the ultimate aim of the initiative, which was to increase Black male student persistence rates through improved staff member equity-mindedness. FCCC's Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research provided persistence rates from Spring and Fall semesters only (Summer semester was not provided/included in the calculations).

### *Balance Measure*

Finally, I collected institutional data on first-to-second semester persistence rates for Black female students, which was the balance measure. While the Black male student persistence rate reflected how the improvement initiative was progressing toward the stated aim, the Black female persistence rate was intended to help verify that increased institutional focus on improving Black male student persistence rates did not undermine the persistence outcomes of their racial counterparts due to a potential perception that the institution's equity priority is Black male students. Monitoring this balance measure was also intended to examine if implementing institutional change efforts that supported the persistence outcomes for Black male students could have a positive impact on other student groups at FCCC.

### **Data Analysis**

#### *Methods*

I incorporated a combination of qualitative and quantitative data analysis within the research design. In this section, I provide an overview of the different approaches I used to analyze each of the practical measures.



## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

### *Driver Measures*

The Equity Scorecard survey (see Appendix A) was administered using Qualtrics and contained 10 survey items where staff member participants self-reported their answers. The response options for the 10 items were *green/most of the time*, *yellow/some of the time*, and *red/rarely*. I used descriptive statistics and trend analysis of the weekly mode of each participant's Equity Scorecard surveys to track the self-reported ratings for questions 1-10. This was an appropriate method because it provided a clear picture of how the participants rated themselves overall, from week to week, and allowed that rating to be tracked back to the Equity Scorecard's rating scale. Because Qualtrics assigned green a score of 1 and red a score of 3, I had to reverse score the responses so that the data visualizations reflected green as a higher point on the chart, since higher points are typically associated with the preferred state. Participants also answered one open-ended reflection. I used a combination of Initial Coding and In Vivo Coding (Saldaña, 2021) for the first coding cycle, followed by Focused Coding in the second coding cycle to analyze question 11, which was the only open-ended reflection question. This combination of coding techniques was appropriate because my goal was to honor the authentic voice of the participants and group them into major themes (Saldaña, 2021). After exporting the survey results into an Excel workbook, I completed the first cycle of the coding process by using the bold/underline feature to note significant words and/or phrases within the participant's responses. Then, I used the fill color feature to color code the cell(s) beside each open-ended response according to the corresponding code category (see Figure 13).

The second driver measure, the Student Satisfaction survey (see Appendix G), was administered by the Student Success Division of FCCC and collected student feedback on their service experiences at FCCC. After requesting and receiving the survey results from the Student

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

Success Division, I used descriptive statistics to analyze the student ratings of the service they received (on a scale of 1 to 5) and if their questions were answered (yes, no, or maybe). For the open-ended feedback question, I used the same process that I used for the open-ended question on the Equity Scorecard survey. I completed the first coding cycle using a combination of Initial Coding and In Vivo Coding, and I completed the second coding cycle using Focused Coding.

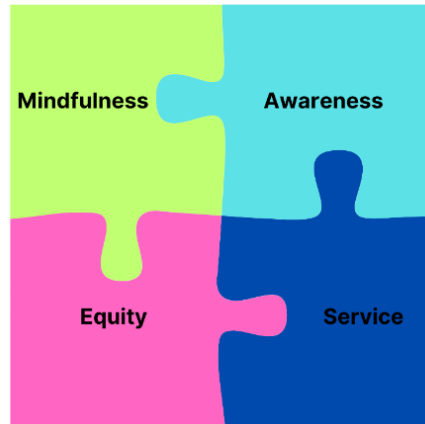
### *Process Measures*

The participant interviews were conducted after the third and sixth weeks of each implementation cycle. After downloading the Zoom-generated transcripts, I reviewed each transcription while listening to the recorded interview to correct any transcription errors. This step increased the accuracy of the transcriptions and also re-familiarized me with the interview content. Next, I read through the transcripts and used the bold/underline and comment features of Microsoft Word to complete the first cycle of coding using a combination of Initial Coding and In Vivo Coding. I then completed the second cycle of coding using Focused Coding. I designated certain colors for individual code categories that aligned with the underlying objectives of the Equity Scorecard and highlighted the bold/underlined text according to their corresponding category color (see Figure 13), which emerged from the interviews in PDSA 1. This approach ensured that the voices of the participants were retained and recurring themes were easily identified.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

**Figure 13**

*Qualitative Coding Categories*



The Fidelity Checklist instrument (see Appendix L) was implemented in PDSA 2. After each week of the 6-week Equity Scorecard survey completion process, I checked the surveys that were completed for the previous week. I looked at the participant ID codes for each survey that was completed and noted that completion on the checklist, beside the corresponding participant ID code. I used descriptive statistics to analyze the number of surveys completed.

***Outcome Measures***

The Pre Equity-Mindedness survey (see Appendix D) was administered to Equity Scorecard participants prior to their attending the orientation presentation, and the Post Equity-Mindedness survey (see Appendix E) was administered to participants after the sixth week of the Equity Scorecard implementation. Both surveys were administered using Qualtrics and contained the same 27 questions where participants could rate their responses on a scale from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*. In order to better understand the changes within related questions, I used four question domains for the Pre and Post Equity-Mindedness surveys, which were researcher-developed and aligned to the qualitative coding categories (see Figure 13) but not psychometrically tested (Cook & Beckman, 2006). There was also one open-ended question at

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

the end of each survey. Due to the relatively small sample size, I used descriptive statistics to analyze the changes in Pre and Post Equity-Mindedness survey results for each PDSA cycle, and I used a t-test to analyze the changes for the initiative overall, which included results from all participants in PDSA 1 and PDSA 2. For the open-response question on the Pre and Post Equity-Mindedness survey, I used the same combination of Initial Coding and In Vivo Coding (Saldaña, 2021) for the first coding cycle, followed by Focused Coding in the second coding cycle to analyze the open-ended reflection question. This combination of coding techniques was appropriate because my goal was to honor the authentic voice of the participants (Saldaña, 2021) and group them into major themes (Saldaña, 2021). After exporting the survey results into an Excel document, I completed the first cycle of the coding process by using the bold/underline feature to note significant words and/or phrases within the participant's responses. I also used the comment feature in Microsoft Excel to make additional annotations regarding the emergence of potential code categories and key ideas. Lastly, I used the shading feature to color code cells beside the open-ended responses according to the qualitative coding categories noted in Figure 13.

I submitted a data request to FCCC's Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research to obtain the Black male student persistence rates, which were my second outcome measure. The data included first-to-second semester persistence rates for Spring and Fall semesters only (Summer was not included). To establish a baseline, data were collected from Spring 2019 to Fall 2023; however, for the purposes of this intervention, only the Spring 2023 and Fall 2023 data were used to measure improvement. This timeframe coincides with the implementation timeframe for the Equity Scorecard initiative. I used descriptive statistics to analyze any change in Black male student persistence rates during the implementation of the initiative.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

### *Balance Measure*

To obtain the Black female student persistence rates, I submitted a data request to FCCC's Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research. The data included first-to-second semester persistence rates for Spring and Fall semesters only (Summer was not included). To establish a baseline, data were collected from Spring 2019 to Fall 2023; however, for the purposes of this intervention, only the Spring 2023 and Fall 2023 data were used to measure improvement. This timeframe coincides with the implementation timeframe for the Equity Scorecard initiative. I used descriptive statistics to analyze any change in Black female student persistence rates during and immediately following the implementation of the initiative.

**Figure 14**

*Data Collection and Analysis Overview*

Data Collection & Analysis Overview			
Data Instrument	Stakeholder / Collection Timeframe / Purpose	Practical Measure	Analysis Method
Equity Scorecard Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FCCC Full-Time Student Support Staff Members</li> <li>March – May &amp; September – October 2023</li> <li>Self-Assessment of equity-mindedness, service delivery, and reflective practice</li> </ul>	Driver Measure	Mixed Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial</li> <li>In Vivo</li> <li>Focused</li> <li>Trend Analysis</li> </ul>
Student Satisfaction Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FCCC Students</li> <li>April – October 2023</li> <li>Student feedback on service delivery</li> </ul>	Driver Measure	Mixed Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial</li> <li>In Vivo</li> <li>Focused</li> <li>Descriptive Statistics</li> </ul>
Fidelity Checklist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Graduate Researcher</li> <li>September – October 2023</li> <li>Frequency of Equity Scorecard completion</li> </ul>	Process Measure	Quantitative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Descriptive Statistics</li> </ul>
Semi-Structured Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FCCC Full-Time Student Support Staff Members</li> <li>April/May &amp; October 2023</li> <li>Evidence of equity-mindedness, service delivery, and reflective practice</li> </ul>	Process Measure	Qualitative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial</li> <li>In Vivo</li> <li>Focused</li> </ul>
Equity-Mindedness Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FCCC Full-Time Student Support Staff Members</li> <li>March/May &amp; September/October 2023</li> <li>Growth in equity-mindedness, service delivery, and reflective practice</li> </ul>	Outcome Measure	Mixed Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial</li> <li>In Vivo</li> <li>Focused</li> <li>Descriptive Statistics</li> <li>T-Test</li> </ul>
Black Male Persistence Rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FCCC Black Male Students</li> <li>Spring 2023 &amp; Fall 2023</li> <li>First-to-second semester persistence rates</li> </ul>	Outcome Measure	Quantitative Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Descriptive Statistics</li> </ul>
Black Female Persistence Rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FCCC Black Female Students</li> <li>Spring 2023 &amp; Fall 2023</li> <li>First-to-second semester persistence rates</li> </ul>	Balance Measure	Quantitative Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Descriptive Statistics</li> </ul>

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

*“It helps me just to kind of either check myself. So, if I have a meeting with a student, and I may have been answering a question and think, oh, I missed that part, maybe I should do that for next time.” – Jesse*

### Results

#### Participants

A total of 20 full-time staff members, primarily from the Student Success Services Division of FCCC, participated in the Equity Scorecard initiative. PDSA 1 had seven total participants and PDSA 2 had 13 total participants. There were initially 14 participants in PDSA 2, but one participant withdrew after completing the Pre Equity-Mindedness survey, citing concerns regarding her existing workload. The participants were recruited through a combination of purposive sampling – staff members who have a significant impact on the experiences of Black male students in the realm of service delivery – and snowball sampling via recommendations from recruited participants. In some cases, I used FCCC’s organizational chart to identify the appropriate supervisor to receive the recruitment email. This recruitment approach was justified because it models how initiatives function in real-world educational settings, increasing the feasibility of this approach in replication and scaling efforts.

#### Demographics

PDSA 1 included six FCCC Student Success Navigators and one member of the Testing Center. There was one Black woman, five White women, and one White man. They ranged in age from 32 to 66. Their time as employees at FCCC ranged from six months to 19 years and their time in their current roles ranged from six months to 14 years.

PDSA 2 staff included two members from FCCC Student Life, three members from Library Services, one member from Career and College Promise, one Career Coach, five

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

members from Academic Advising, and one Dean. There were two Black women, two Black men, six White women, and three White men. They ranged in age from 28 to 56. Their time as employees at FCCC ranged from one year to 20 years, and their time in their current roles ranged from one year to 15 years. Table 1 provides an overview of the participant demographics for PDSA 1 and PDSA 2.

**Table 1**

*Participant Demographics*

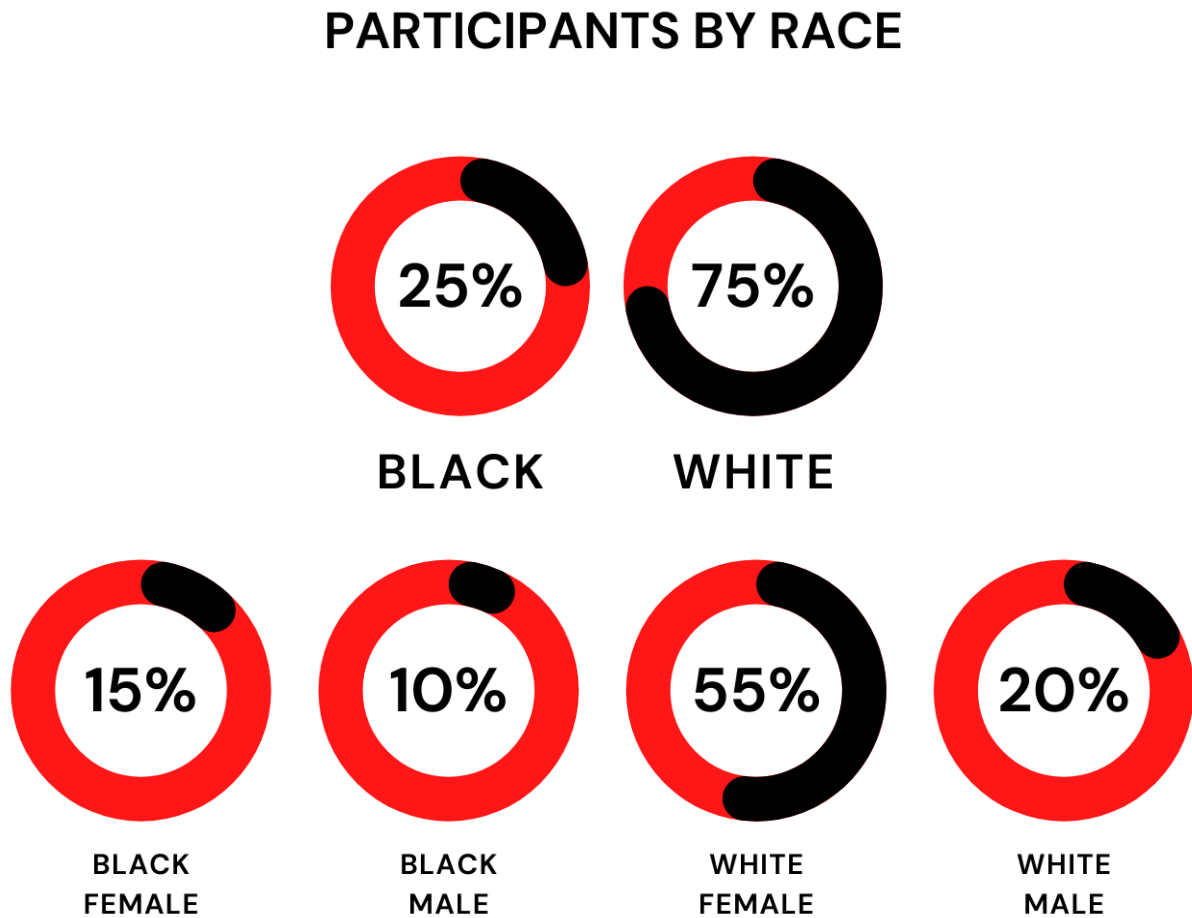
PDSA Cycle	Black Female	Black Male	White Female	White Male	Age	Years in Role
PDSA 1	1	0	5	1	32 – 66	0.5 – 14
PDSA 2	2	2	6	3	28 – 56	1 – 15
Total	3	2	11	4	28 – 66	0.5 – 15

Figure 15 depicts the breakdown of participant demographics by race and gender. What is notable about this data is the fact that White females make up an overwhelming majority of the participants in the study. This is significant because it mirrors the reality of race/gender representation in higher education, where Black male students will likely interact with White female educators due to their representation within the population of educators. Engaging this critical group of professionals in an initiative designed to increase equity-mindedness could have significant implications on the experiences of Black male students at FCCC.



**Figure 15**

*Participant Demographics by Race and Gender*



*Note.* These calculations include participants in PDSA 1 and PDSA 2 combined.

#### ***De-Identification Process***

The participants entered a participant ID code on each Equity Scorecard survey and the Pre and Post Equity-Mindedness surveys so that individual participant scores could be analyzed across time while maintaining some degree of participant privacy. The participant ID code was determined by combining the two-digit day the participant was born, the second letter of their last name, and the last 4 digits of their cell phone number. For example, if the participant was born on May 21st, their last name was Smith, and their cell phone number ended in 4785, the

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

participant ID code would be 21M4785. If the participant was born on May 5th instead of May 21st, the Participant ID Code would be 05M4785. The participant ID instructions were included at the beginning of each Equity Scorecard survey and the Pre and Post Equity-Mindedness surveys. In some cases, the participants mis-entered their ID code or used a different phone number in their code. Due to the relatively small size of each PDSA cycle, I was able to match the data to the corresponding participant.

As an added layer of security, once data collection was complete and prepared for analysis, each participant ID code was replaced with a randomly assigned participant number. The seven participants in PDSA 1 were randomly assigned participant numbers that ranged from PDSA1-1 to PDSA1-7. The 13 participants in PDSA 2 were randomly assigned ID numbers that ranged from PDSA2-1 to PDSA2-13. The original participant ID codes, entered by the participants, were then removed from the data sets.

### **PDSA Cycles**

The Equity Scorecard initiative consisted of two complete PDSA cycles that facilitated the opportunity to collect data and implement design refinements from the first iteration to the second iteration (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020). These sequential design enhancements represent the essence of Improvement Science. The first PDSA cycle began in March 2023 and ended in July 2023. The “Do” portion of PDSA 1 took place from March 2023 to May 2023, which corresponded to the Spring 2023 academic term. The findings from PDSA 1 informed the research design modifications in PDSA 2. Appendix O outlines the changes that were implemented in PDSA 2, which began in July 2023 and ended in November 2023. The “Do” portion of PDSA 2 took place from September 2023 to October 2023, which corresponded to the

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

Fall 2023 academic term. The following section details the findings of each PDSA cycle, as well as the combined findings for the Equity Scorecard overall.

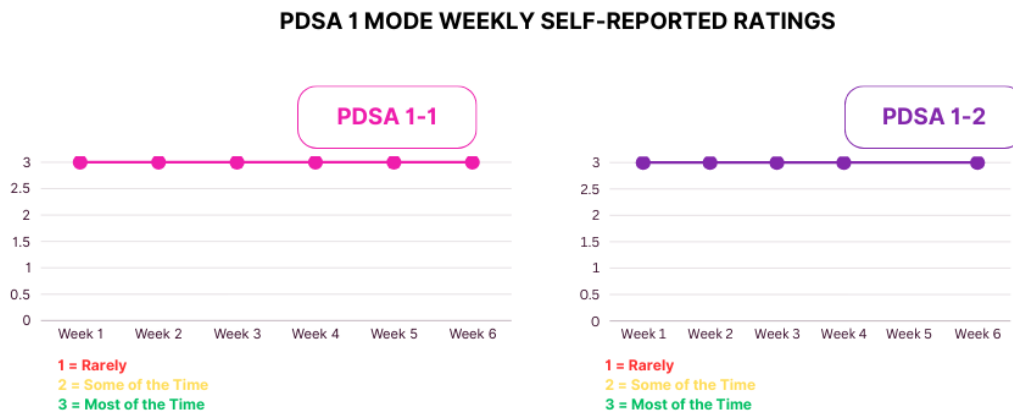
### Driver Measures

#### *PDSA 1*

The first driver measure that I analyzed in PDSA 1 was the Equity Scorecard survey. Participants were asked to complete the survey at least two times per week for six weeks. I performed descriptive statistics to calculate the mode self-reported survey rating each week for each participant. Figure 16 displays the weekly modes for each participant in PDSA 1. The self-reported weekly mode scores for six participants were *green/most of the time*. Only one participant's self-reported weekly mode scores, PDSA 1-4, deviated from this trend. Two of the participants in PDSA 1 completed Equity Scorecard surveys during all six weeks of the initiative, while the other participants' completions ranged from three out of six weeks to five out of six weeks.

### Figure 16

*Equity Scorecard Weekly Modes for PDSA 1*



## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH



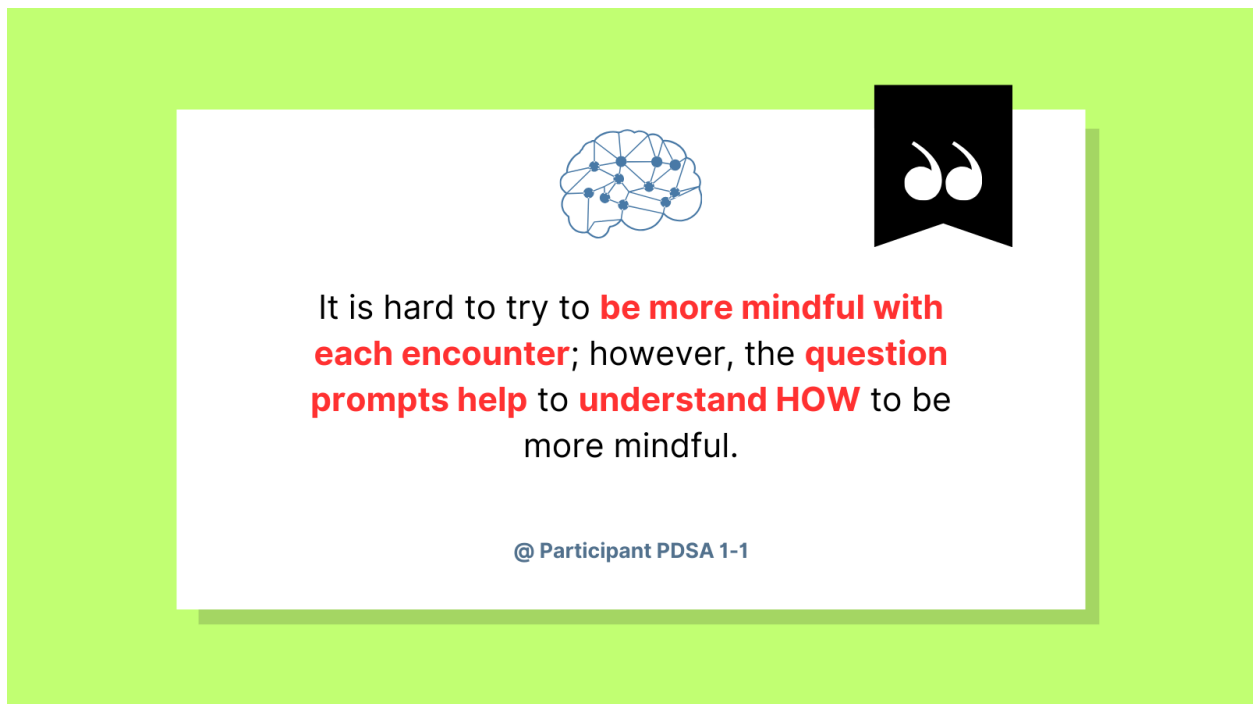
Figure 17 depicts a sample of the responses participants provided for the open-response question on the Equity Scorecard survey in PDSA 1, in which they were asked to describe their current thoughts, feelings, ideas, and/or experiences related to service delivery, from an equity perspective. Participant entries for this question offered evidence of the four domains that were used throughout the data analysis process – mindfulness, awareness, equity, and service. In the mindfulness domain, Participant PDSA 1-1’s response highlights the participant’s use of the

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

Equity Scorecard survey questions as a guide to operationalize mindfulness during student interactions. In the awareness domain, Participant PDSA 1-2 names the reality that students face barriers to success, which can be uncovered through effective communication. Participant PDSA 1-3's response emphasizes equity by recognizing that each student has particular needs that must be addressed. Participant PDSA 1-6 discusses a combination of factors that facilitate successful service delivery, which include seeing students and finding ways to engage them in conversations.

### Figure 17

*Sample of Equity Scorecard Open-Response Answers PDSA 1*



## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH



I was able to assist a student today with transportation by talking with him and **discovering issues** that were **preventing him from being successful**.

@ Participant PDSA 1-2



I try to make sure that **each student has whatever they need**, whether it is extra instruction of information.

@ Participant PDSA 1-3



We have to be aware of our surroundings and **be able to spot individuals that need a little more attention than others.** They may appear shy and timid and they are but **there are ways to engage them in conversations to break the surface.**

@ Participant PDSA 1-6

The second driver measure in PDSA 1 was the Student Satisfaction Survey, which was administered by the FCCC Student Success Services Division. Data are not reported for Week 1 and Week 2 of the initiative, because the institution modified how they administered the Student Satisfaction survey, and the new survey process was not launched until Week 3 of PDSA 1. Table 2 provides an overview of student responses to the question “Did we answer your question?” During PDSA 1, 38 students responded *Yes*, three students responded *Maybe*, and five students responded *No*. Figure 18 provides a visual representation of the Student Satisfaction Survey data for PDSA 1 and demonstrates that the percentage of students responding *Yes* to this question increased each week during the initiative.

AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

**Table 2**

*Student Satisfaction Survey Results for Did We Answer Your Question PDSA 1*

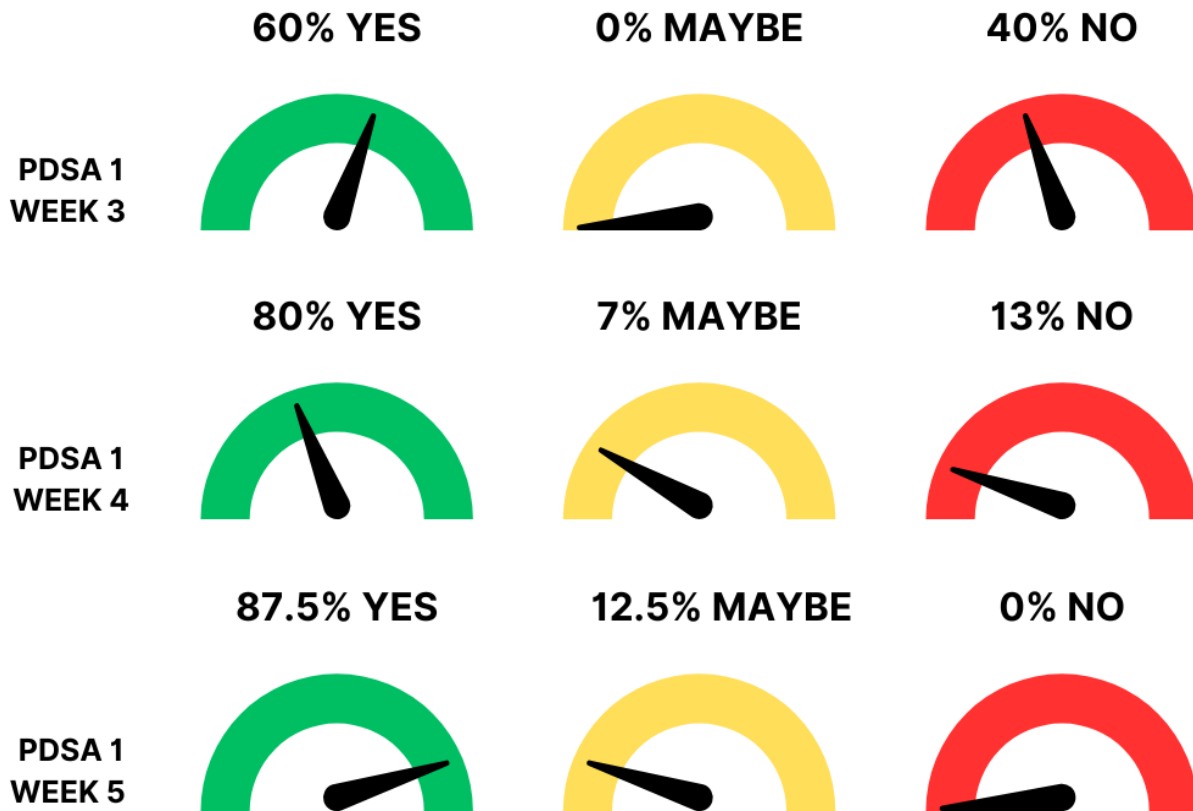
PDSA 1	Yes	Maybe	No
Week 1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Week 2	N/A	N/A	N/A
Week 3	3	0	2
Week 4	12	1	2
Week 5	14	2	0
Week 6	9	0	1
Total	38	3	5

*Note.* Institutional data for the Student Satisfaction Survey were not available (N/A) for Week 1 or Week 2 of PDSA 1, because the institution restructured how they administered the survey during that time.

**Figure 18**

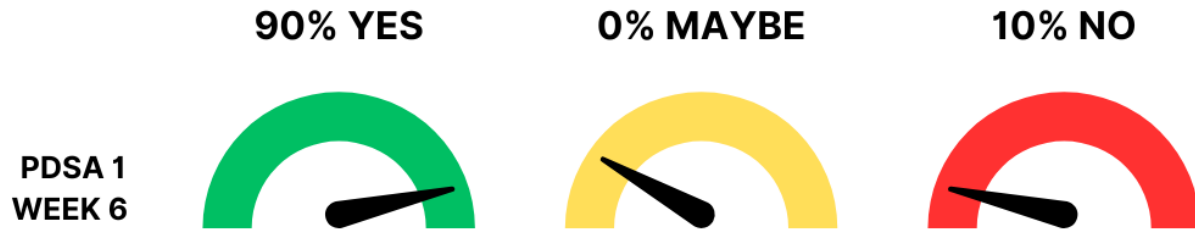
*Student Satisfaction Survey Results for Did We Answer Your Question PDSA 1*

## Did We Answer Your Question?





## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH



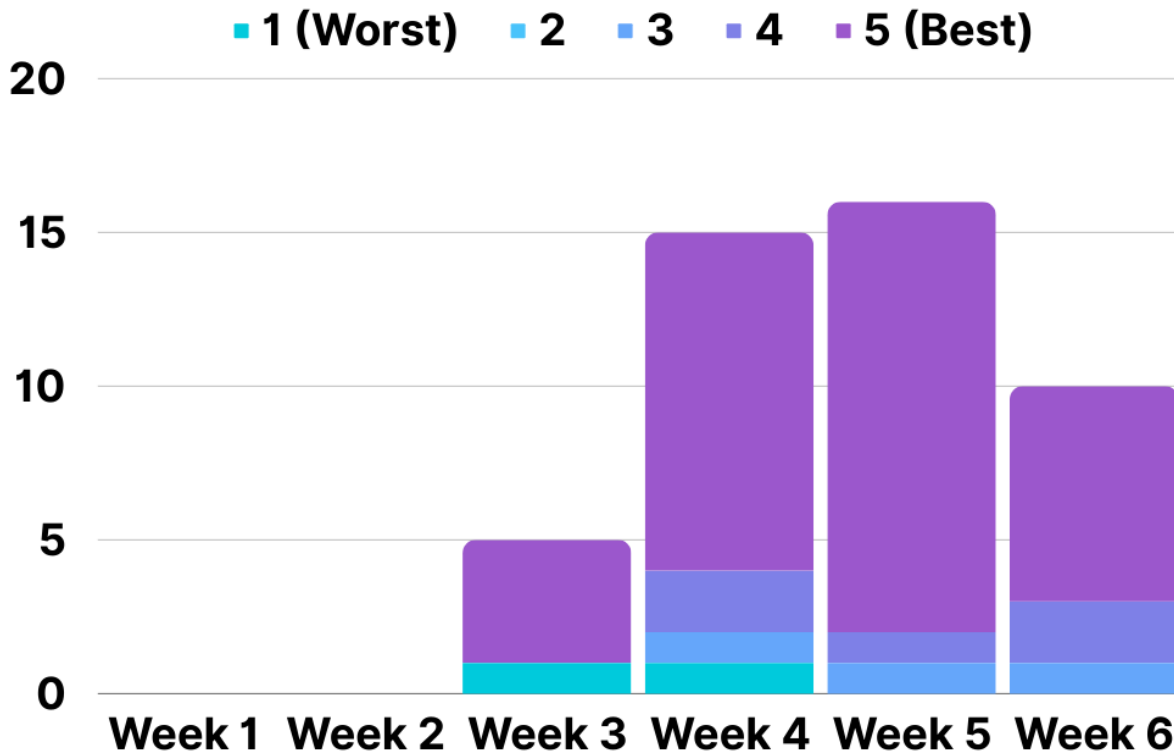
*Note.* Institutional data for the Student Satisfaction Survey were not available for Week 1 or Week 2 of PDSA 1, because the institution restructured how they administered the survey during that time.

Figure 19 illustrates student responses to the question “How would you rate the service that you received? With 5 being the best and 1 being the least?” During the PDSA cycle, 46 students completed the Student Satisfaction Survey. Of those responses, 36 students gave their service a 5-rating, 5 students gave their service a 4-rating, three students gave their service a 3-rating, no students gave their service a 2-rating, and two students gave their service a 1-rating. Week 5 had the highest number of 5-ratings.

**Figure 19**

*Student Satisfaction Survey Results for How Would You Rate Your Service PDSA 1*

## How Would You Rate Your Service?



*Note.* The institution restructured how they administered the Student Satisfaction survey and data were not available for Week 1 or Week 2 of PDSA 1.

The Student Satisfaction Survey also provided respondents with the opportunity to name an FCCC staff member who was particularly helpful. PDSA 1 participants were named on four different surveys that were submitted during the weeks that corresponded with PDSA 1.

### **Driver Measure**

#### ***PDSA 2***

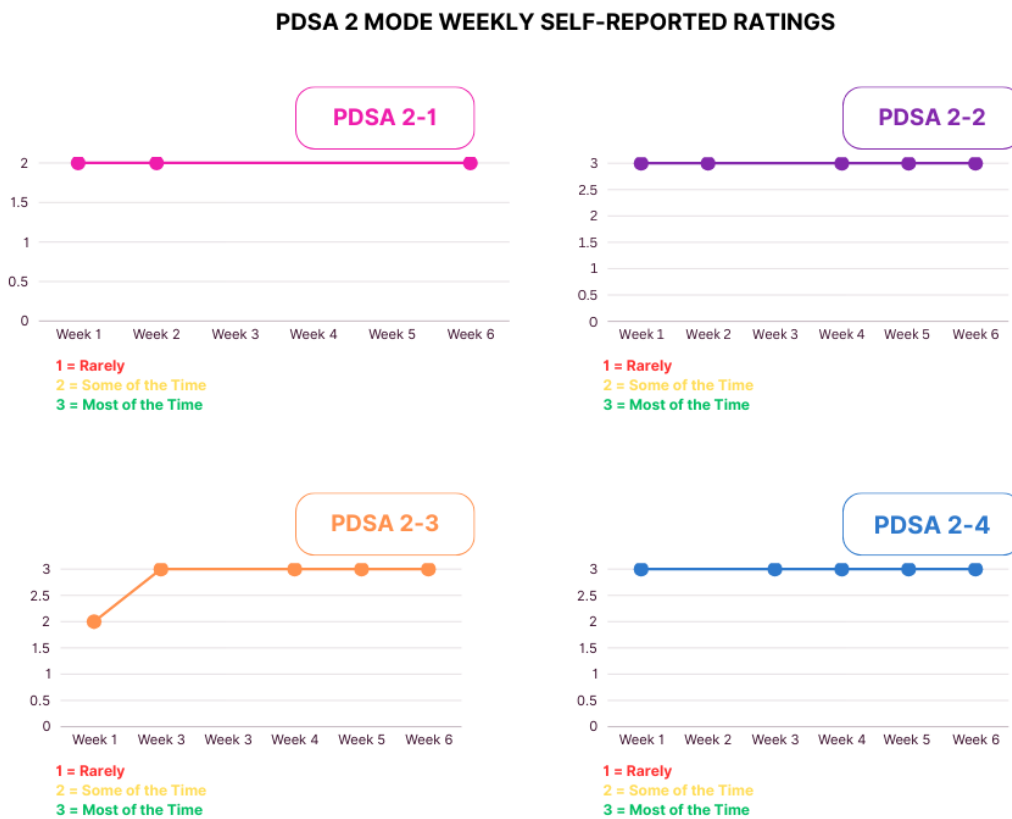
The first driver measure that I analyzed in PDSA 2 was the Equity Scorecard survey. Participants were asked to complete the survey at least two times per week for six weeks. I performed descriptive statistics to calculate the mode self-reported survey rating each week for

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

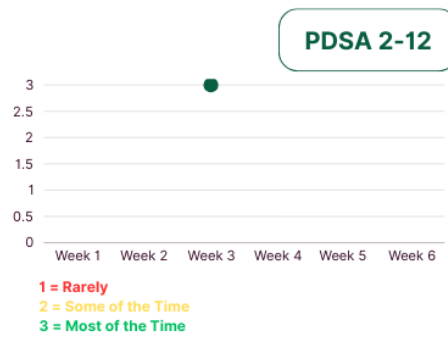
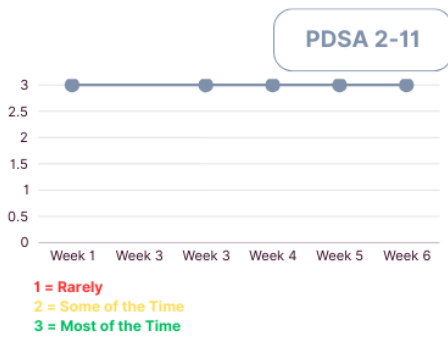
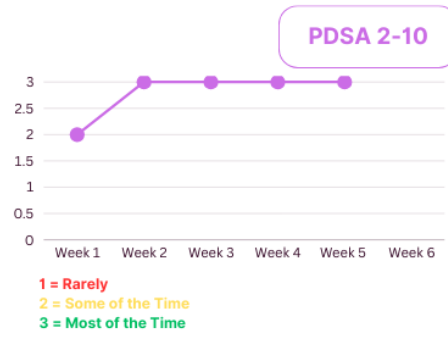
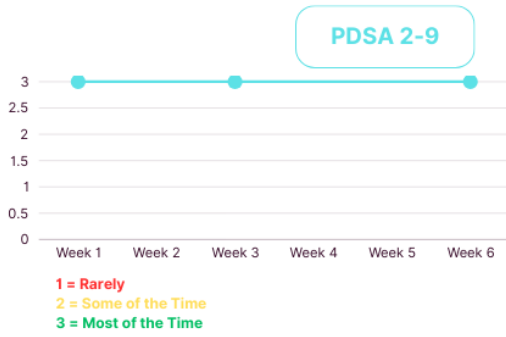
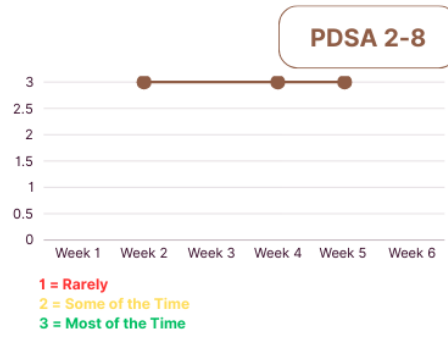
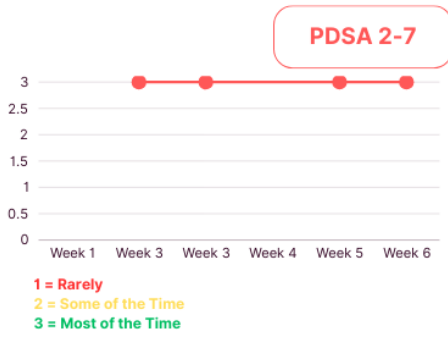
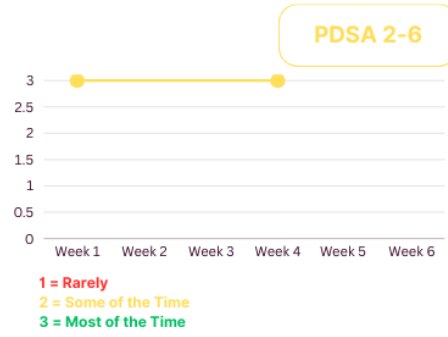
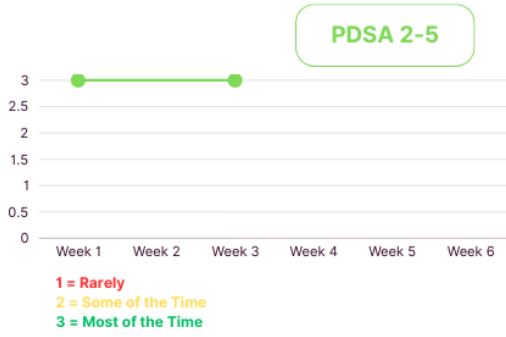
each participant. Figure 20 displays the weekly modes for each participant in PDSA 2. Ten participants' self-reported weekly mode scores for each of the six weeks was 3 or "Most of the Time". Three participants' self-reported weekly mode scores deviated from this trend. Only one of the participants in PDSA 2 completed Equity Scorecard surveys during all six weeks of the initiative, while the other participants' completions ranged from one out of six weeks to five out of six weeks.

**Figure 20**

*Equity Scorecard Weekly Modes for PDSA 2*



# AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH



## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

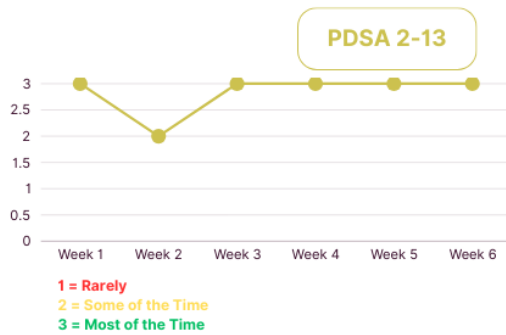
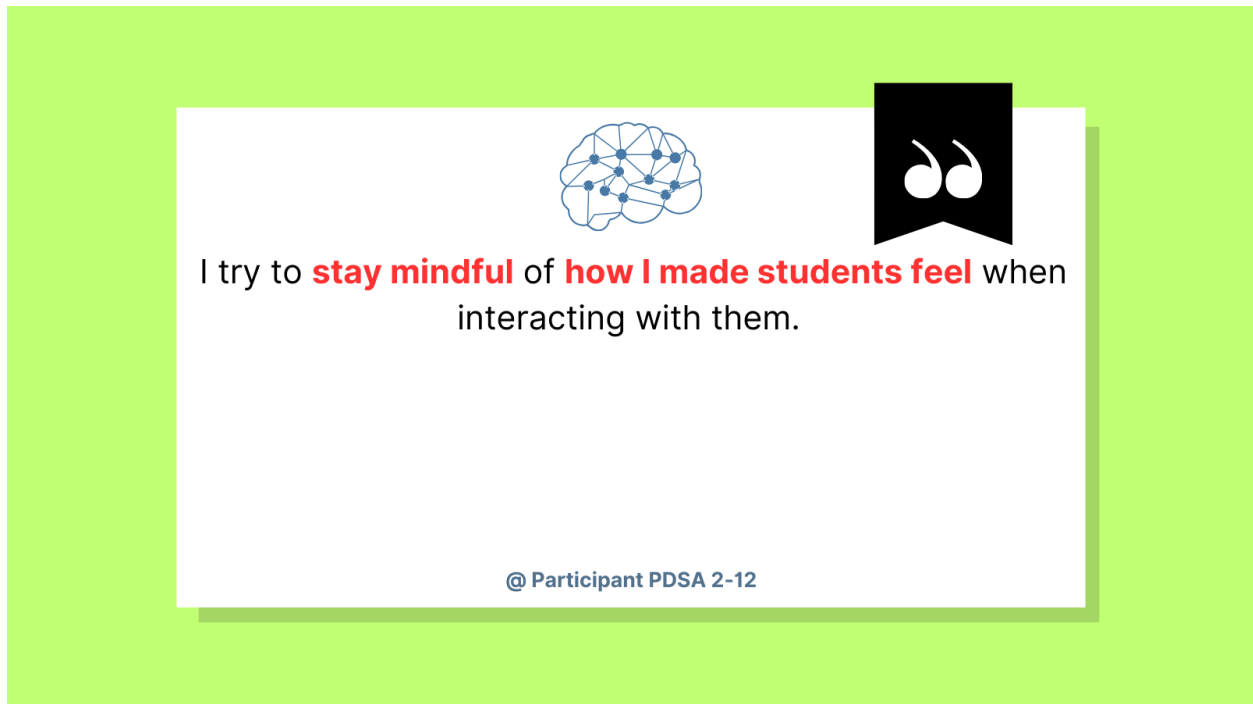


Figure 21 depicts a sample of the responses participants provided for the open-response question on the Equity Scorecard survey in PDSA 2, in which they were asked to describe their current thoughts, feelings, ideas, and/or experiences related to service delivery, from an equity perspective. Participant entries for this question offered evidence of the four domains that were used throughout the data analysis process – mindfulness, awareness, equity, and service. In the mindfulness domain, Participant PDSA 2-12 reflects on being mindful of how interactions shape how students feel. In the awareness domain, Participant PDSA 2-6 shares an encounter with a student that highlights the impact that taking the time to be tuned in can have on student experience and access to support resources. Participant PDSA 2-10’s response emphasizes equity by recognizing tone and facial expressions impact different students differently and must be adjusted accordingly. Participant PDSA 2-2 discusses a combination of factors, such as delivery and tone, that create the service experience.

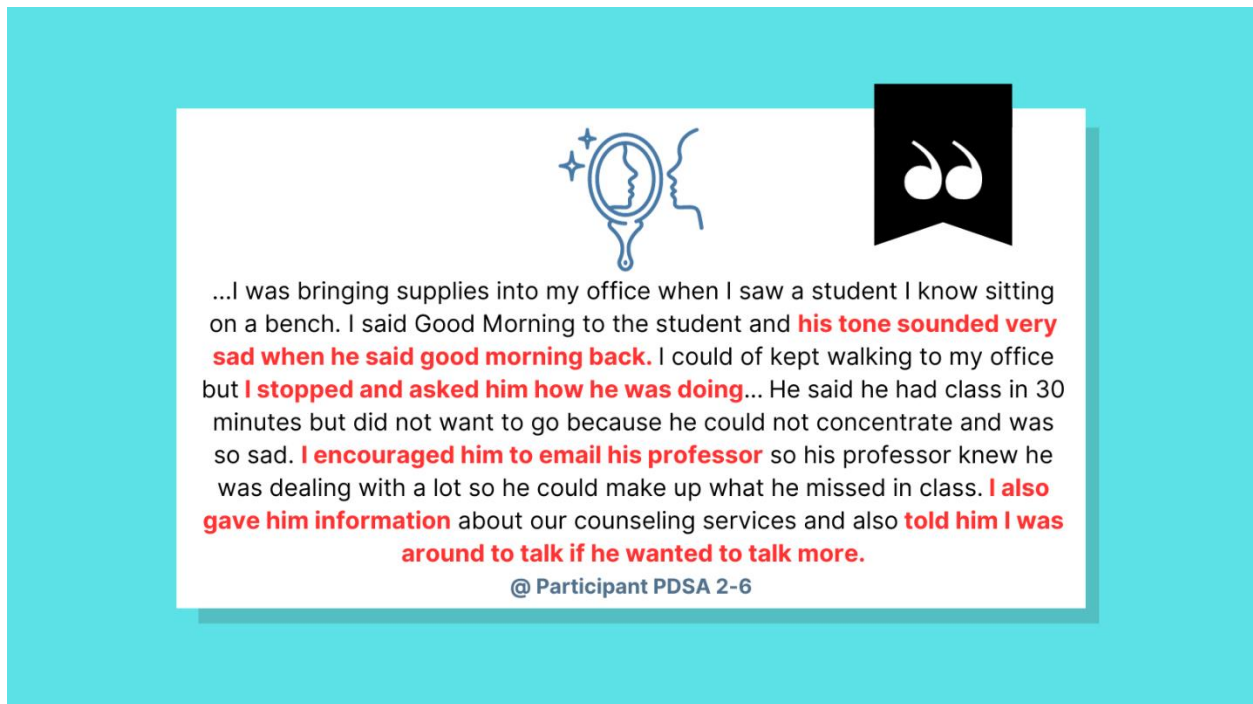
## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

**Figure 21**

*Sample of Equity Scorecard Open-Response Answers PDSA 2*

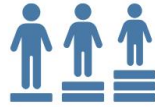


This slide features a light green background. At the top center is a blue icon of a brain with neural connections. To the right is a black speech bubble icon with white quotation marks. The text is centered and reads: "I try to **stay mindful** of **how I made students feel** when interacting with them." At the bottom center, it says "@ Participant PDSA 2-12".



This slide features a light blue background. At the top center is a blue icon of a hand holding a mirror with a face inside, surrounded by stars. To the right is a black speech bubble icon with white quotation marks. The text is centered and reads: "...I was bringing supplies into my office when I saw a student I know sitting on a bench. I said Good Morning to the student and **his tone sounded very sad when he said good morning back**. I could of kept walking to my office but **I stopped and asked him how he was doing**... He said he had class in 30 minutes but did not want to go because he could not concentrate and was so sad. **I encouraged him to email his professor** so his professor knew he was dealing with a lot so he could make up what he missed in class. **I also gave him information** about our counseling services and also **told him I was around to talk if he wanted to talk more**." At the bottom center, it says "@ Participant PDSA 2-6".

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH



I really want to work on **how I present myself to students through my tone and facial expressions**. I've never put a lot of thought into these from an equity standpoint, but I understand how they are important. **I'm learning that I have to be intentional** in the practice of recognizing my **tone and facial expressions** and how they **may impact different students and their individual backgrounds**.

@ PDSA 2-10



I want to make sure the **quality of my services** are high. I **have to be mindful** that my **delivery and tone are part of that experience**.

@ Participant PDSA 2-2

The second driver measure in PDSA 2 was the Student Satisfaction survey, which was administered by the FCCC Student Success Services Division. Table 3 provides an overview of student responses to the question “Did we answer your question?” During the PDSA cycle, 26

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

students responded *Yes*, two students responded *Maybe*, and no students responded *No*. Figure 22 provides a visual representation of the Student Satisfaction Survey data for PDSA 2 and demonstrates that the percentage of students responding *Yes* to this question increased from Week 1 to Week 2 and remained at 100% in each of the following four weeks of the Equity Scorecard implementation.

**Table 3**

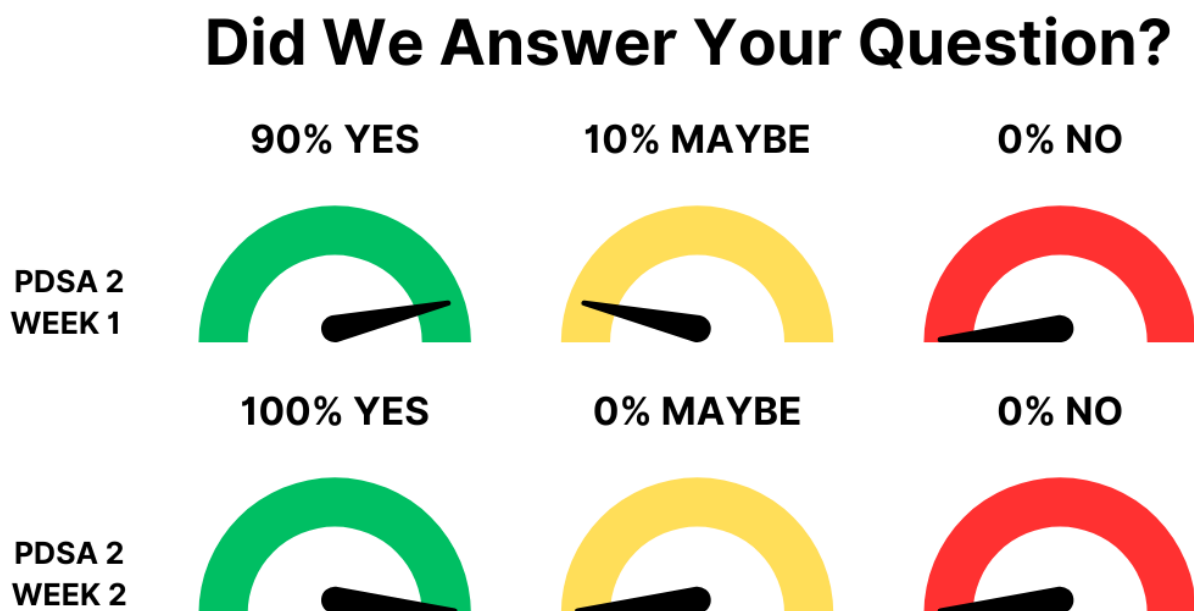
*Student Satisfaction Survey Results for Did We Answer Your Question PDSA 2*

PDSA 2	Yes	Maybe	No
Week 1	9	1	0
Week 2	1	0	0
Week 3	1	0	0
Week 4	10	0	0
Week 5	5	0	0
Week 6*	--	--	--
Total	26	1	0

*Note.* No Student Satisfaction Surveys were submitted during Week 6 of PDSA 2.

**Figure 22**

*Student Satisfaction Survey Results for Did We Answer Your Question PDSA 2*





## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

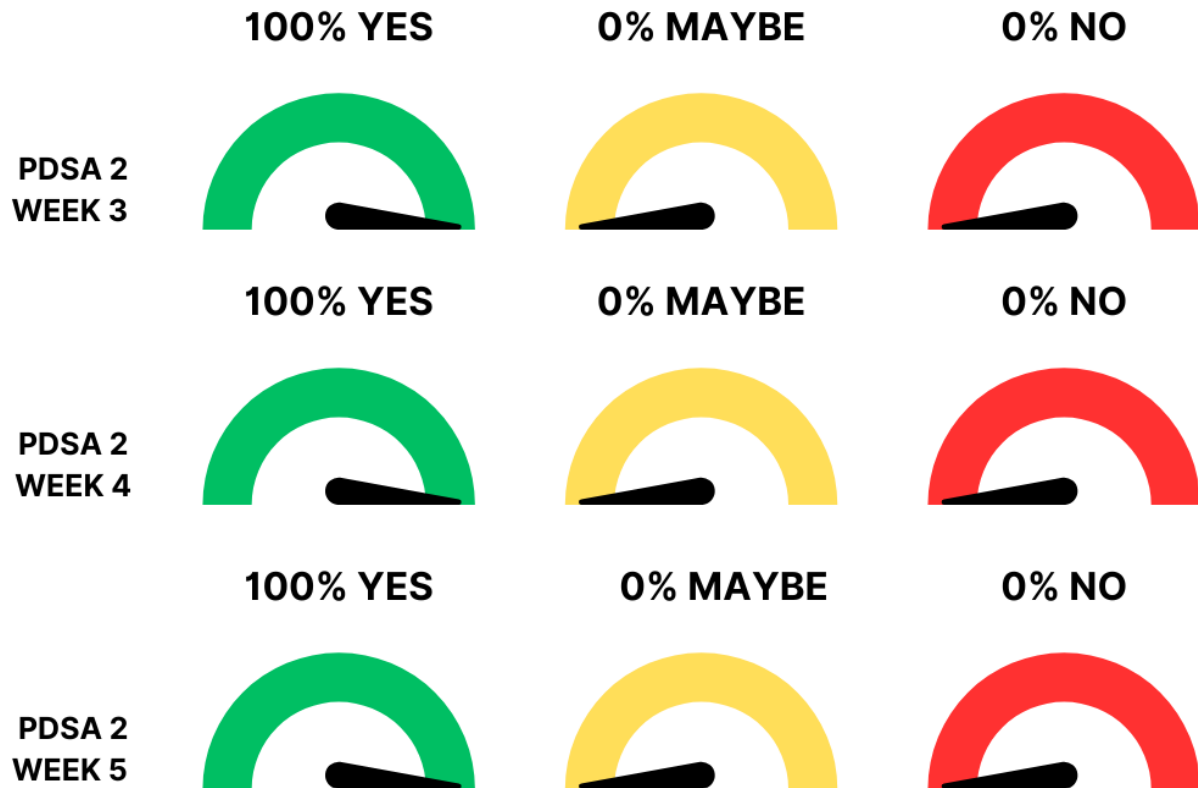
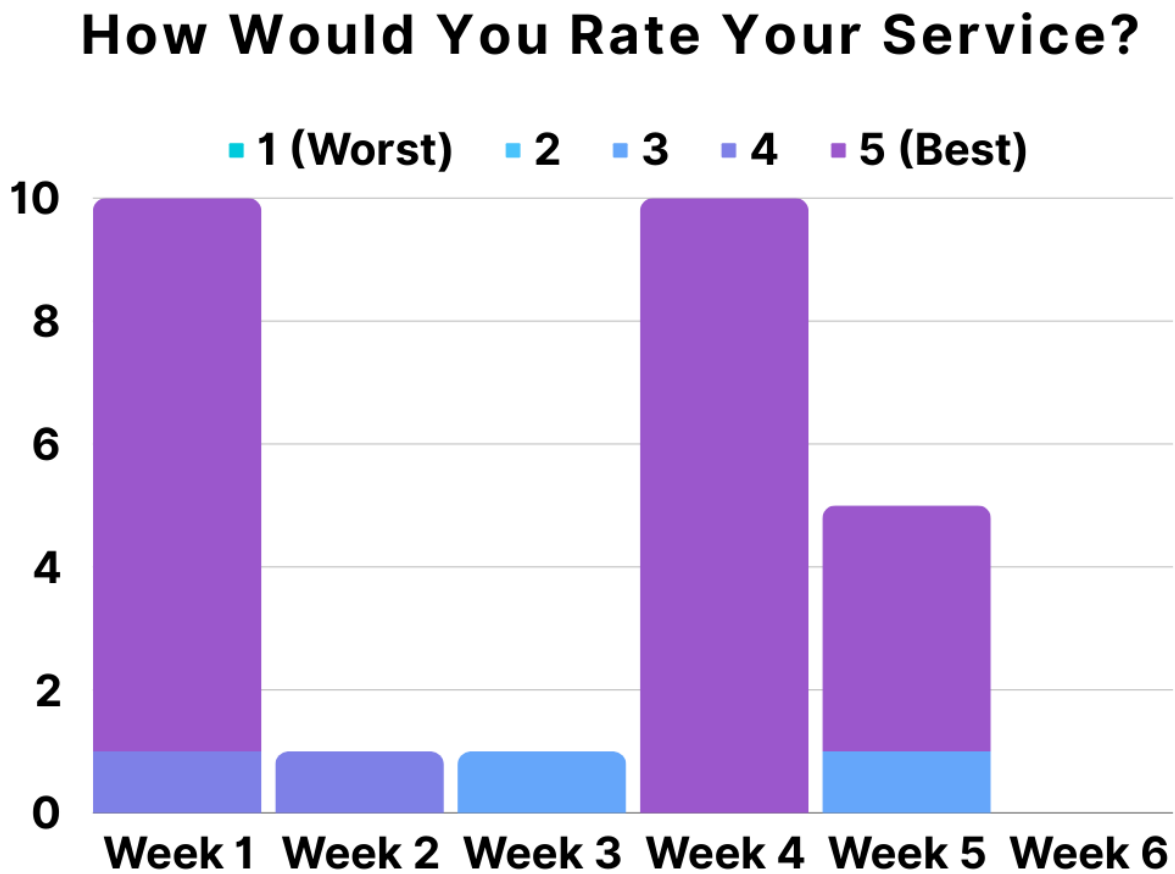


Figure 23 illustrates student responses to the question “How would you rate the service that you received? With 5 being the best and 1 being the least?” During the cycle, 27 students completed the Student Satisfaction Survey. Of those responses, 23 students gave their service a 5-rating, two students gave their service a 4-rating, one student gave their service a 3-rating, and no students gave their service a 2-rating or a 1-rating. Week 4 had the highest number of 5-ratings.

**Figure 23**

*Student Satisfaction Survey Results for How Would You Rate Your Service PDSA 2*



In response to the Student Satisfaction Survey question regarding FCCC staff members who were particularly helpful, the results for the PDSA cycle included four references to participants from PDSA 2, and five references to participants from PDSA 1.

**Overall**

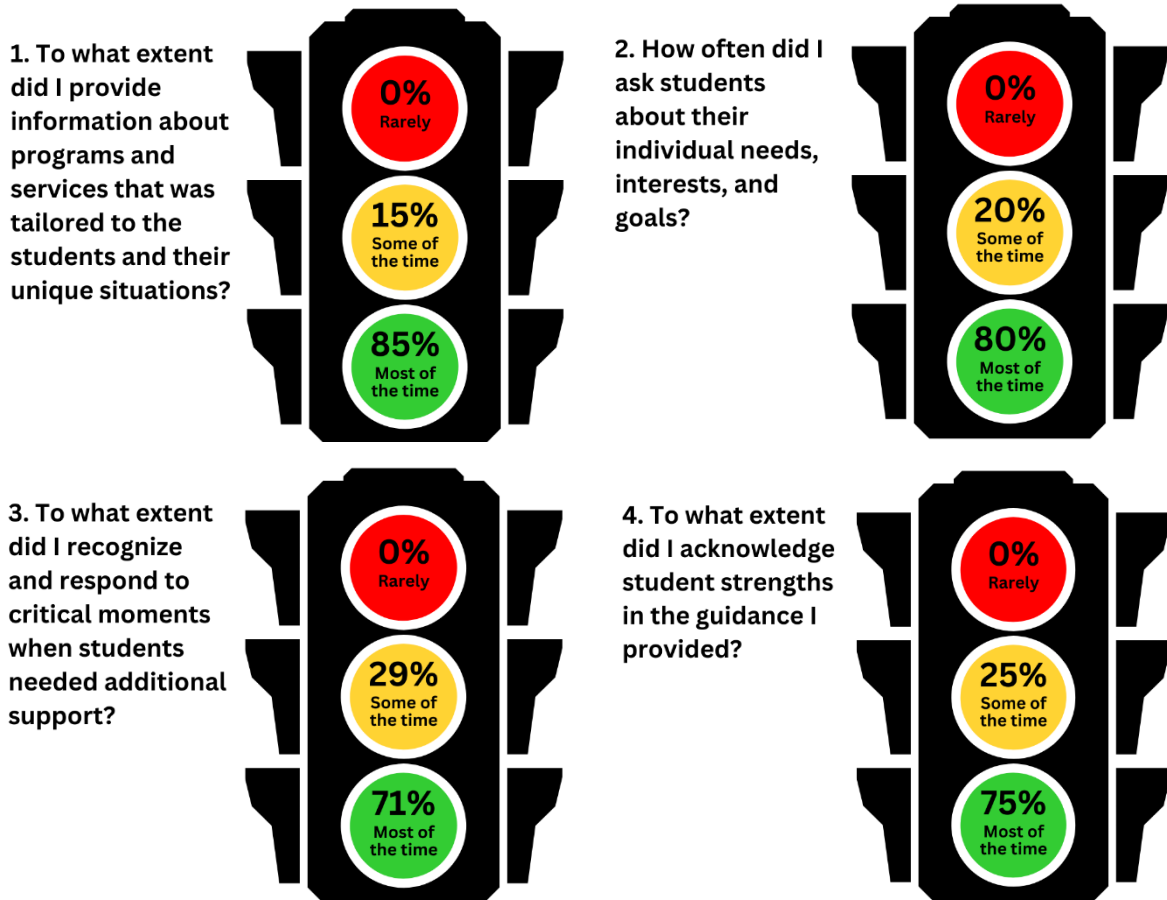
Figure 24 depicts the question modes for each self-report item on the Equity Scorecard survey for PDSA 1 and PDSA 2 combined. While the majority of the modes for each question fell in the *green/most of the time* category, there were notable differences in the percentage breakdowns between the questions. At 56%, the lowest *green/most of the time* value was for question number six, “How often did I inquire about students and their lived experiences so I

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

could establish connections and provide services?” At 67%, the second lowest green value was for question number five, “How often did I consider how students from diverse backgrounds may experience campus services and representatives?” Questions 7, 9, and 10 had the highest green values at 95% each.

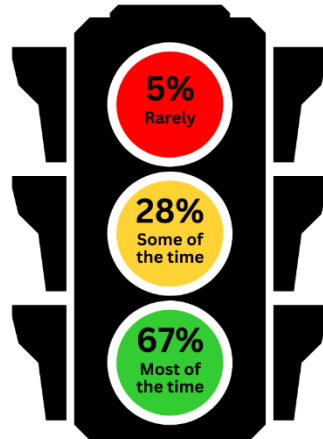
**Figure 24**

*Equity Scorecard Question Modes for PDSA 1 and PDSA 2 Combined*

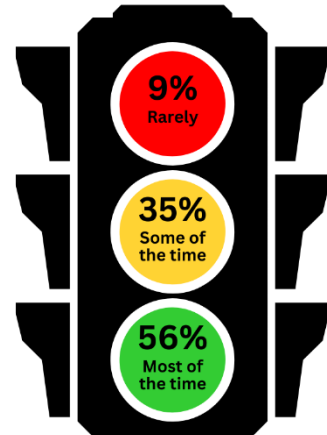


## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

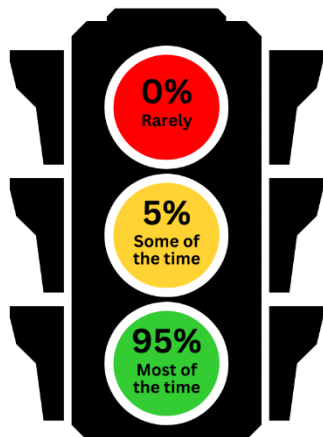
5. How often did I consider how students from diverse backgrounds may experience campus services and representatives?



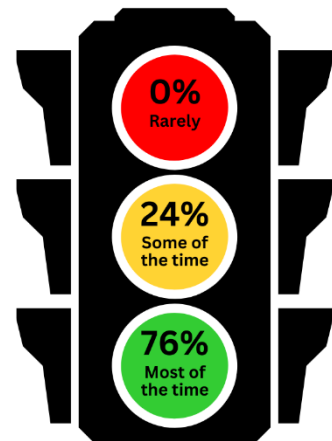
6. How often did I inquire about students and their lived experiences so I could establish connections and provide services?



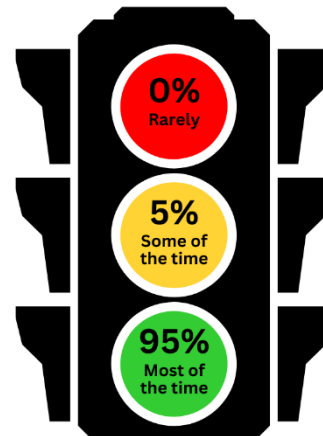
7. In my communication with students, to what extent did I find ways to incorporate affirming and/or encouraging messages?



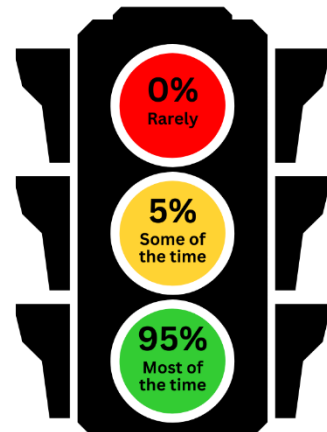
8. When working with students, how often was I aware of my tone of voice and facial expressions?



9. While working with students, to what extent did I reflect on whether my service delivery made them feel welcome and respected?



10. To what extent was I mindful of how my words and actions may be perceived by students?



### Process Measures

#### *PDSA 1*

The process measure in PDSA 1 was the participant interview. I used interviews to determine if the Equity Scorecard initiative was being implemented as planned and to collect data related to the impact of the initiative from the perspective of the participants. I conducted a

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

total of five interviews in PDSA 1, two at the halfway point and three at the end of the initiative. Because I used random selection with replacement in PDSA 1, two participants were interviewed at both the three-week and six-week marks. This resulted in a total of three interview participants in PDSA 1. The interviews ranged in duration from 12 minutes to 30 minutes. Figure 25 shows participant responses to key interview questions at a glance. Regarding the impact of the initiative on their service delivery, all three participants referenced an increased level of awareness or attention. In some cases, this was in reference to the students and their needs. In other cases, this increased mindfulness was related to the verbal and non-verbal communication of the practitioners. Some of the benefits of participation indicated by the interviewees included the ability to keep the questions in mind as they were serving students, which Diamond and Gomez (2023) refer to as “reflection-in-action” (p. 5), the opportunity to self-reflect, and new knowledge they could share with colleagues. The reported challenges were slightly varied ranging from difficulties focusing on one particular student group (Black male students), completing the Equity Scorecard survey without being interrupted, and engaging in the process of self-examination. Recommendations for changes to the initiative focused on ways to incorporate the Equity Scorecard initiative into the larger professional development context through such means as offering equity vs. equality refresher courses, combining the Equity Scorecard initiative with other trainings, and offering an incentive or benefit to staff for participation.

**Figure 25**

*Interviews at a Glance for PDSA 1*

**INTERVIEWS AT A GLANCE - PDSA 1**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Service Impact</b>	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Suggested Changes</b>
<b>Elizabeth</b>	Being aware of students and their needs	Keeping the questions in mind ----- Working on customer service	Reflecting on all questions in one day ----- Focusing on one group of students	Offering a recurring equity vs. equality refresher course
<b>Nature</b>	Paying attention to the subtext of what students say	Keeping the questions in mind ----- Self-reflection	Completing the Equity Scorecard without interruptions	Providing a benefit for participation ----- Offering with other trainings
<b>Jules</b>	Being aware of mannerisms, tone, and facial expressions	Self-awareness ----- Knowledge to share with staff	Self-examination	None

*Note.* Suggested changes noted as “None” indicate that the participants did not recommend any changes. Suggested changes noted as “NA” indicate that the participants were not asked that question because they were interviewed after Week 3.

***PDSA 2***

One process measure in PDSA 2 was the participant interview, which was again used to determine if the Equity Scorecard initiative was being implemented as designed and to gather insights related to the implementation. I conducted a total of five interviews in PDSA 2, two at the halfway point and three at the end of the initiative. Because I used random selection without replacement in PDSA 2, I interviewed a total of five different participants. The interviews ranged in duration from 20 minutes to 29 minutes. Figure 26 shows participant responses to key interview questions at a glance. In response to the questions regarding the impact of the Equity Scorecard initiative on their service, four out of five participants discussed the ways in which

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

participation increased their awareness or mindfulness regarding students, service, and equity in general. When asked about the benefits of participation, interviewees had more varied responses that included increased awareness of making students feel welcome, understanding the perspectives of colleagues related to equity, improved mindfulness, and sense of purpose in their work, the importance of non-verbal cues, and having a tool to self-check their performance. When asked about the challenges faced during the initiative, three out of five participants mentioned limited student interactions as a barrier. Other challenges included unpredictability with the self-reported scores and having reminders to complete the survey. Changes recommended for the Equity Scorecard initiative from PDSA 2 participants included using an evaluation scale that was more granular, incorporating a check-in point for all participants during the initiative, and providing participants with a visual aid to remind them of the importance of equity-mindedness.

**Figure 26**

*Interviews at a Glance for PDSA 2*

**INTERVIEWS AT A GLANCE - PDSA 2**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Service Impact</b>	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Suggested Changes</b>
<b>Librarian</b>	Thinking more about student interactions	Awareness of importance of making people feel welcome	Few student interactions	N/A
<b>Rob</b>	Being more aware of equity issues facing Black male students	Learning about others' perspectives on equity	Limited student interactions	Using a more granular rating instrument
<b>Monique</b>	Digging into student interests and goals ----- Showing a genuine interest	Mindfulness and purposefulness	Survey scores were unpredictable	Adding a check-in during the initiative
<b>Paul</b>	Stopping and reflecting on the execution of guiding principles	Importance of nonverbal cues	Setting reminders to complete the survey	Picture or poster to encourage the equity-mindedness approach
<b>Jesse</b>	Thinking about equity more	Self-check	Few student interactions	NA

The second process measure, which was added as a design enhancement in PDSA 2, was the Fidelity Checklist. This instrument was used to track the number of Equity Scorecard surveys completed by each participant during each of the six weeks. Figure 27 displays the Fidelity Checklist data for PDSA 2. Table 4 displays the descriptive statistics for the Fidelity Checklist data. The frequency of completion reported on the Fidelity Checklist varied from week to week and participant to participant. In some cases, participants reported that they did not complete the

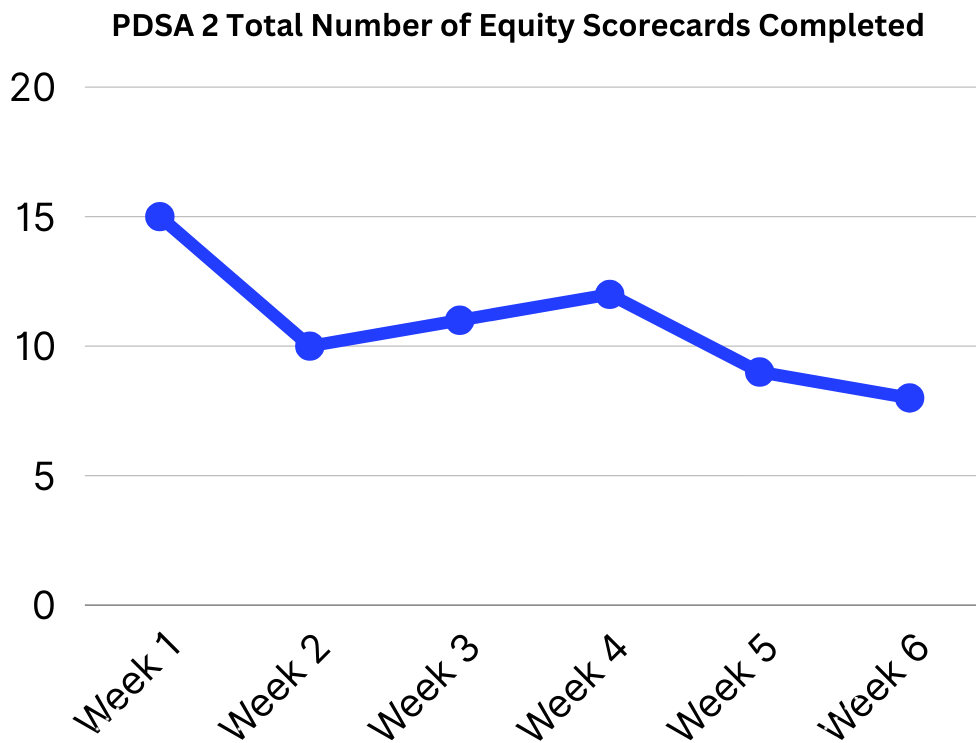


## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

Equity Scorecard because they did not have any interactions with students that week. Week 1 had the most completions with 15 surveys completed and 38% of participants completing the prescribed two-survey minimum. Week 6, the final week of the initiative, had the fewest number of completions with eight surveys completed and only 8% of participants completing the prescribed two-survey minimum. The minimum number of total Equity Scorecard completions by a single participant in one week was zero surveys, and the maximum number completed was four surveys. The mode number of completions in one week was one Equity Scorecard survey.

**Figure 27**

*Fidelity Checklist Data for PDSA 2*



## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

**Table 4**

*Fidelity Checklist Data for PDSA 2*

Equity Scorecard Completions	Total	Mean Per Participant	Participants With 2 Completions	Participants With 1 Completion	Minimum	Maximum	Mode
Week 1	15	1.15	38%	38%	0	2	1, 2
Week 2	10	0.77	23%	31%	0	2	0
Week 3	11	0.85	23%	38%	0	2	1
Week 4	12	0.92	15%	46%	0	4	1
Week 5	9	0.69	8%	54%	0	2	1
Week 6	8	0.61	8%	46%	0	2	0,1

### Outcome Measures

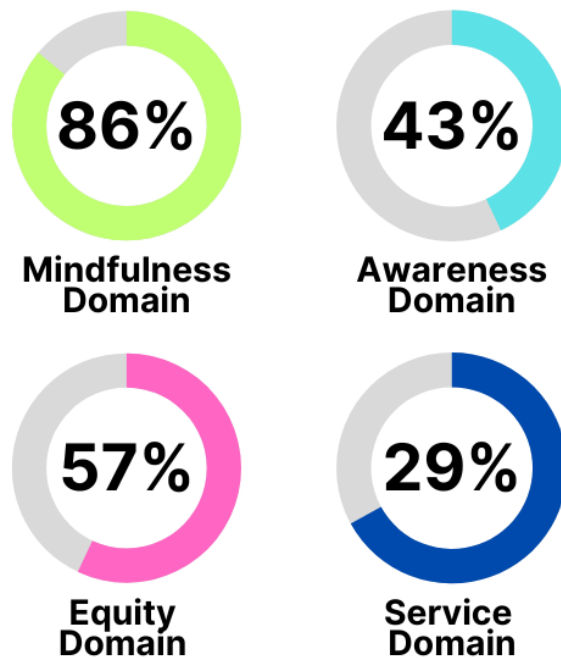
#### *PDSA 1*

The first outcome measure in PDSA 1 was the Equity-Mindedness survey (see Appendix D and Appendix E), which was administered before and after the six-week Equity Scorecard implementation. Figure 28 illustrates the percentage of participants in PDSA 1 who demonstrated a composite score increase from their Pre to Post Equity-Mindedness surveys. The mindfulness domain had the highest percentage of participants with an Equity-Mindedness survey score increase at 86%. The service domain had the lowest percentage of participants with Equity-Mindedness survey score gains at 29%. The equity domain and the awareness domains had 57% and 43% of participants with Equity-Mindedness survey score increases, respectively.

**Figure 28**

*Percentage of Participants with Gains by Domain in PDSA 1*

## Percentage of Participants with Equity-Mindedness Gains in PDSA 1



### *PDSA 2*

The first outcome measure in PDSA 2 was the Equity-Mindedness survey, which was administered before and after the six-week Equity Scorecard implementation. One of the participants in PDSA 2 completed the Pre Equity-Mindedness survey but did not complete the Post Equity-Mindedness survey. This participant's responses were excluded from the Equity-Mindedness survey data analysis. Figure 29 illustrates the percentage of participants in PDSA 2 who demonstrated a composite score increase from their Pre to Post Equity-Mindedness surveys. The mindfulness and equity domains had the highest percentage of participants with Equity-Mindedness survey score increases at 67% each. The awareness domain had the lowest

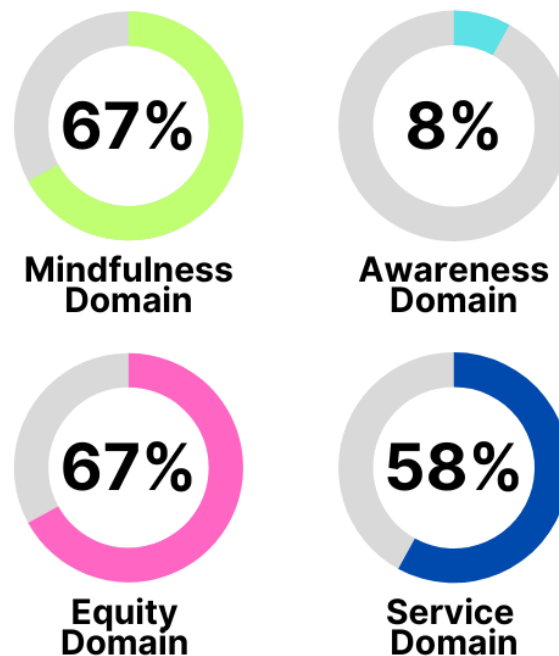
## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

percentage of participants with Equity-Mindedness survey score gains at 8%, while 58% of participants demonstrated gains in the service domain of the Equity-Mindedness survey.

**Figure 29**

*Percentage of Participants with Gains by Domain in PDSA 2*

### Percentage of Participants with Equity-Mindedness Gains in PDSA 2



#### *Overall*

Figure 30 illustrates the percentage of participants in PDSA 1 and PDSA 2 combined who demonstrated a composite score increase from their Pre to Post Equity-Mindedness surveys. The mindfulness domain had the highest percentage of participants with Equity-Mindedness survey score increases at 74% of participants. The awareness domain had the lowest percentage of participants with Equity-Mindedness survey score gains at 21% of participants. The equity domain and the awareness domain had 63% and 47% of participants with Equity-Mindedness survey score increases, respectively.

**Figure 30**

*Percentage of Participants with Gains by Domain in PDSA 1 and PDSA 2 Combined*

## Percentage of Participants with Equity-Mindedness Gains in PDSA 1 and PDSA 2 Combined

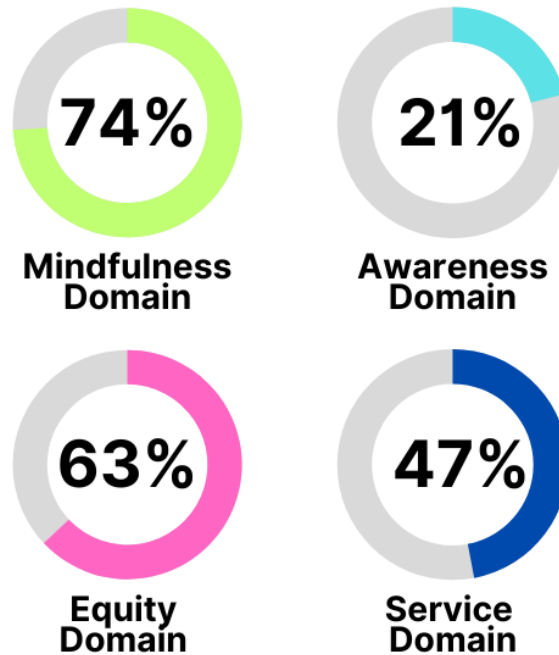


Table 5 displays the Equity-Mindedness composite scores for all participants in PDSA 1 and PDSA 2. The participant with the highest total difference between the Pre Equity-Mindedness survey score and the Post Equity-Mindedness survey score was participant number PDSA 1-6, who had a total difference of 9 points or 8.18%. The participant with the lowest total difference between the Pre Equity-Mindedness survey score and the Post Equity-Mindedness survey score was participant number PDSA 2-7, who had a total difference of -11 points or -9.73%.

I conducted a paired t-test to determine if there was a difference in Equity-Mindedness survey scores before and after participation in the Equity Scorecard initiative. Tables 6 and 7 display the t-test data. Pre Equity-Mindedness and Post Equity-Mindedness survey data were

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

collected from a sample of 19 staff members. The Pre Equity-Mindedness survey mean was 109 ( $SD = 5.66$ ) and the Post Equity-Mindedness survey mean was 113 ( $SD = 6.06$ ). This shows the scores increased from the Pre survey to the Post survey. I conducted the paired t-test to determine if this difference was statistically significant from 0, and the results indicate that the Pre survey and Post survey means were statistically different ( $t = 2.73$ ,  $df = 18$ ,  $p = .014$ ). So, the null hypothesis was rejected at the .05 significance. The effect size, which is calculated as the mean difference divided by the standard deviation of the Post survey, was .626. This is interpreted as a medium effect size. The results provide evidence to support the conclusion that Equity-Mindedness scores may increase after participation in the Equity Scorecard initiative.

**Table 5**

*Pre and Post Equity-Mindedness Survey Totals for PDSA 1 and PDSA 2*

Participant Number	Total Pre Equity-Mindedness Score	Total Post Equity-Mindedness Score	Total Difference	Percent Difference
PDSA 1-1	112	117	5	4.46
PDSA 1-2	110	118	8	7.27
PDSA 1-3	97	102	5	5.15
PDSA 1-4	105	109	4	3.81
PDSA 1-5	109	109	0	0.00
PDSA 1-6	110	119	9	8.18
PDSA 1-7	112	110	-2	-1.79
PDSA 2-1	106	112	6	5.66
PDSA 2-2	114	122	8	7.01
PDSA 2-3	108	110	2	1.85
PDSA 2-4	107	112	5	4.67
PDSA 2-5	106	114	8	7.55
PDSA 2-6	116	118	2	1.72
PDSA 2-7	113	102	-11	-9.73
PDSA 2-8	115	107	-8	-6.96
PDSA 2-9	108	112	4	3.70
PDSA 2-10	120	125	5	4.17
PDSA 2-12	107	112	5	4.67
PDSA 2-13	98	111	6	5.66

*Note.* Participant PDSA 2-11 completed the Pre Equity-Mindedness survey but could not complete the Post Equity-Mindedness survey before the end of data collection. The Equity-Mindedness scores for Participant PDSA 2-11 are not included in the Equity-Mindedness survey analysis.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

**Table 6**

*Paired Samples T-Test for PDSA 1 and PDSA 2 Combined*

		Statistic	df	p	Mean Difference	SE Difference	Cohen's d Effect Size
Pre Equity-Mindedness Survey	Post Equity-Mindedness Survey	-2.73	18	0.014	-3.58	1.31	-0.626

*Note.*  $H_a \mu \text{ Measure 1} - \text{Measure 2} \neq 0$

**Table 7**

*Paired Samples T-Test Descriptives for PDSA 1 and PDSA 2 Combined*

	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
Pre Equity-Mindedness Survey	19	109	109	5.66	1.30
Post Equity-Mindedness Survey	19	113	112	6.06	1.39

Participants completed one open-response question as part of the Pre and Post Equity-Mindedness survey in which they were asked to share thoughts, insights, feelings, and reflections related to their participation in the Equity Scorecard Initiative. Figure 31 provides a sample of participant Post Equity-Mindedness survey responses in PDSA 1 and PDSA 2, organized into the four qualitative categories that were used throughout the data analysis – mindfulness, awareness, equity, and service. The results reveal that participants demonstrated equity-minded thinking in their responses. In the mindfulness domain, participants indicated the benefits of the scorecard as a tool to create time and space to reflect on their professional practice. In the awareness domain, participants noted that students come to educational institutions with different needs and life experiences, and it is the responsibility of educators to build up and mitigate for their students. The equity domain offered multiple examples of equity-minded reflections including the need to focus on student assets, the reality that some students need more support than others, the

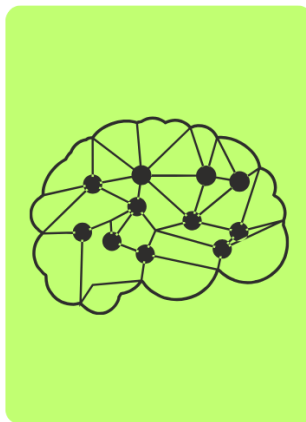
## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

importance of establishing equitable environments and pathways, and the implications of professional policies on student success. Responses in the service domain highlighted the importance of making students feel welcome and offering customized care, the impact of equity in daily interactions with students, and how the Equity Scorecard can be used as a tool to reflect on improving performance.

**Figure 31**

*Selected Post Equity-Mindedness Survey Open-Ended Responses for PDSA 1 and PDSA 2*

### Post Equity-Mindedness Survey PDSA 1 & PDSA 2



#### MINDFULNESS

"It helped me **make time to reflect** on my interactions with students and process how I acted as a professional, what I did well and what I need to work on." (PDSA 2-6)

"Using the Equity Scorecard Initiative has made me more aware of different acts, behaviors, etc. that I possess that may or may not be equity minded...I also liked the quick check-in with a stoplight. It allowed me to make a quick assessment on my own equity mindedness throughout the week without feeling overwhelming and made me **pause and reflect on the equity work I'm doing** and how it can be improved." (PDSA 2-10)



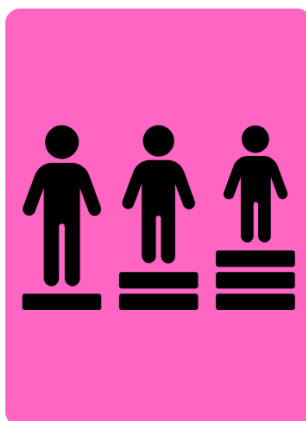
#### AWARENESS

"Regardless of any situation, you should treat individuals with kindness, support, and respect. We all go through things in life and some stay strong, some fall, and **some need additional assistance**; however, we must build one another up regardless of our status or the color of our skin." (PDSA 1-6)

"This experience has encouraged me to consciously think about my interactions with students, especially regarding the **situations and life experiences students are bringing with them to campus** and how I can help to mitigate any barriers they may face." (PDSA 2-12)



## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH



### EQUITY

"If we could **start looking at the assets** students bring rather than the deficits they have we would be able to formulate a plan of interaction that is relevant to POC." (PDSA 1-1)

"I believe in treating everyone fairly. There are **some students that need a little more help** and I am always willing to give them what they need." (PDSA 1-3)

"This study has reinforced my belief that **providing an equitable environment is critical**, however promoting pathways that help with overcoming obstacles must be included in that process." (PDSA 2-8)

"This was a good exercise in examining views on equity and how professional **policies and behaviors can influence students' success.**" (PDSA 2-5)



### SERVICE

"There are some areas where race has come into play and I do not like that. To me, it does not matter the students race, gender or religious preference. I am here to **help students succeed and feel welcome.**" (PDSA 1-7)

"It can be hard to balance state regulation, college policies and budget with **specialized [c]are** for at risk student sectors." (PDSA 1-2)

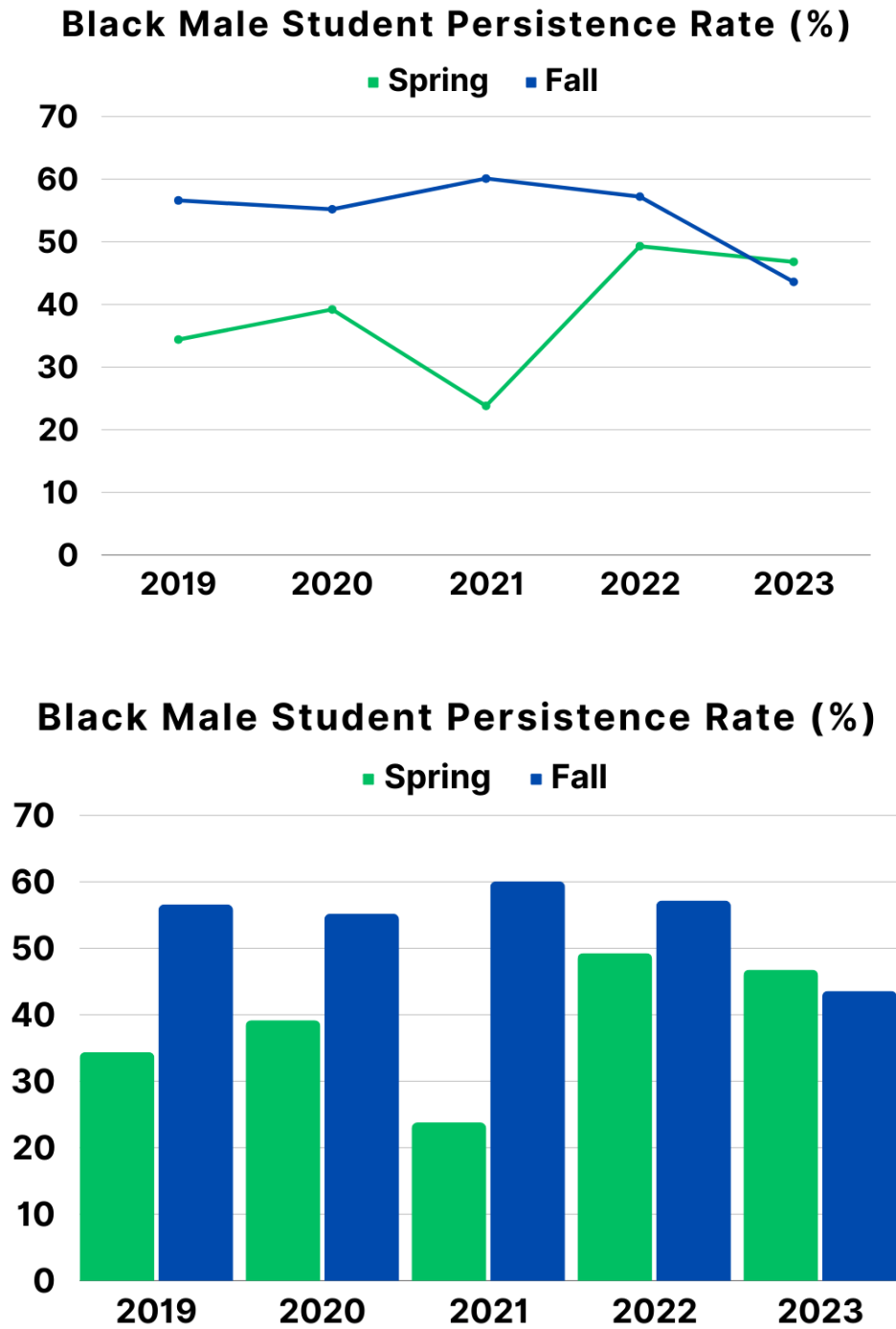
"This exercise did raise my awareness level related to equity and it's affects on my **day to day interactions** with students." (PDSA 2-4)

"I like that participation in this initiative forces participants to **take time to consider** some very important issues. It makes you sit down and evaluate how things went during the week, and how you might **handle things differently.**" (PDSA 2-1)

The second outcome measure for the Equity Scorecard initiative was the first-second semester persistence rate for Black male students. Figure 32 and Table 8 show the Spring and Fall persistence data for 2019-2023 provided by FCCC's Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research. The semesters during which the initiative took place correspond to Spring 2023 (PDSA 1) and Fall 2023 (PDSA 2). The data for Spring 2023 reveal that 46.8% of Black male students who entered in Spring 2023 persisted to Fall 2023. This is down 2.5% from the previous year's Spring persistence rate of 49.3%. The data for Fall 2023 reveal that 43.6% of Black male students who entered in Fall 2023 persisted to Spring 2024. This represents a decrease of 13.6% from the Fall 2022 persistence rate of 57.2%.

Figure 32

FCCC Black Male Persistence Rates for 2019 - 2023



## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

**Table 8**

*FCCC Black Male Student Persistence Rates for 2019 - 2023*

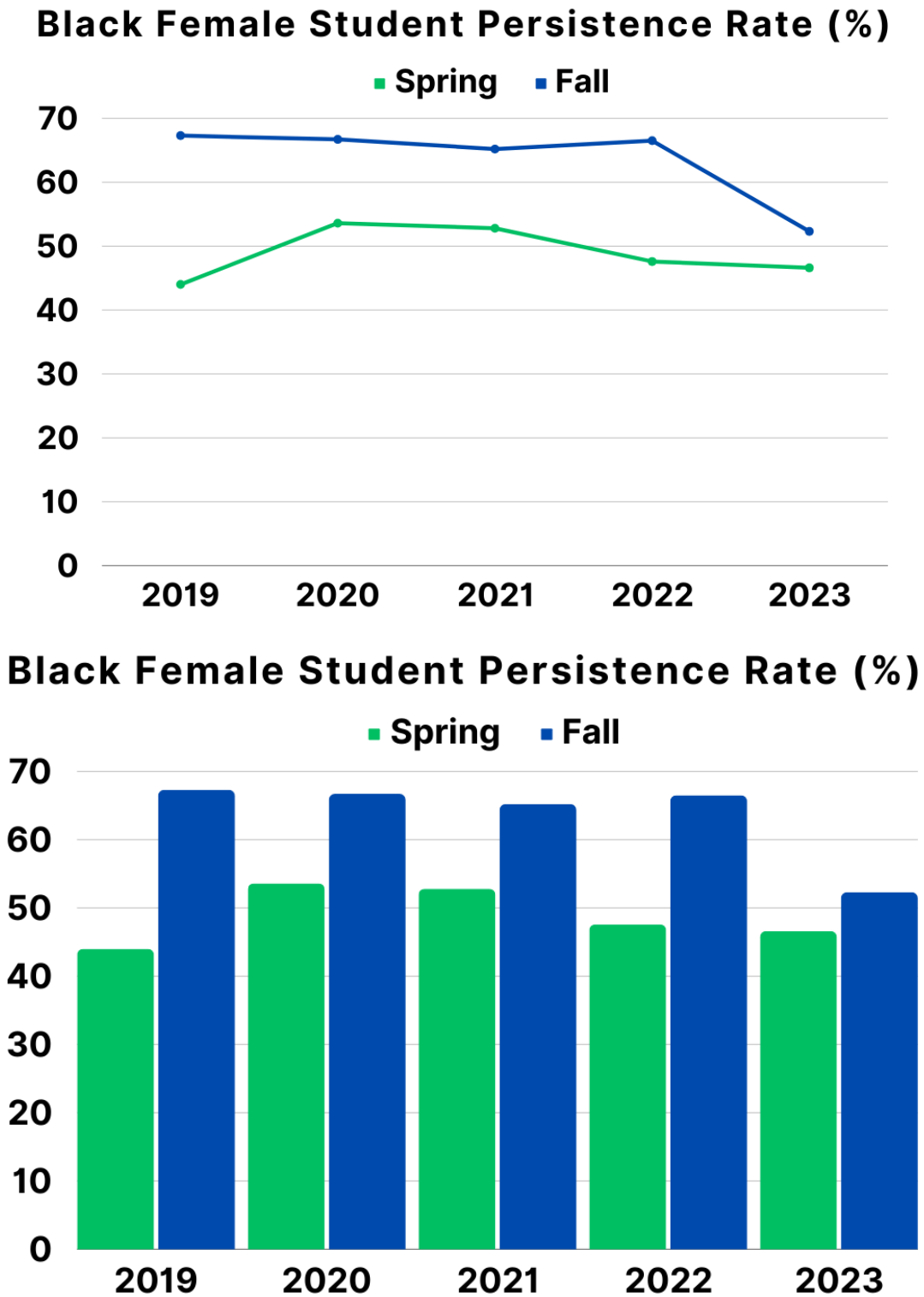
Academic Term	Spring	Fall
2019	34.4	56.6
2020	39.2	55.2
2021	23.8	60.1
2022	49.3	57.2
2023	46.8	43.6

### **Balance Measure**

The balance measure for the Equity Scorecard initiative was the first-second semester persistence rate for Black female students. Figure 33 and Table 9 show the Spring and Fall persistence data for 2019-2023 provided by FCCC's Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research. The semesters during which the initiative took place correspond to Spring 2023 (PDSA 1) and Fall 2023 (PDSA 2). The data for Spring 2023 reveal that 46.6% of Black female students who entered in Spring 2023 persisted to Fall 2023. This is down 1% from the previous year's Spring persistence rate of 47.6%. The data for Fall 2023 reveal that 52.3% of Black female students who entered in Fall 2023 persisted to Spring 2024. This represents a 14.2% decrease from the Fall 2022 persistence rate of 66.5%.

Figure 33

*FCCC Black Female Persistence Rates for 2019 - 2023*



**Table 9**

*FCCC Black Female Persistence Rates for 2019 – 2023*

Academic Term	Spring	Fall
2019	44	67.3
2020	53.6	66.7
2021	52.8	65.2
2022	47.6	66.5
2023	46.6	52.3

**Hidden Findings**

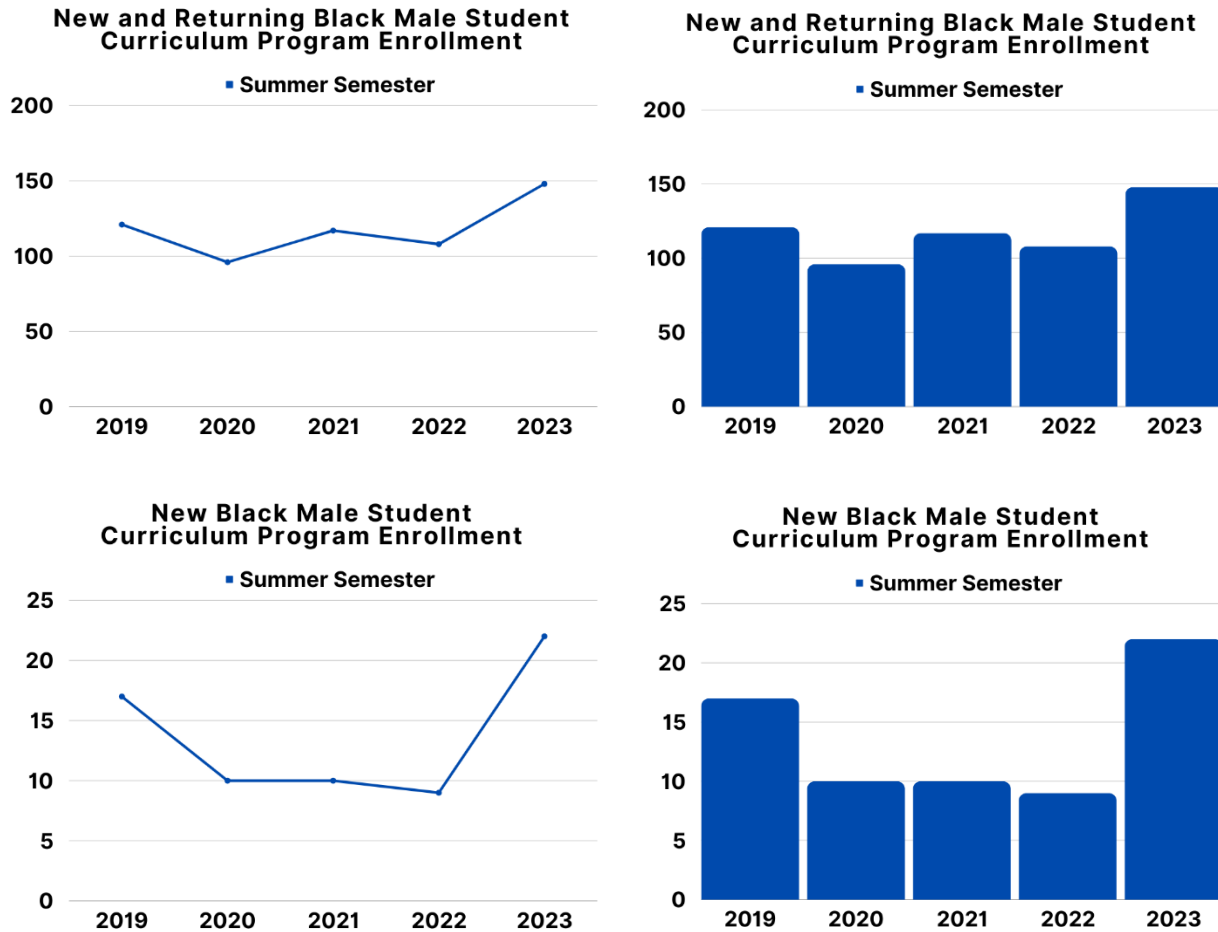
A critical indication of the Equity Scorecard initiative’s impact was hidden from the practical measures described above. Because FCCC reports persistence data for Spring and Fall terms only, data for the Summer semester was not included in the institutional data analysis. This is a significant detail because PDSA 1 concluded one week before the Summer semester began. Therefore, data from the Summer of 2023 are highly relevant in the analysis of the initiative’s impact on student success. Figure 34 and Table 10 below display FCCC’s Black male student curriculum enrollment (headcount) data for Summer 2023. The data reveal that the number of new and returning Black male students in curriculum programs increased by 37% in Summer 2023, from 108 to 148. The number of new Black male students in curriculum programs increased by 144%, from nine students in Summer 2022 to 22 students in Summer 2023. Because the Equity Scorecard initiative focused on persistence data, not headcount data, I nearly overlooked this vital statistic. Although the initiative’s ultimate aim was to improve Black male student persistence rates, the enrollment data from Summer 2023 indicate that there is a correlation between the timelines of the Equity Scorecard initiative (PDSA 1) and the increase in Black male student enrollment at FCCC for Summer 2023. This finding opens a new possibility of the Equity Scorecard supporting increased enrollment, in addition to facilitating a campus climate that cultivates to Black male student sense of belonging and persistence. As an added

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

note, the fact that these gains occurred immediately following PDSA 1, which was primarily comprised of Student Success Navigators, provides evidence to support the impact front-facing educators can have on critical student success metrics like enrollment and persistence.

**Figure 34**

*FCCC Black Male Student Curriculum Program Enrollment for Summer 2023*



*Note.* Data were retrieved from the State Community Colleges’ data dashboard on February 7, 2024. Data represent the number of Black male students who enrolled in curriculum programs during the Summer of 2023. The data for Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 were not yet available at the time of this writing.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

**Table 10**

*FCCC Black Male Student Curriculum Program Enrollment for Summer 2023*

Academic Year	New Students	% Change Over Pervious Year	New & Returning Students	% Change Over Pervious Year
2019	17	-19	121	-1
2020	10	-41	96	-21
2021	10	0	117	+22
2022	9	-10	108	-8
2023	22	+144	148	+37

*Note.* Data were retrieved from the State Community Colleges' data dashboard on February 7, 2024. Data represent the number of Black male students who enrolled in curriculum programs during the Summer of 2023. The data for Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 were not yet available at the time of this writing.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

*“It's just something I just didn't think about, how feeling comfortable or having a bond with the person that you're interacting with can help retention. But it can also help your eagerness or your willingness to engage.” – Monique*

### **Discussion and Implications**

#### **Equity Scorecard Initiative**

Findings from this Equity Scorecard improvement initiative indicate that participation has the potential to increase practitioner equity-mindedness, as demonstrated through both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. These results are significant as they offer promising support for future Equity Scorecard implementation efforts.

#### ***Driver Measures***

The two driver measures in this study, Equity Scorecard surveys and Student Satisfaction surveys, offered evidence of practitioners taking steps to improve service delivery. While the completion rates for the Equity Scorecard were not as prescribed, each participant in the initiative completed at least one survey during their PDSA cycle. In some cases, simply having an Equity Scorecard to complete impacted participant equity-minded service delivery, as they kept the survey questions in mind even if they did not complete the survey itself. While there may be several factors beyond the scope of this study that contributed to an increase in Student Satisfaction survey ratings, it is notable that the ratings increased in each PDSA cycle, which could potentially indicate a correlation between Equity Scorecard implementation and improved service delivery.

These driver measures provided a framework for equitable service delivery strategies and offered insights on progress toward service improvements; however, there are ways that these measures could be enhanced in future implementation cycles. Establishing designated days



## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

and/or times for all participants to complete the Equity Scorecard survey could improve completion rates and better integrate the initiative within existing work routines. Instead of offering three response choices, the Equity Scorecard survey instrument could be re-designed to include four to seven response options (McCoach et al., 2013), so participants could more accurately self-assess their service delivery during the week. There are also some modifications to the Student Satisfaction survey administration process that could support this improvement initiative. While this driver measure was intended to integrate student voice within the limitations of the IRB protocol, the survey results were not limited to Black male students who had interactions with Equity Scorecard initiative participants. A design enhancement would be for participants to share a designated QR code with Black male students, after their service interaction, which would direct students to a separate survey. This modification could increase the number of survey responses received from this student group, and it would help ensure that the data was specific to the service provided by Equity Scorecard initiative participants.

### *Process Measures*

While the Fidelity Checklist process measure revealed some inconsistencies with respect to Equity Scorecard survey completion, the interview process measure offered promising insights into the effectiveness of the initiative. Interview participants in PDSA 1 and PDSA 2 repeatedly noted how their participation in the initiative directly impacted their professional practice through actions they took as a result of their increasing equity-mindedness. Particularly noteworthy was the fact that the theme of increased mindfulness was reiterated across participants – even those who admitted they struggled to complete the two-survey weekly minimum. These findings imply that exposure to the Equity Scorecard framework was beneficial to participants and their professional practice.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

The process measures were useful in providing insights into the effectiveness of the improvement initiative and whether it was being implemented as planned. Yet, some adjustments could enhance these measures in future implementation cycles. Incorporating a design modification that allowed the findings from the fidelity checklist to trigger follow-up communication with participants who were not completing two Equity Scorecard surveys each week could increase response rates and participant engagement. My proposal included the use of focus groups, but there was a concern from the committee that the data analysis of the focus groups would not meet my disquisition timeframe. A second process measure design improvement would be to collect data during the Closing Meeting, which would provide additional insights on the implementation of the initiative that could be used in replication and scaling efforts. A final process measure modification would be to incorporate data analysis of the Researcher's Journal, which was incorporated as a change in PDSA 2. This collection of detailed reflections would provide valuable information about the impact of the initiative, from the perspective of the scholar-practitioner.

### *Outcome Measures*

The two outcome measures of this improvement initiative, Equity-Mindedness surveys, and Black male student persistence rates, remind us that change is possible, but it does not happen overnight. While 16 out of 19, or 84% of the participants demonstrated growth from their Pre Equity-Mindedness to Post Equity-Mindedness surveys, the persistence rates did not parallel that improvement. Though the Equity-Scorecard initiative had a significant impact on practitioners, as demonstrated in the qualitative and quantitative data analysis, the intervention also highlights the fact that many factors, internal and external (Wood & Harris, 2017), contribute to Black male student outcomes. This is not to negate the impact of the Equity

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

Scorecard initiative but to recognize that lasting change that transforms mindsets and overturns generations of systemic inequity must be scaled and sustained. The findings of this change idea indicate that the Equity Scorecard initiative is a promising place to start.

The Equity-Mindedness survey and the Black male student persistence rates provided useful outcome data on the improvement related to the problem of practice. However, there is a missing piece in the outcome data that should be considered based on the theory of improvement. A design enhancement for future implementation cycles would be to incorporate a Sense of Belonging survey for Black male students who are assigned to the caseloads of Equity Scorecard initiative participants. This pre/post survey would offer essential insights about how the implementation of the change idea addresses Black male student sense of belonging, which is a precursor for persistence (Strayhorn, 2015). Additional design modifications for future cycles include coordinating the initiative start date with the academic calendar and disaggregating persistence rates by Black male students assigned to the caseloads of Equity Scorecard initiative participants, so the impact of the service delivery improvements can be more clearly represented in the persistence data. Finally, future initiative efforts should also consider the analysis of persistence data across student race/ethnic groups, to help provide context and better understand if there are persistence changes across the board.

### ***Balance Measure***

I based my balance measure on a theoretical perspective that if you provide focused supports for Black male students, there was a possibility that you neglected the specific needs of Black female students. While Black female student persistence is a balance measure for the problem of practice, it is not an appropriate balance measure for the actual initiative. A more appropriate measure of the initiative could be other professional development opportunities or

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

other work duties that participants could not complete, due to their participation in this initiative. With this in mind, the decrease in the Black female student persistence rates that is observed in this study, similar to the persistence rates of Black male students, appears to be the result of a variety of factors, rather than attributed to the intervention itself.

### **Implications for Policy**

Institutional leaders must invest in equity and allocate the resources – people, training, and time – to ensure that staff members are equipped to provide equitable service delivery to Black male students and other underserved students attending institutions of higher education. In some cases, this may mean re-evaluating staff and budgetary distributions (Hotchkins et al., 2021) and ensuring that distributions of student caseloads are equitably managed to facilitate high-quality interactions that move beyond transactional exchanges into bond-building endeavors that promote sense of belonging and persistence. Additionally, leaders must invest their influence to support active participation in initiatives like the Equity Scorecard, to the point that they become integrated with the professional development expectations for staff.

### **Implications for Practice**

Findings from this intervention indicate that equity-mindedness can be cultivated with a framework for equitable service delivery, such as the Equity Scorecard survey instrument. Participants made references to remembering the questions or keeping the questions in mind as they engaged with students. The participants used the instrument itself to different degrees, but their involvement in the initiative afforded them the opportunity to leverage an equity-minded framework to incorporate real-time reflection of their professional practice and its implications for equity and student success. Completing the Equity Scorecard was only one manifestation of participant engagement with equity-minded practices. Appendix Q provides a bank of equity-

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

minded practices that emerged from the participant interviews. These strategies offer practical yet impactful actions that staff members at FCCC and other institutions can take to enhance their equitable service delivery and student experience.

Educators occupy a range of positionalities on the spectrum of equity-mindedness. As such, their engagement levels with equity initiatives will likely vary. That said, improvement designs focused on enhancing professional practice should incorporate room for a range of practitioner knowledge and dispositions related to the change idea. In other words, progress towards equity objectives may present differently within different contexts and from different practitioners within the same context. Scholar-practitioners must be open to the different manifestations of change and improvement that will inevitably take shape. Although the overall change in Pre/Post equity-mindedness scores did not meet the quantitative goal of a 10% increase, findings from the quantitative and qualitative outcome measure indicate that participants realized equity-mindedness growth and meaningful changes after participating in the Equity Scorecard initiative.

### **Future Research**

Building on this intervention, future research may explore the implementation of an Equity Scorecard initiative that incorporates faculty participants. Since Black male students spend a significant portion of their time on community college campuses with faculty, increasing faculty equity-mindedness could have a significant impact on Black male student sense of belonging and persistence. Another research option is studying the long-term impacts of participation in the Equity Scorecard initiative and the ways in which participants do or do not sustain their equity-minded gains and when the formal initiative ends. This line of inquiry could provide insights to enhance the design of the initiative in order to achieve lasting results.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

*“Even beyond just giving better service to a specific sector of the population, I think it makes you think more about just better service in general to everybody...You're more aware when you're thinking about how you're going to put things on a card the next time you do it. You're more aware of, you know, your behaviors, and then it kind of gets you thinking about your own biases and you know, how could I have done that better?” - Nature*

### **Lessons Learned**

#### **Black Male Student Persistence**

The issue of Black male student persistence in community colleges is complex and requires a comprehensive approach to mitigate deficits and create campus climates that are conducive to Black male student sense of belonging and success. This problem of practice did not emerge suddenly, and efforts to reverse the disparity will not fix the issue overnight. Instead, institutional agents must individually and collectively take steps that combine to create the conditions necessary for students to thrive and persist toward their academic goals. While the intent of the Equity Scorecard initiative was to increase persistence rates for Black male students by 10% by the end of 2023, the reality is that systemic inequities embedded within institutional policies and service delivery take time to reverse; however, efforts like the Equity Scorecard initiative provide an opportunity and a platform for the process of critical reflection to commence.

#### **Equity Work and Improvement Science**

Efforts to reverse generations of systemic injustice and inequities are not without opposition. The societal structures in place perpetuate status quo outcomes designed to keep minoritized and underserved populations in the margins. In the face of these daunting challenges, there is hope. Specifically, design of the Improvement Science framework offers a vehicle for change that is impactful and practical. As the findings of this intervention indicate, equity-

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

minded change can be achieved through Improvement Science and thoughtfully designed initiatives that are focused on iterative efforts. The findings of this study also reiterate the reality that the struggle for equity and social justice is a process – not perfection.

Incorporating multiple opportunities for participants to reflect on their experience is essential. In the Equity Scorecard initiative, some participants were very detailed in the open response items on the surveys. Others were less detailed in the surveys but provided valuable feedback during the one-on-one interviews. As with other works related to human development, it was highly beneficial to incorporate qualitative measures in addition to quantitative measures. The mixed methods design provided opportunities to capture and express the data in different ways that consider the whole story of the Equity Scorecard initiative and its impact on staff members at FCCC. Future research designs should consider the benefit of incorporating a variety of platforms and opportunities for participants to voice their perspectives and researchers to capture data that can fuel ongoing equity and improvement efforts.

### **The Disquisition Process**

Operating in the role of a scholar practitioner presented a complex duality when engaging in the disquisition process. Implementing a change idea as an insider and educator within the institution had advantages; however, at times the scholarly requirements of an IRB-approved research protocol created implementation challenges that may not have occurred in a typical professional development effort operating outside the restrictions a formal research study. Appendix R provides an overview of specific strategies that I used to mitigate critical implementation challenges that occurred during the Equity Scorecard initiative.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

*“I’m mindful of you know what I’m doing. But thankfully I have a scorecard, whereas I know that other people... that service these students may not have that. And so I do wonder, you know, what can I do on a more systemic level? As far as making sure that how they feel affirmed, how they feel included, how they feel considered, how can I help make sure that these students feel that in all aspects of their, you know, student experience?” – Paul*

### **Conclusion**

#### **Summary of the Work**

Black male students’ sense of belonging is created through a collection of critical moments. These experiences combine to establish the baseline of expectations that significantly impact enrollment decisions and persistence outcomes. In my disquisition, I sought to address this problem of practice by implementing a re-imagined Equity Scorecard initiative designed to promote equity-mindedness and improve service delivery of the staff member participants. After providing a review of relevant literature and a description of the institutional context, I described the Equity Scorecard initiative, including my theory of improvement, design, and goals. Next, I described the research methodology, including data collection and analysis procedures. I shared the research results for each of the four practical measures collected within the Improvement Science framework – driver, process, outcome, and balance. Finally, I discussed the implications of this work and lessons learned from this research study. In this section, I describe the limitations of this study and offer final reflections on the future of equity work at FCCC.

#### **Limitations**

As is the case with any intervention, there are limitations to the Equity Scorecard initiative. While these limitations do not outweigh the potential benefits, recognizing them within this disquisition provides the opportunity for informed and enhanced future implementation efforts.



## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

One limitation of this initiative was the fact that some participants were out of the office due to vacation, conferences, or illness during their designated implementation timeframe. This meant that they had fewer opportunities to complete the Equity Scorecard survey. Some participants reported that this schedule disruption impacted their survey routine, and they forgot about completing the Equity Scorecard once they returned.

A second limitation was the fact that participants were only required to complete the Equity Scorecard survey twice per week. This was a recommendation of the Disquisition Committee intended to facilitate a timely data analysis process. In my initial design, the participants were asked to assess their performance daily, so that the process of reflection was better integrated into their routines and they might have been less likely to forget to complete the survey. Having more survey data to analyze could also have provided better insights into the effectiveness of the Equity Scorecard survey instrument for increasing equity-mindedness.

Another notable limitation for this intervention was the implementation timeframe. As a result of delays in the IRB approval and recruitment processes, the start of PDSA 1 and PDSA 2 did not fall at the most conducive periods for implementation. PDSA 1 was impacted by graduation and PDSA 2 was impacted by Fall semester registrations. In both instances, the academic calendar impacted the flow of students to the staff members and the types of services that were delivered. In future studies, the initiative should be implemented with sufficient time for the participants to utilize their equity-minded service delivery during academic periods that would more clearly be reflected in the persistence data. The term start and end dates were another time-related challenge. Participants in PDSA 1 began completing the scorecards the week of 3/27/2023, but the census date for the Spring semester that is used to determine persistence rates was 4/3/2023. Participants in PDSA 2 began completing the equity scorecards

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

the week of 9/11/2023 and the census date for the Fall semester was 9/7/2023. Due to the timing of the implementation dates and the FCCC census dates, the effects of the implementation may not be reflected in the persistence rates that correspond with the semester in which the implementation took place.

Additionally, many of the participants offered examples of their service delivery to underrepresented students or students in general – not specifically Black male students. This aggregated assessment of service is, potentially, due to the low representation number of Black male students on campus. Despite the limited opportunities for engagement with the target population for this study, the development of equity-mindedness, particularly in the qualitative data from the surveys and the interviews, indicates that the strategies and conscious awareness that the Equity Scorecard initiative cultivated impacted equitable service delivery overall, which will ultimately benefit Black male students as well.

An important design limitation of this initiative was the rating scales that were used in the survey instruments. The Equity-Mindedness survey utilized a 5-point Likert-style scale, and the Equity Scorecard survey used 3-point scale which may have glossed over some of the more nuanced changes participants experienced as a result of their participation in the initiative. For example, many of the participants reported Pre Equity-Mindedness survey scores that were already on the higher end of the spectrum, leaving less room for demonstrated change over time.

Another design limitation was the limited voice of FCCC students. Their perspectives were only captured on the Student Satisfaction survey, which was not disaggregated to include only Equity Scorecard initiative participants. In other words, the students who were surveyed may not have been served by the participants; yet their feedback was included in the overall Student Satisfaction data. Even though the surveys reflected the service of individuals who were

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

not participants, the involvement of the participants could have a residual impact on the overall service level. For example, they might have discussed or modeled behavior that influenced the behavior of their colleagues who were not participating. While this survey instrument may not have been the best measure of student feedback, it was the most feasible option to incorporate student voice while protecting the privacy of staff members and students.

A final limitation was the fact that the persistence data provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research included all Black male and Black female students, not exclusively those who had service interactions with Equity Scorecard initiative participants.

### **Future Equity Work at FCCC**

If we want to achieve transformational change at Four Corners Community College, the kind of change that rejects the status quo and truly improves lives and builds community for all students, we must begin by transforming our minds. The findings from this intervention indicate that the Equity Scorecard initiative is a practical yet impactful approach to help facilitate this process of transformation.

The work does not, however, end here. Future equity work at FCCC must explore how to scale opportunities for practitioners to engage in critical self-reflection that builds educator capacity and centers the problem around the system and not the students. Expanding the Equity Scorecard initiative beyond the initial 20 participants to staff and faculty across the institution is one approach to achieve this. Despite the contextual barriers, leaders at FCCC must continue to prioritize improving service delivery in support of student success. Rather than shy away from equity initiatives because of emerging legislative restrictions, equity-minded educators at FCCC should increase the level of creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking required to identify,

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

implement, and sustain improvement efforts specifically designed to eliminate disparities and increase success for historically marginalized and underserved groups.

To support the expansion of this equity work at FCCC, I will leverage support from the Student Success Division leadership directly involved with implementing the Equity Scorecard initiative to serve as ambassadors for its use within other divisions. From sharing the positive impact they witnessed to highlighting the connection between the Equity Scorecard's focus on sense of belonging and the institution's strategic objective of belonging, there are practical ways that his work can be disseminated and scaled within the institution. The Human Resources department invited me to facilitate an upcoming professional development workshop for faculty and staff. This session will take place in September 2024 and will focus on "Making the most of critical moments." Initially, my workshop proposal centered on faculty and staff building their capacity to recognize and respond to critical moments to support student sense of belonging and success. After reviewing the proposal, the HR team asked if I could expand the focus to include student and employee sense of belonging and success. This request is evidence of the appeal of incorporating the Equity Scorecard framework to benefit multiple marginalized and underserved groups within the FCCC community who have encountered campus experiences that jeopardize their ability to thrive.

### **Bottom Line**

Returning to the beginning of our journey, I encourage you to consider Michael's choice. Recall that he is literally standing at the door of opportunity. Yes, the decision to persist ultimately belongs to the student; yet, as equity-minded educators, we must commit to ongoing reflective practice and equitable service delivery that facilitates positive student experiences, affirms enrollment decisions, and promotes persistence. When Black male students face critical

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

moments, as Michael did, unwavering commitment to their sense of belonging and success must fuel our thoughts, shape our policies, and determine our actions amidst cultural, historical, and institutional change (Strayhorn, 2015). Only then can we truly fulfill the calling of an open access institution worthy of such an honorable distinction: the community's college.

**References**

- Avery, D. R. (2023). How outlawing collegiate affirmative action will impact corporate America. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 64(4), 1-5.
- Baber, L., Fletcher, R., & Graham, E. (2015). Black men attending community colleges: Examining an institutional approach toward equity: Black men attending community colleges. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 2015(172), 97-107.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/cc.20167>
- Bell, D. (1980). Brown v. board of education and the interest-convergence dilemma. *Harvard Law Review*, 93(3), 518-533. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1340546>
- Bensimon, E. M. (2007). The underestimated significance of practitioner knowledge in the scholarship on student success. *Review of Higher Education*, 30(4), 441-469.  
<https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2007.0032>
- Bensimon, E.M. (2012). The equity scorecard: Theory of change. In E.M. Bensimon & L.E. Malcom-Piqueux (Eds.), *Confronting equity issues on campus: Implementing the equity scorecard in theory and practice* (1st ed.). (pp. 17-44). Stylus Publishing.  
<https://a.co/all5Kcm>
- Bensimon, E.M., Polkinghorne, D.E., Bauman, G.L., & Vallejo, E. (2004). Doing research that makes a difference. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 75(1), 104-126.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3838691>
- Biag, M. (2019). Navigating the improvement journey with an equity compass. In R. Crow, B. Hinnant-Crawford, & D. T. Spaulding (Eds.), *The educational leader's guide to improvement science: Data, design and cases for reflection* (pp. 91-123). Meyers Education Press.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

- Bivens, G. M., & Wood, J. L. (2016). Voice of the national researcher: African American student populations in community colleges. In A. Long (Ed.), *Overcoming educational racism in the community college* (1st ed., pp. 11-27). Routledge.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003446248-3>
- Brooks, M., Jones, C., & Burt, I. (2013). Are African-American male undergraduate retention programs successful? an evaluation of an undergraduate African-American male retention program. *Journal of African American Studies* (New Brunswick, N.J.), 17(2), 206-221. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12111-012-9233-2>
- Brooms, D.R. (2018). 'Building us up': Supporting Black male college students in a Black male initiative program. *Critical Sociology*, 44(1), 141-155.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920516658940>
- Brooms, D. R. (2019). Not in this alone: Black Men's bonding, learning, and sense of belonging in black male initiative programs. *The Urban Review*, 51(5), 748-767.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-019-00506-5>
- Bryk, A. S., Gomez, L. M., Grunow, A., & LeMahieu, P. G. (2015). *Learning to improve: How America's schools can get better at getting better*. Harvard Education Press.
- Bush, E.C., & Bush, L.V. (2010). Calling out the elephant: An examination of African American male achievement in community colleges. *Journal of African American Males in Education*, 1(1), 40-62.
- Capper, C. A. (2019). *Organizational theory for equity and diversity: Leading integrated, socially just education*. Routledge.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

- Cohen-Vogel, L., Tichnor-Wagner, A., Allen, D., Harrison, C., Kainz, K., Socol, A. R., & Wang, Q. (2015). Implementing educational innovations at scale: Transforming researchers into continuous improvement scientists. *Educational Policy (Los Altos, Calif.)*, 29(1), 257-277. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904814560886>
- Cook, D. A., & Beckman, T. J. (2006). Current concepts in validity and reliability for psychometric instruments: Theory and application. *The American Journal of Medicine*, 119(2), 166.e7-166.e16. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amjmed.2005.10.036>
- Coney, E. R. (2017). Stop out, drop out, grad out: The differential impact of institutional services on anticipated persistence among African American community college men. *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College*, 24(2), 1-14. <http://proxy195.nclive.org/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.proxy195.nclive.org/scholarly-journals/stop-out-drop-grad-differential-impact/docview/2075490898/se-2>
- Delgado, R., Stefancic, J., & Harris, A. (2017). *Critical race theory: An introduction* (Third ed.). New York University Press.
- Diamond, J. B., & Gomez, L. M. (2023). Disrupting white supremacy and anti-black racism in educational organizations. *Educational Researcher*, X(XX), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X231161054>
- Dowd, A.C., Malcom, L., Nakamoto, J., & Bensimon, E.M. (2012). Institutional researchers as teachers and equity advocates: Facilitating organizational learning and change. In E.M. Bensimon & L.E. Malcom-Piqueux (Eds.), *Confronting equity issues on campus: Implementing the equity scorecard in theory and practice* (1st ed.). (pp. 191-215). Stylus Publishing. <https://a.co/all5Kcm>



## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

- Felix, E. R., Bensimon, E. M., Hanson, D., Gray, J., & Klingsmith, L. (2015). Developing agency for equity-minded change. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 2015(172), 25-42. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cc.20161>
- Four Corners Community College. (2022, February 28). *Redacted*. [Video]. YouTube.
- Four Corners Community College. (n.d.). *Office of the President*. Retrieved July 29, 2022.
- Four Corners Community College. (2018-2023). *Strategic Plan*.
- Harris III, F., & Bensimon, E. M. (2007). The equity scorecard: A collaborative approach to assess and respond to racial/ethnic disparities in student outcomes. *New Directions for Student Services*, 2007(120), 77-84. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.259>
- Harris, F., & Wood, J. L. (2013). Student success for men of color in community colleges: A review of published literature and research, 1998-2012. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 6(3), 174-185. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0034224>
- Harris III, F., Wood, J. L., & Newman, C. (2015). An exploratory investigation of the effect of racial and masculine identity on focus: An examination of White, Black, Mexicano, Latino, and Asian men in community colleges. *Culture, Society and Masculinities*, 7(1), 61-72. <https://doi.org/10.3149/CSM.0701.61>
- Harrison, J.D., & Palacios, A.M. (2014). Black male students in the community college and faulty student engagement: Differential scores across levels of faculty-derived campus ethos. *Journal of Progressive Policy & Practice*, 2(2), 134-147.
- Hinnant-Crawford, B.N. (2019). Practical measurement in improvement science. In R. Crow, B. Hinnant-Crawford, & D. T. Spaulding (Eds.), *The educational leader's guide to improvement science: Data, design and cases for reflection* (pp. 43-70). Meyers Education Press.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

Hinnant-Crawford, B. (2020). *Improvement science in education: A primer*. Myers Education Press.

Hotchkins, B. K., McNaughtan, J., & García, H. A. (2021). Black community collegians sense of belonging as connected to enrollment satisfaction. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 90(1), 55-70. <http://proxy195.nclive.org/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.proxy195.nclive.org/scholarly-journals/black-community-collegians-sense-belonging-as/docview/2655181236/se-2>

Johnson, R.M., Strayhorn, T.L., & Travers, C.S. (2019). Examining the academic advising experiences of Black males at an urban university: An exploratory case study. *Urban Education*, 1-27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085919894048>

Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Teachers College Record*, 97(1), 47-68.

Langley, G. J., Moen, R. D., Nolan, K. M., Nolan, T. W., Norman, C. L. & Provost, L.P. (2009). *The Improvement Guide: A practical approach to enhancing organizational performance*. Jossey-Bass.

Lomotey, K. (2020). *The Disquisition at Western Carolina University: The capstone experience in the University's EdD program*. Unpublished manuscript, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC.

Lorenz, G.L. (2012). Scorecard teams as high learning groups: Group learning and the value of group learning. In E.M. Bensimon & L.E. Malcom-Piqueux (Eds.), *Confronting equity issues on campus: Implementing the equity scorecard in theory and practice* (1st ed.). (pp. 45-63). Stylus Publishing. <https://a.co/all5Kcm>

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

Lumina Foundation. (2024, March 10). *REACH collaborative*.

<https://www.luminafoundation.org/reach/>

McCoach, D.B, Gable, R.K., & Madura, J. (2013). *Instrument development in the affective domain*. Springer.

McNair, T. B., Bensimon, E. M., & Malcom-Piqueux, L. (2019). *From Equity Talk to Equity Walk: Expanding Practitioner Knowledge for Racial Justice in Higher Education*.

Jossey-Bass. <https://a.co/7pBrJiT>

National Center for Education Statistics. (n.d.). *Fast facts: Race/ethnicity of college faculty*.

Retrieved September 27, 2023, from <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=61>

National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. (2023, July 27). *Persistence and retention: Fall 2021 beginning postsecondary student cohort*.

<https://nscresearchcenter.org/persistence-retention/>

Perez-Lopez, E., Gavrilova, L., Disla, J., Goodlad, M., Ngo, D., Seshappan, A., Sharmin, F.,

Cisneros, J., Kello, C. T., & Berhe, A. A. (2022). Ten simple rules for creating and sustaining antiracist graduate programs. *PLoS Computational Biology*, 18(10),

e1010516-e1010516. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.1010516>

Pilgrim, D. (2000, November). *The brute caricature*. Jim Crow Museum. Retrieved September

27, 2023, from <https://jimcrowmuseum.ferris.edu/brute/homepage.htm>

Redacted. (2021, October 26). *Four Corners Community College to host virtual*

*diversity, equity and inclusion conference*.

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. (2017). *Equality/equity bike graphic* [Infographic].

<https://www.rwjf.org/en/insights/our-research/infographics/visualizing-health-equity.html>

Saldaña, J. (2021). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Sage.

<https://a.co/9urURHJ>

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

- Smiley, C., & Fakunle, D. (2016). From "brute" to "thug:" The demonization and criminalization of unarmed black male victims in America. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 26(3-4), 350-366. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2015.1129256>
- Smith, W. A., Allen, W. R., & Danley, L. L. (2007). Assume the position . . . you fit the description: Psychosocial experiences and racial battle fatigue among African American male college students. *The American Behavioral Scientist (Beverly Hills)*, 51(4), 551-578. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764207307742>
- Spaulding, D.T., & Hinnant-Crawford, B.N. (2019). Tools for today's educational leaders: The basic tool box. In R. Crow, B.N. Hinnant-Crawford, & D. T. Spaulding (Eds.), *The educational leader's guide to improvement science: Data, design and cases for reflection* (pp. 13-41). Meyers Education Press.
- State Community Colleges. (2023). *Basic skills headcount* [Data set]. Retrieved December 13, 2023.
- State Community Colleges. (2023). *College Transfer performance (PM7): Institutional outcomes* [Data set]. Retrieved December 13, 2023.
- State Community Colleges. (2023). *Continuing education headcount* [Data set]. Retrieved December 13, 2023.
- State Community Colleges. (2023). *Curriculum completion (PM5): Institutional outcomes* [Data set]. Retrieved December 13, 2023.
- State Community Colleges. (2023). *Curriculum headcount* [Data set]. Retrieved December 13, 2023.
- State Community Colleges. (2023). *Curriculum headcount* [Data set]. Retrieved February 7, 2024.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

- State Community Colleges. (2023). *First-year progression/persistence (PM4): Institutional outcomes* [Data set]. Retrieved December 13, 2023.
- State Community Colleges. (2023). *Total headcount* [Data set]. Retrieved December 13, 2023.
- State Community College System. (2019). *2019 Equity report: Identifying access and academic progress gaps in the State Community College System*.
- Strayhorn, T. L. (2012). Satisfaction and retention among African American men at two-year community colleges. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 36(5), 358-375. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668920902782508>
- Strayhorn, T. L. (2019). *College students' sense of belonging: A key to educational success for all students* (Second ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315297293>
- Strayhorn, T. L. (2015). Reframing academic advising for student success: From advisor to cultural navigator. *NACADA Journal*, 35(1), 56-63. <https://doi.org/10.12930/NACADA-14-199>
- United States Census Bureau. (2019). *Quick Facts* [Data set]. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/kannapoliscitynorthcarolina,concordcitynorthcarolina,salisburycitynorthcarolina/PST045219>
- Wood, J.L., & Harris III, F. (2017). *Supporting men of color in the community college: A guidebook*. Montezuma Publishing.

Appendix A

*Equity Scorecard Qualtrics Survey Instrument*



**My Equity Scorecard**

Today's Date

Participant ID Code (NOTE: Your Participant ID Code is the day you were born, the second letter of your last name, and the last 4 digits of your cell phone number. For example, if I was born on May 21st, my last name was Smith, and my cell phone number ended in 4785, my participant ID code would be 21M4785. If I was born on May 5th instead of May 21st, my Participant ID Code would be 05M4785.)

**By clicking "I Agree" I consent to participate in this study.**

I Agree



**Remember...**

**Equality**



**Equity**



*Note:* Reproduced with permission of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Princeton, N.J.



**INSTRUCTIONS**

Reflect on your service contributions since the last time you completed your Equity Scorecard. Ask yourself the following questions. Answer each question by moving the slider to Red/Top Light (rarely), Yellow/Center Light (some of the time), or Green/Bottom Light (most of the time). If you leave a question blank, it will be assumed that the question is not applicable to you today (ie: you did not work with students).



**1. To what extent did I provide information about programs and services that was tailored to the students and their unique situations?**



**2. How often did I ask students about their individual needs, interests, and goals?**





3. To what extent did I recognize and respond to critical moments when students needed additional support?



4. To what extent did I acknowledge student strengths in the guidance I provided?







**5. How often did I consider how students from diverse backgrounds may experience campus services and representatives?**



**6. How often did I inquire about students and their lived experiences so I could establish connections and provide services?**





**7. In my communication with students, to what extent did I find ways to incorporate affirming and/or encouraging messages?**



**8. When working with students, how often was I aware of my tone of voice and facial expressions?**





9. While working with students, to what extent did I reflect on whether my service delivery made them feel welcome and respected?



10. To what extent was I mindful of how my words and actions may be perceived by students?



Describe your current thoughts, feelings, ideas, and/or experiences related to service delivery, from an equity perspective.



## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH



We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.  
Your response has been recorded.

---

## Appendix B

### *Semi-Structured Participant Interview #1 Protocol (After 3 Weeks)*

#### **Introduction**

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview! As you may recall, I am researching how staff equity-mindedness impacts Black male student persistence in community colleges (how likely they are to remain in college and earn their degree). As part of my change idea, you were selected to complete a daily *Equity Scorecard* survey. The goal of the survey is to help you reflect on your professional performance for the day, from an equity perspective. Now that we have reached the halfway point, I would like to ask you some questions about your participation in this initiative so far. As we go through each of the questions, I encourage you to reflect on your own experiences and insights with respect to the *Equity Scorecard*. Please know that your participation in this interview is voluntary. The session is being recorded to facilitate a thorough analysis process; however, the information that you provide today will remain confidential.

#### **Questions**

1. How has the experience of completing the *Equity Scorecard* impacted your thoughts and/or feelings related to equity?
2. How has the experience of completing the *Equity Scorecard* impacted your service delivery?
3. Have you noticed any changes regarding your awareness of issues related to equity since you began completing the *Equity Scorecard*? If yes, please describe those changes.
4. Have you changed any behaviors regarding issues related to equity since you began completing the *Equity Scorecard*? If yes, please describe those changes.
5. What have been some benefits and lessons learned by completing the *Equity Scorecard*?
6. What have been some of the challenges of completing the *Equity Scorecard*?
7. What are some examples of equitable service delivery that you have performed or observed?
8. Based on your experience so far, have you identified any policies, practices, or procedures within your department that should be changed in order to increase equity? If yes, please explain.
9. What questions or concerns do you have now that we are halfway through this 6-week initiative?

## Appendix C

### *Semi-Structured Participant Interview #2 Protocol (After 6 Weeks)*

#### **Introduction**

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview! As you will recall, I am researching how staff equity-mindedness impacts Black male student persistence in community colleges (how likely they are to remain in college and earn their degree). As part of my change idea, you were selected to complete a daily *Equity Scorecard*. The goal of the survey was to help you reflect on your professional performance for the day, from an equity perspective. Now that you have completed the 6<sup>th</sup> week of the initiative, I would like to ask you some questions about your participation overall. As we go through each of the questions, I encourage you to reflect on your own experiences and insights with respect to the *Equity Scorecard*. Please know that your participation in this interview is voluntary. The session is being recorded to facilitate a thorough analysis process; however, the information that you provide today will remain confidential.

#### **Questions**

1. How has the experience of completing the *Equity Scorecard* impacted your thoughts and/or feelings related to equity?
2. How has the experience of completing the *Equity Scorecard* impacted your service delivery?
3. Have you noticed any changes regarding your awareness of issues related to equity since you began completing the *Equity Scorecard*? If yes, please describe those changes.
4. Have you changed any behaviors regarding issues related to equity since you began completing the *Equity Scorecard*? If yes, please describe those changes.
5. What are some examples of equitable service delivery that you have performed or observed?
6. Based on your experience so far, have you identified any policies, practices, or procedures within your department that should be changed in order to increase equity? If yes, please explain.
7. What have been the greatest benefits and lessons learned by completing the *Equity Scorecard*?
8. What have been the most significant challenges of completing the *Equity Scorecard*?
9. Would you recommend this initiative to a colleague? Why or why not?
10. What change would you recommend to improve this initiative?

## Appendix D

### *Pre Equity-Mindedness Survey Instrument*

#### **Introduction**

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey! I am researching how staff equity-mindedness impacts Black male student persistence in community colleges (how likely they are to remain in college and earn their degree). You were selected to participate in a 6-week Equity Scorecard initiative. As an important part of the initiative, please respond to the following questions as accurately as possible. Know that your participation is voluntary and there are no “right” answers. The information you provide will remain confidential.

**By clicking “I agree” I consent to participate in this study.**

#### **Participant ID Code Instructions**

Your Participant ID Code is the day you were born, the second letter of your last name, and the last 4 digits of your cell phone number. For example, if I was born on May 21<sup>st</sup>, my last name was Smith, and my cell phone number ended in 4785, my participant ID code would be 21M4785. If I was born on May 5th instead of May 21st, my ID Code would be 05M4785.

**Please enter your Participant ID Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Demographic Information**

Race: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Role: \_\_\_\_\_

Years in Current Role: \_\_\_\_\_

Years at FCCC: \_\_\_\_\_

Educational History (select all that apply):

Certificate       Diploma       Professional License       Associate Degree

Bachelor’s Degree       Master’s Degree       Doctorate

#### **Questions**

Please respond to the following questions with one of the following options:

**Strongly Agree/Agree/Neutral/Disagree/Strongly Disagree**

1. I regularly think about issues related to equity.
2. I take time to reflect on how effectively I serve students each day.
3. It is important to think about the student impact of my actions at work.
4. I treat all students fairly.
5. All students experience college in the same way.
6. I tailor my service delivery to meet the needs of each individual student.
7. Equality and equity mean the same thing.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

8. It is important to go “above and beyond” to make sure students feel welcome.
9. All students feel like they belong at our community college.
10. I examine my values, assumptions, and beliefs on a regular basis.
11. I can name specific actions that demonstrate equity-minded service delivery.
12. I think about my interactions with students even after the workday has ended.
13. I could explain the meaning of equity-mindedness to a colleague.
14. I feel comfortable having critical conversations about race.
15. Some students face more barriers to success than others.
16. Students are primarily responsible for achieving their own success.
17. I actively engage with colleagues on topics related to equity.
18. It is my responsibility to ensure that each student I serve has what they need to succeed.
19. I can recognize “critical moments” when working with students.
20. I should not be expected to change my attitudes and behaviors at work.
21. I should treat all students the same.
22. Institutional policies and procedures can create barriers to student success.
23. Some of my professional practices may negatively impact student success.
24. I consistently look for ways to improve my performance at work.
25. I assume responsibility for student success.
26. I think about how to make the campus environment more welcoming.
27. Stereotypes can impact student success.
28. Please use this space to share thoughts, insights, feelings, and reflections related to your participation in the Equity Scorecard Initiative.



## Appendix E

### *Post Equity-Mindedness Survey Instrument*

#### **Introduction**

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey! I am researching how staff equity-mindedness impacts Black male student persistence in community colleges (how likely they are to remain in college and earn their degree). You were selected to participate in a 6-week Equity Scorecard initiative. As an important part of the initiative, please respond to the following questions as accurately as possible. Know that your participation is voluntary and there are no “right” answers. The information you provide will remain confidential.

**By clicking “I agree” I consent to participate in this study.**

#### **Participant ID Code Instructions**

Your Participant ID Code is the day you were born, the second letter of your last name, and the last 4 digits of your cell phone number. For example, if I was born on May 21<sup>st</sup>, my last name was Smith, and my cell phone number ended in 4785, my participant ID code would be 21M4785. If I was born on May 5th instead of May 21st, my Participant ID Code would be 05M4785.

**Please enter your Participant ID Code: \_\_\_\_\_**

#### **Questions**

Please respond to the following questions with one of the following options:

**Strongly Agree/Agree/Neutral/Disagree/Strongly Disagree**

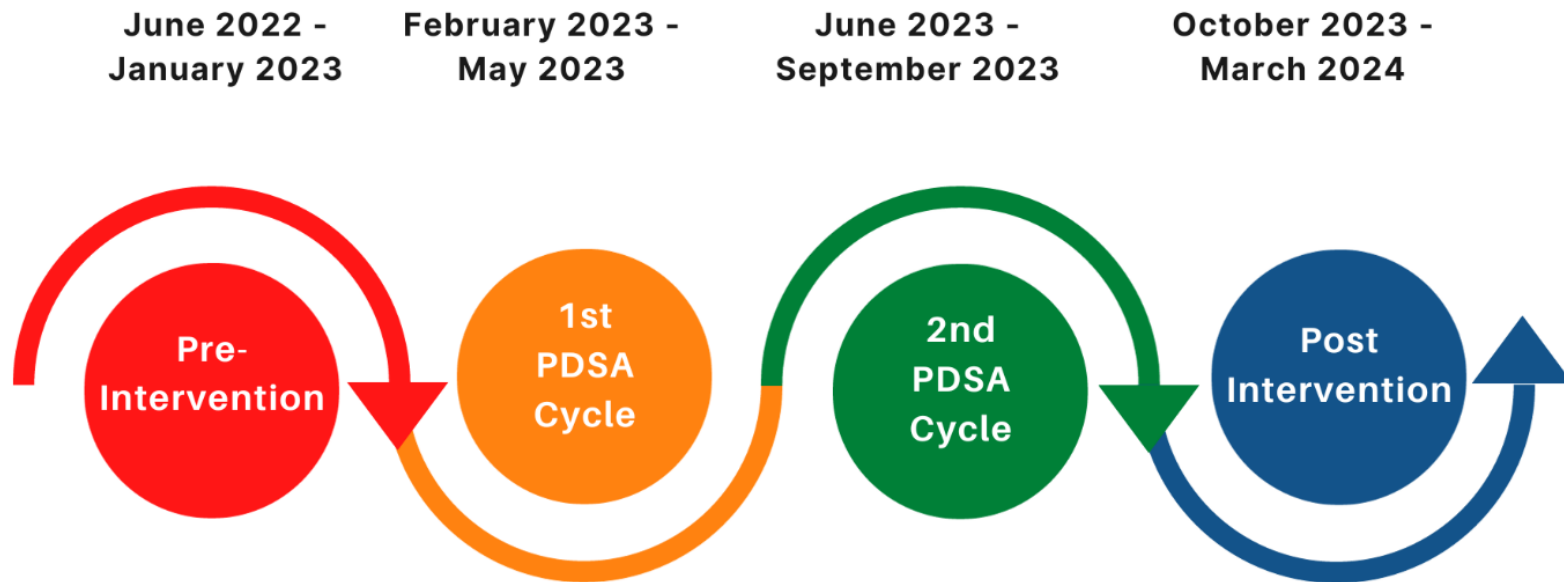
1. I regularly think about issues related to equity.
2. I take time to reflect on how effectively I serve students each day.
3. It is important to think about the student impact of my actions at work.
4. I treat all students fairly.
5. All students experience college in the same way.
6. I tailor my service delivery to meet the needs of each individual student.
7. Equality and equity mean the same thing.
8. It is important to go “above and beyond” to make sure students feel welcome.
9. All students feel like they belong at our community college.
10. I examine my values, assumptions, and beliefs on a regular basis.
11. I can name specific actions that demonstrate equity-minded service delivery.
12. I think about my interactions with students even after the workday has ended.
13. I could explain the meaning of equity-mindedness to a colleague.
14. I feel comfortable having critical conversations about race.
15. Some students face more barriers to success than others.
16. Students are primarily responsible for achieving their own success.
17. I actively engage with colleagues on topics related to equity.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

18. It is my responsibility to ensure that each student I serve has what they need to succeed.
19. I can recognize “critical moments” when working with students.
20. I should not be expected to change my attitudes and behaviors at work.
21. I should treat all students the same.
22. Institutional policies and procedures can create barriers to student success.
23. Some of my professional practices may negatively impact student success.
24. I consistently look for ways to improve my performance at work.
25. I assume responsibility for student success.
26. I think about how to make the campus environment more welcoming.
27. Stereotypes can impact student success.
28. Please use this space to share thoughts, insights, feelings, and reflections related to your participation in the Equity Scorecard Initiative.

**Appendix F**  
*Implementation Timeline*

**PROPOSED**



June 2022 -  
January 2023

February 2023 -  
May 2023

June 2023 -  
September 2023

October 2023 -  
March 2024

**ACTUAL**

June 2022 -  
February 2023

March 2023 -  
July 2023

July 2023 -  
November 2023

November 2023 -  
March 2024



Appendix H

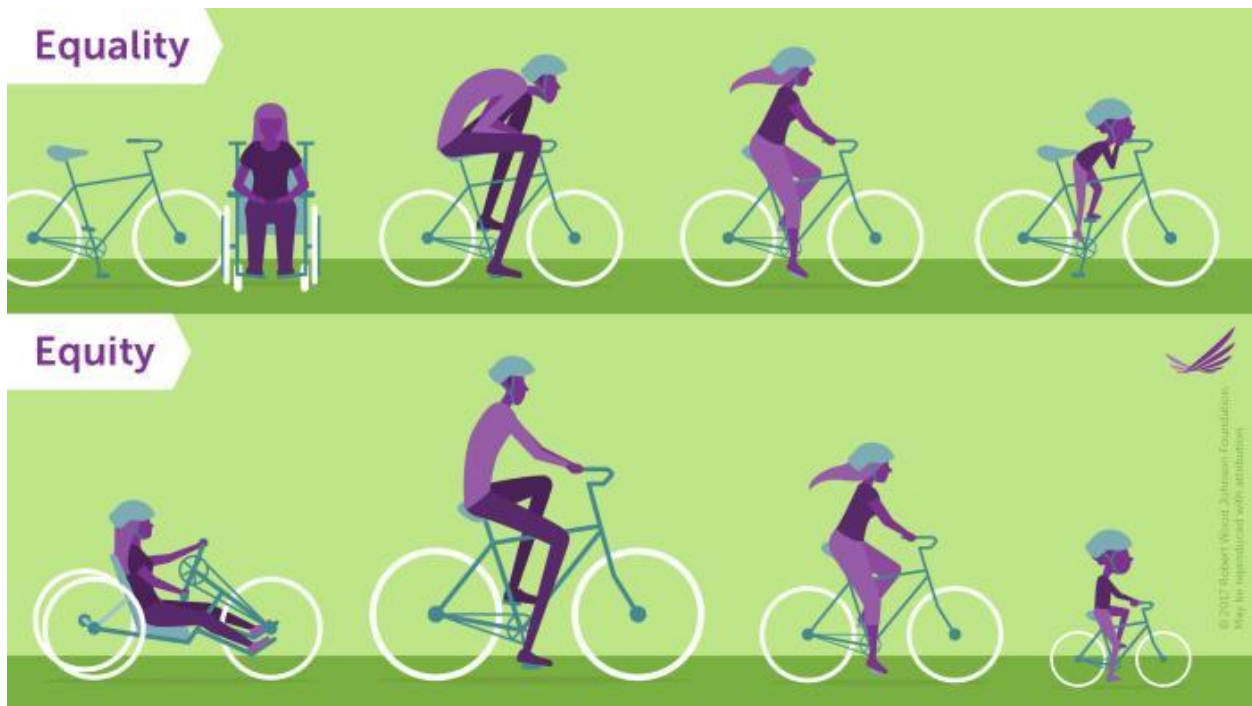
*Equity Scorecard Plain Text Survey Instrument*

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Participant ID Code** (NOTE: Your Participant ID Code is the day you were born, the second letter of your last name, and the last 4 digits of your cell phone number. For example, if I was born on May 21st, my last name was Smith, and my cell phone number ended in 4785, my participant ID code would be 21M4785. If I was born on May 5th instead of May 21st, my Participant ID Code would be 05M4785.) \_\_\_\_\_

By clicking “I Agree” I consent to participate in this study.

Remember...



Note: Reproduced with permission of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Princeton, N.J.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

### Instructions

Reflect on your service contributions since the last time you completed your Equity Scorecard. Ask yourself the following questions. Answer each question by moving the slider to Red/Top Light (rarely), Yellow/Center Light (some of the time), or Green/Bottom Light (most of the time). If you leave a question blank, it will be assumed that the question is not applicable to you today (i.e.: you did not work with students).

### Questions

1. To what extent did I provide information about programs and services that was tailored to the students and their unique situations?
2. How often did I ask students about their individual needs, interests, and goals?
3. To what extent did I recognize and respond to critical moments when students needed additional support?
4. To what extent did I acknowledge student strengths in the guidance I provided?
5. How often did I consider how students from diverse backgrounds may experience campus services and representatives?
6. How often did I inquire about students and their lived experiences so I could establish connections and provide services?
7. In my communication with students, to what extent did I find ways to incorporate affirming and/or encouraging messages?
8. When working with students, how often was I aware of my tone of voice and facial expressions?
9. While working with students, to what extent did I reflect on whether my service delivery made them feel welcome and respected?
10. To what extent was I mindful of how my words and actions may be perceived by students?
11. Describe your current thoughts, feelings, ideas, and/or experiences related to service delivery, from an equity perspective.

**Appendix I**

*Email Templates*

**Email to Supervisor**

**Subject:** Opportunity to Participate

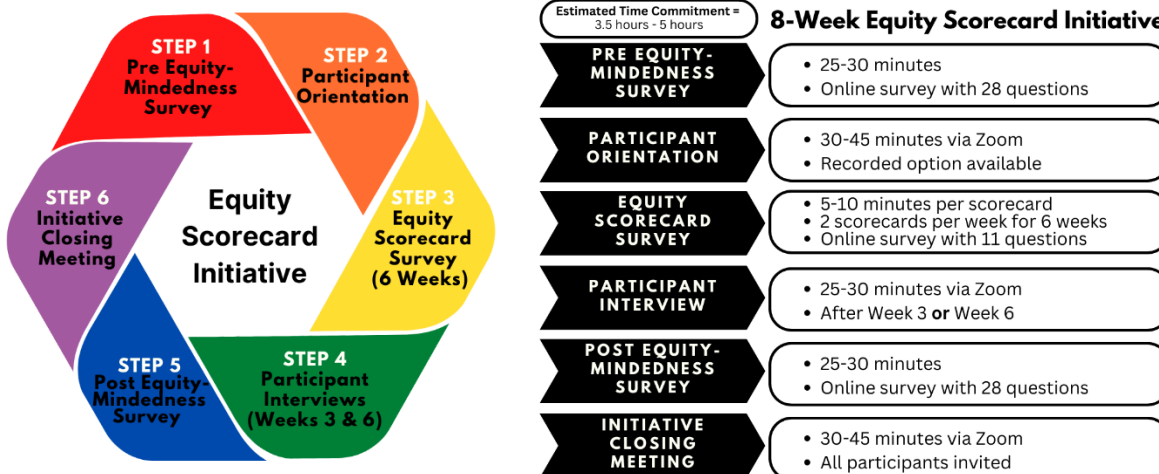
**Attachment:** Equity Scorecard Initiative Graphics

**Message:**

Hi \_\_\_\_\_,

I hope you are doing well and having a great day!

I am reaching out because I am a 3rd-year doctoral student at Western Carolina University conducting a study on Black male student persistence at FCCC. As part of my research, I wanted to invite you and your full-time staff members to participate in an 8-week Equity Scorecard Initiative. After completing an initial survey and orientation, participants will be asked to complete at least two Equity Scorecards per week for six weeks. Each scorecard should take 5-10 minutes to complete. A few participants will also be asked to complete an interview. All participants will complete a final survey and attend a closing meeting at the end of the eight weeks. I am including an overview of the process below (also attached).



This initiative is intended to promote equity-mindedness and equitable service delivery through reflection and self-awareness. I designed the study to be a practical and impactful approach to improving student persistence that easily fits into the routines of FCCC staff. If you and/or your team members would be willing to participate, the next step would be a face-to-face meeting (individually or as a team) to discuss this opportunity and answer your questions. Also, feel free to reply to this email with any initial questions.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

I appreciate you taking the time to consider participating in this initiative and supporting my doctoral journey. I look forward to hearing from you soon!

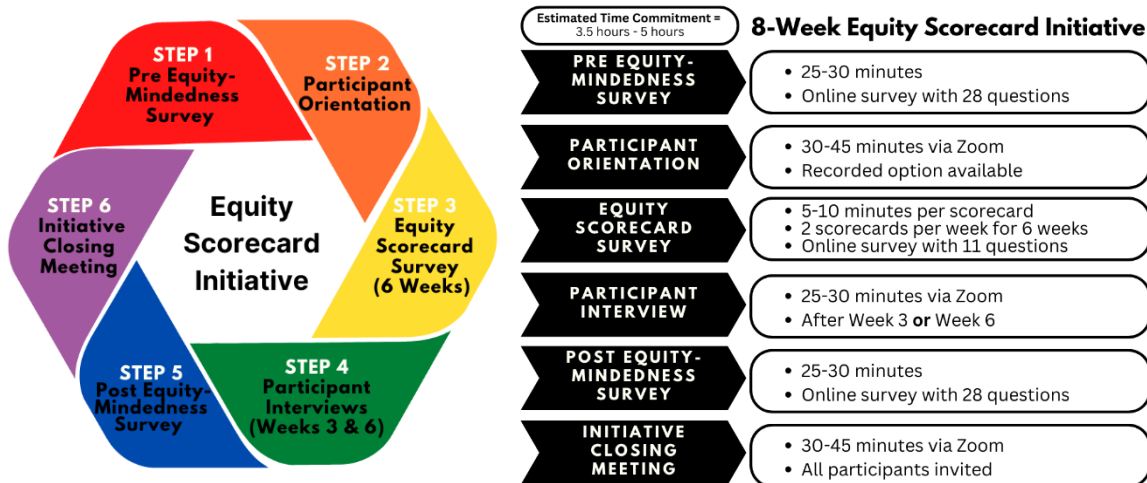
### Initial Email Invitation to Prospective Participants

**Subject:** Invitation to Participate

**Message:**

Hi \_\_\_\_\_,

You are invited to participate in a research study of Black male student persistence in community colleges. You were selected as a possible participant because of your role as a full-time staff member at FCCC who has direct service interactions with students. Participation is completely voluntary. Included below is an overview of the Equity Scorecard Initiative process.



Please reply to this email with “YES” if you would like to participate or “NO” if you would not like to participate. Participants will be asked to complete consent paperwork and a Pre-Equity Mindedness survey prior to attending a Participant Orientation Presentation.

Thank you in advance for your consideration!

### Follow-Up Email to Participants

**Subject:** Equity Scorecard Initiative

**Attachment:** Consent Form

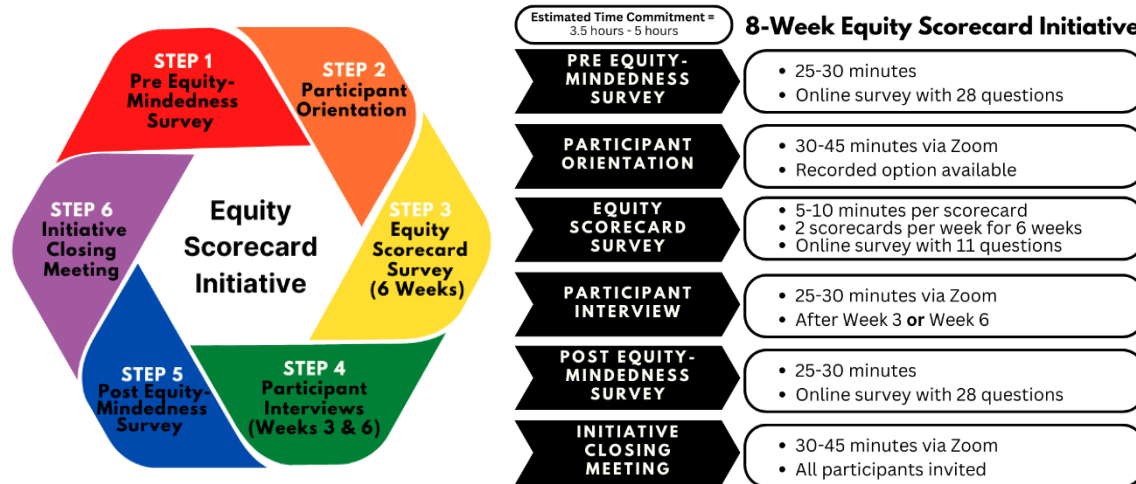
**Message:**

Dear Equity Scorecard Initiative Participants,



## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Equity Scorecard Initiative! Included below is a reminder of the process and links to important surveys that will be used in this research project. Be sure to save this email for future reference.



Survey Consent Form  
Interview Consent Form  
Pre Equity-Mindedness Survey  
Equity Scorecard Survey  
Post Equity-Mindedness Survey

Please complete the Survey Consent Form, Interview Consent Form, and Pre Equity-Mindedness Survey **before** the Participant Orientation Presentation. You will receive a follow-up email with the meeting access information. If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know.

I look forward to your participation in the Equity Scorecard Initiative!

### Participant Orientation Email Invitation

**Subject:** Equity Scorecard Participant Orientation

**Message:**

Dear Equity Scorecard Initiative Participants,

As part of the Equity Scorecard Initiative, please attend the Participant Orientation Presentation on Month/Day/Year at Time. The meeting access information is included below. Be sure to complete the Survey Consent Form, Interview Consent Form, and Pre Equity-Mindedness Survey before the Orientation. If you have any questions or are unable to attend, please let me know.

Thank you in advance!

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

### **Participant Orientation Reminder Email**

**Subject:** Reminder: Equity Scorecard Participant Orientation

**Message:**

Dear Equity Scorecard Initiative Participants,

This is a friendly reminder that the Equity Scorecard Initiative Participant Orientation Presentation will take place on Zoom on Month/Day/Year at Time. The meeting access information is included below. Please be sure to complete the Survey Consent Form, Interview Consent Form, and Pre Equity-Mindedness Survey before the Orientation. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Thank you in advance!

### **Participant Orientation Recording Email**

**Subject:** Recorded Equity Scorecard Participant Orientation

**Message:**

Dear Equity Scorecard Initiative Participants,

Attached is the Equity Scorecard Participant Orientation for review and future reference. If you were unable to attend the live Orientation, please be sure to watch the recording before completing your Equity Scorecards. If you have any questions after viewing the presentation, please let me know and I will be happy to answer them.

Thank you in advance!

### **Follow Up Participant Orientation Email (Participants that Could Not Attend)**

**Subject:** Recorded Equity Scorecard Participant Orientation - Checking In

**Message:**

Hi \_\_\_\_\_,

I hope you are doing well and having a great week! Just checking in to see if you had an opportunity to watch the Equity Scorecard Orientation Presentation recording. This is an important part of the process, so please let me know if you have questions.

Thanks in advance!

### **Interview Email Invitation**

**Subject:** Interview Invitation

**Message:**

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

Hi \_\_\_\_\_,

As part of the Equity Scorecard Initiative, you are invited to participate in a one-on-one interview. Please let me know what day/time works best for you during the week of \_\_\_\_\_. The meeting access information is included below.

I look forward to meeting with you!

### **Interview Reminder Email**

**Subject:** Reminder: Participant Interview

**Message:**

Hi \_\_\_\_\_,

This is a friendly reminder that your participant interview is scheduled for Month/Day at Time. The meeting access information is included below.

See you then!

### **Follow-Up Interview Email Invitation**

**Subject:** Interview Invitation

**Message:**

Hi \_\_\_\_\_,

I was just following up to make sure you received your interview invitation for the Equity Scorecard Initiative. Please let me know what day/time would be good to meet. I appreciate your help!

### **Missed Interview Email**

**Subject:** Today's Interview

**Message:**

Hi \_\_\_\_\_,

I missed meeting with you today for the one-on-one interview. I know things can get hectic, so please let me know when is a good day/time to reschedule.

Thanks in advance!

### **Equity Scorecard Weekly Reminder Email**

**Subject:** Your Equity Scorecard Reminder

**Message:**

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

Dear Equity Scorecard Initiative Participants,

This is a friendly reminder to complete the Equity Scorecard survey at least two times this week, preferably on days that you work with students. You can access the survey by clicking [HERE](#). Please keep in mind that there are no “right” or “wrong” answers. The survey is designed to help you to reflect on your contributions to equitable service delivery at FCCC.

Thank you in advance!

### **Post Equity-Mindedness Survey Email Invitation**

**Subject:** Post-Equity Mindedness Survey Invitation

**Message:**

Dear Equity Scorecard Initiative Participants,

As part of the Equity Scorecard Initiative, please click the link below to complete the Post Equity-Mindedness survey.

Post-Equity Mindedness Survey

Thank you in advance!

### **Initiative Closing Meeting Email Invitation**

**Subject:** Closing Meeting Invitation

**Message:**

Dear Equity Scorecard Initiative Participants,

Thank you for the time and effort you have contributed to the Equity Scorecard Initiative! As the final step in this process, you are invited to participate in an Initiative Closing Meeting on Month/Day/Year at Time. The meeting access information is included below. If you have not already done so, please be sure to complete the Post Equity-Mindedness Survey before attending the Closing Meeting.

I look forward to seeing you there!

### **Initiative Closing Meeting Reminder Email**

**Subject:** Reminder: Closing Meeting

**Message:** 00

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

Dear Equity Scorecard Participants,

This is a friendly reminder that the Equity Scorecard Initiative Closing Meeting will be held on Month/Day at Time. The meeting access information is included below. This is the final step in the process, so I look forward to seeing everyone there!

### **Task Reminder Email**

**Subject:** Reminder Email

**Message:**

Hi \_\_\_\_\_,

This is a friendly reminder to please complete the Equity Scorecard Initiative \_\_\_\_\_. Your participation is very important, so please let me know if you have any questions or need any assistance.

Thank you in advance!

**Appendix J**

*Informed Consent for Interviews*

**Western Carolina University**

**Consent Form to Participate in a Research Study**

You are being invited to participate in a research study of Black male persistence in community colleges. You were selected as a possible participant because of your role as a full-time staff member at Four Corners Community college who has direct interactions with students. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. Participation is completely voluntary.

**Project Title: An Equity-Minded Approach to Improving Black Male Student Persistence at Four Corners Community College: Reframing the Issues**

**This study is being conducted by:** Rebecca G. Childs, Dr. Kofi Lomotey, and Dr. Aarti Bellara

**Description and Purpose of the Research:** You are invited to participate in a research study about Black male student persistence in community colleges. By doing this study we hope to learn how educator equity-mindedness impacts Black male student sense of belonging and persistence.

**What you will be asked to do:** After completing a Pre Equity-Mindedness survey and attending a participant orientation presentation, you may be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview, after the third and/or sixth week of the study.

The semi-structured interviews will provide an opportunity for you to share information and insights regarding your participation in the Equity Scorecard initiative.

The participant orientation should take approximately 45 minutes. Each interview should take approximately 45 minutes and will be recorded to aid the analysis process.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

**Risks and Discomforts:** There are no anticipated risks from participating in this research.

**Benefits:** There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this research study. The study may help us better understand how to increase Black male student persistence in community colleges. A copy of the major findings of this initiative will be shared with participants after the study is completed.

**Privacy/Confidentiality/Data Security:** The data collected in this research study will be kept confidential. Participation in research may involve some loss of privacy. We will do our best to make sure that the information about you is kept confidential, but we cannot guarantee total confidentiality. Your personal information may be viewed by individuals involved in the research and may be seen by people including those collaborating, funding, and regulating the study. We will share only the minimum necessary information in order to conduct the research. Your personal information may also be given out if required by law, such as pursuant to a court order. While the information and data resulting from this study may be presented at scientific meetings or published in a scientific journal, your name or other personal information will not be revealed.

We will collect your information through recordings and notes. The researcher will also maintain a researcher's journal to record and reflect on observations and thoughts related to the implementation and implications of the research study. This information will be stored in an encrypted cloud based system. This information will be retained for a period of three years. Where possible, summary data from the whole group will be used. Pseudonyms will be used for direct quotes.

The research team will work to protect your data to the extent permitted by technology. It is possible, although unlikely, that an unauthorized individual could gain access to your responses because you are responding online. This risk is similar to your everyday use of the internet.

Pseudonyms will be assigned to each interviewee, and during the course of the interview and in all notes, you will only be referred to by your pseudonym.

Audio/visual recordings will be collected during this study and used to enhance analysis of the data. The recordings will be destroyed after three years. The recordings will not be shared with the general public. You do have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in the main part of this study.

If you give the research team permission to quote you directly, the researchers will give you a pseudonym and will generalize your quote to remove any information that could be personally identifying.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

Identifiers might be removed from your information and the de-identified information might be used or distributed to other researchers for future research without your additional consent.

**Voluntary Participation:** Participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If you choose not to participate or decide to withdraw, there will be no impact on your employment. You do not have to participate in the interviews to participate in the other portions of the study. You may withdraw by notifying the researcher directly.

**Compensation for Participation:** There is no compensation provided for participation.

**Contact Information:** For questions about this study, please contact Rebecca Childs at 704-213-4496 or [rgchilds1@catamount.wcu.edu](mailto:rgchilds1@catamount.wcu.edu). You may also contact Dr. Kofi Lomotey, the principal investigator and faculty advisor for this project at [klomotey@email.wcu.edu](mailto:klomotey@email.wcu.edu), or Dr. Aarti Bellara, the co-principal investigator, at [abellara@email.wcu.edu](mailto:abellara@email.wcu.edu).

**If you have questions or concerns about your treatment as a participant in this study, you may contact the Western Carolina University Institutional Review Board through the Office of Research Administration by calling 828-227-7212 or emailing [irb@wcu.edu](mailto:irb@wcu.edu). All reports or correspondence will be kept confidential to the extent possible.**

**You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.**

I understand what is expected of me if I participate in this research study. I understand that my raw data will not be shared with anyone outside of the three investigators listed above and will only be presented in aggregate in the form of a final Disquisition paper to be orally defended in front of the committee. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions, and I understand that participation is voluntary. By clicking "I agree" I consent to participate in this study.

I do  or do not  give my permission to the investigators to quote me directly in their research.

The investigators may  or may not  digitally record me during the interview.

Name



**Appendix K**

*Informed Consent for Surveys*

**Western Carolina University**

**Consent Form to Participate in a Research Study**

You are being invited to participate in a research study of Black male persistence in community colleges. You were selected as a possible participant because of your role as a full-time staff member at Four Corners Community college who has direct interactions with students. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. Participation is completely voluntary.

**Project Title: An Equity-Minded Approach to Improving Black Male Student Persistence at Four Corners Community College: Reframing the Issues**

**This study is being conducted by:** Rebecca G. Childs, Dr. Kofi Lomotey, and Dr. Aarti Bellara

**Description and Purpose of the Research:** You are invited to participate in a research study about Black male student persistence in community colleges. By doing this study we hope to learn how educator equity-mindedness impacts Black male student sense of belonging and persistence.

**What you will be asked to do:** You will be asked to complete a Pre Equity-Mindedness survey and attend a participant orientation. After attending a participant orientation, you will be asked to complete a brief Equity Scorecard survey at least twice per week for a period of six weeks. At the end of the six-week period, you will be asked to complete a Post Equity-Mindedness survey.

The Equity-Mindedness survey will collect basic demographic information as well as your responses to equity-oriented questions. The Equity Scorecard will ask you to report your answers to 10 survey questions and one open-response question.

The participant orientation should take approximately 45 minutes. The Equity-Mindedness survey should take approximately 25 minutes to complete. The Equity Scorecard survey should take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

**Risks and Discomforts:** There are no anticipated risks from participating in this research.

**Benefits:** There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this research study. The study may help us better understand how to increase Black male student persistence in community colleges. A copy of the major findings of this initiative will be shared with participants after the study is completed.

**Privacy/Confidentiality/Data Security:** The data collected in this research study will be kept confidential. Participation in research may involve some loss of privacy. We will do our best to make sure that the information about you is kept confidential, but we cannot guarantee total confidentiality. Your personal information may be viewed by individuals involved in the research and may be seen by people including those collaborating, funding, and regulating the study. We will share only the minimum necessary information in order to conduct the research. Your personal information may also be given out if required by law, such as pursuant to a court order. While the information and data resulting from this study may be presented at scientific meetings or published in a scientific journal, your name or other personal information will not be revealed.

We will collect your information through qualtrics surveys. This information will be stored in an encrypted cloud based system. Participant ID codes will be used to help protect your privacy. Your Participant ID Code is the day you were born, the second letter of your last name, and the last 4 digits of your cell phone number. For example, if I was born on May 21st, my last name was Smith, and my cell phone number ended in 4785, my participant ID code would be 21M4785. If I was born on May 5th instead of May 21st, my Participant ID Code would be 05M4785. When data collection is complete and the data are prepared for analysis, participants will be assigned a random ID number, and the Participate ID codes will be deleted from the data set.

The researcher will also maintain a researcher's journal to record and reflect on observations and thoughts related to the implementation and implications of the research study. This information will be retained for a period of three years. Where possible, summary data from the whole group will be used. Pseudonyms will be used for direct quotes.

The research team will work to protect your data to the extent permitted by technology. It is possible, although unlikely, that an unauthorized individual could gain access to your responses because you are responding online. This risk is similar to your everyday use of the internet.

If you give the research team permission to quote you directly, the researchers will give you a pseudonym and will generalize your quote to remove any information that could be personally identifying.

## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

Identifiers might be removed from your information and the de-identified information might be used or distributed to other researchers for future research without your additional consent.

**Voluntary Participation:** Participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If you choose not to participate or decide to withdraw, there will be no impact on your employment. You may withdraw by notifying the researcher directly.

**Compensation for Participation:** There is no compensation provided for participation.

**Contact Information:** For questions about this study, please contact Rebecca Childs at 704-213-4496 or [rgchilds1@catamount.wcu.edu](mailto:rgchilds1@catamount.wcu.edu). You may also contact Dr. Kofi Lomotey, the principal investigator and faculty advisor for this project at [klomotey@email.wcu.edu](mailto:klomotey@email.wcu.edu), or Dr. Aarti Bellara, the co-principal investigator, at [abellara@email.wcu.edu](mailto:abellara@email.wcu.edu).

**If you have questions or concerns about your treatment as a participant in this study, you may contact the Western Carolina University Institutional Review Board through the Office of Research Administration by calling 828-227-7212 or emailing [irb@wcu.edu](mailto:irb@wcu.edu). All reports or correspondence will be kept confidential to the extent possible.**

**You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.**

I understand what is expected of me if I participate in this research study. I understand that my raw data will not be shared with anyone outside of the three investigators listed above and will only be presented in aggregate in the form of a final Disquisition paper to be orally defended in front of the committee. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions, and I understand that participation is voluntary. By clicking "I agree" I consent to participate in this study.

I do  or do not  give my permission to the investigators to quote me directly in their research.

Name

**Appendix L**

*Fidelity Checklist*

# Equity Scorecards Completed	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
PDSA2-P1						
PDSA2-P2						
PDSA2-P3						
PDSA2-P4						
PDSA2-P5						
PDSA2-P6						
PDSA2-P7						
PDSA2-P8						
PDSA2-P9						
PDSA2-P10						
PDSA2-P11						
PDSA2-P12						
PDSA2-P13						

*Note.* The Fidelity Checklist was not used in PDSA 1. The Fidelity Checklist was incorporated as a design modification in PDSA 2. The designators in the first column correspond to the randomly assigned participant ID numbers.

Appendix M

*Participant Orientation Presentation*



The graphic features a dark grey background with four white circular icons: a bar chart, two speech bubbles, a hand pointing at a screen, and a stylized person. The main title is in yellow and white text. The author's name and affiliation are in the bottom right corner.

**Equity Scorecard  
Change Initiative:  
Participant Orientation**

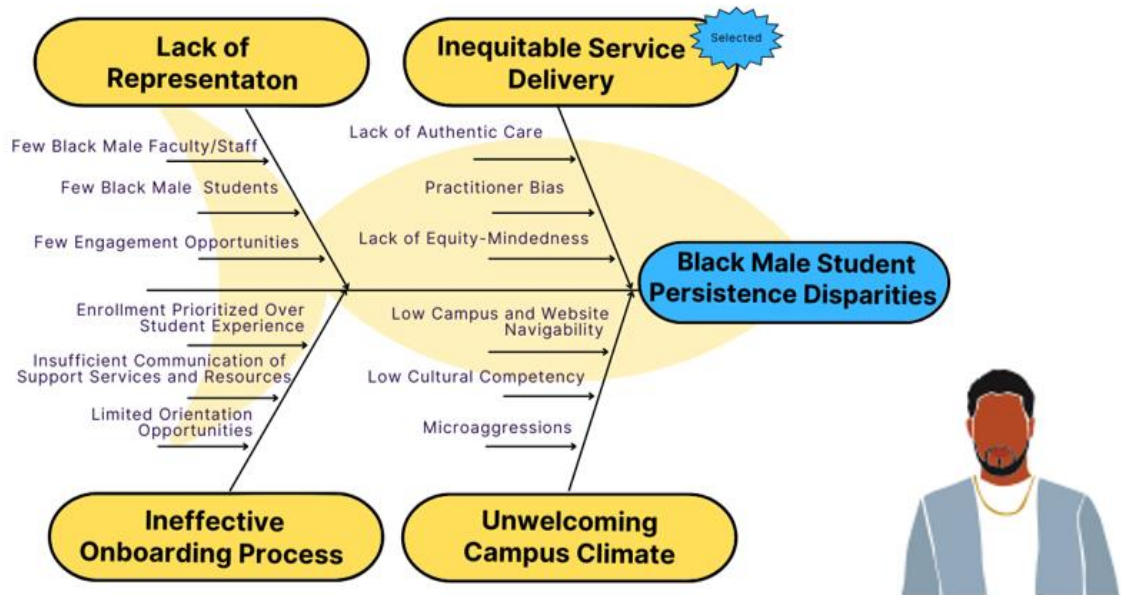
Rebecca G. Childs  
Department of Human Services  
EdD Program in Educational Leadership  
Western Carolina University

## What's the Issue?



- **70%** of Black male students turn to community colleges as a gateway to higher education and upward mobility (Harris et al., 2015; Baber et al., 2015; Wood & Harris, 2017)
- **32%** of Black male community college students complete their academic objectives within 6 years (Wood & Harris, 2017)
- **Persistence** refers to the percentage of students who graduate or return to college for a second year (National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, 2022)
- A combination of root causes create community college environments that fail to support **Black male student sense of belonging** and **persistence** (Bush & Bush, 2010; Brooks et al., 2013)

# What's the Cause?



# What's the Reality at FCCC?

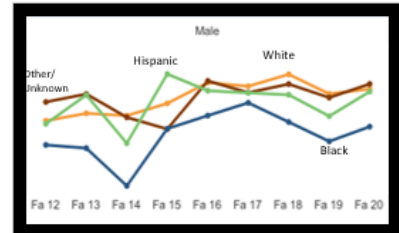
**FOUR CORNERS COMMUNITY COLLEGE:** "Improves lives and builds community through public higher education and workforce development."



Success Metrics for FCCC Male Students

Success Metric	Black	White	Hispanic	Other/Unknown
Enrollment	5%	20%	6%	4%
First-Year Persistence	52%	66%	65%	68%
Curriculum Completion	46%	56%	49%	50%
Transfer	--	85%	--	91%

First-Year Progression for FCCC Male Students



*Note.* The success metric data used in the participant orientation was for the most current year available at the time of the presentation.

# How Can We Improve?

**Equity-mindedness:** “A cognitive frame of reference for understanding disparities in student outcomes that views those problems as a matter of institutional responsibility” (Bensimon & Malcom-Piqueux, 2012, p. 204)



## What are Some Examples of Equity-Mindedness?

# How Can We Improve?

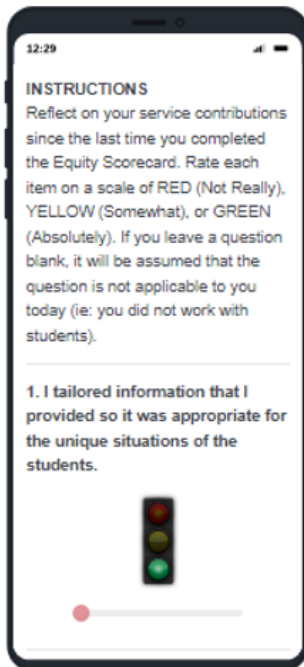
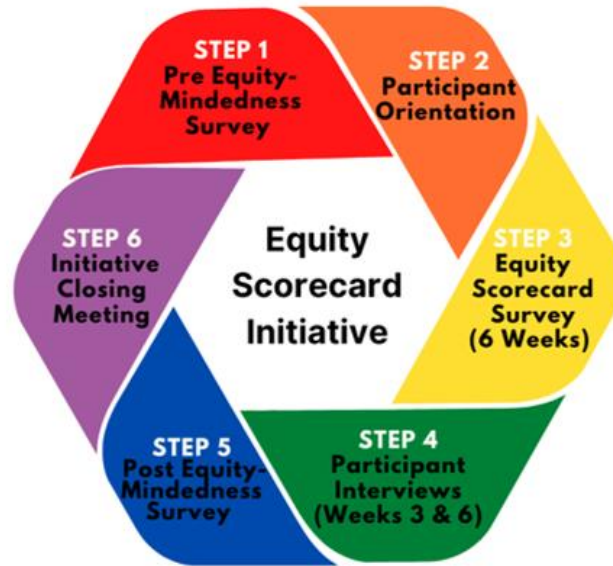
**Critical Moments:** “Every opportunity that an academic advisor, student services officer, or support staff member has to interact with men of color is a crucial opportunity. It represents an instance where educators can reduce barriers, provide critical information, and affirm and build up men of color” (Wood & Harris, 2017, p. 85)



## What are Some Examples of Critical Moments ?



# What's the Process?



## What's the Equity Scorecard?

(Equity Scorecard Survey Demonstration)

# Helpful Reminders

✓ Complete the Equity Scorecard **at least 2 times each week** for 6 weeks

✓ Set a recurring **calendar event/alert**

✓ Choose a time when you can **focus and reflect**



*Note:* Reproduced with permission of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Princeton, N.J.

# Helpful Reminders

✓ Answer each survey item **thoughtfully and honestly**

✓ There are **no “right” or “wrong”** answers

✓ Complete the Equity Scorecard on **days you work with students.**



*Note:* Reproduced with permission of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Princeton, N.J.

# Common Q & A



- **How will I complete the Equity-Mindedness and Equity Scorecard surveys?**
  - You will receive a Qualtrics link to the surveys via email. You can complete the surveys on your computer, tablet, laptop, or phone.
  - If you have issues accessing the survey, you can contact me by phone or email
- **What rights do I have as a participant in this research?**
  - Your participation in this initiative is voluntary. You can end your participation at any time.
  - Please refer to the consent form for additional information.
- **What are the benefits of participating in this research?**
  - You will have the opportunity to reflect on your professional practice and increase your capacity to support students equitably.
- **How much time will do I need to commit to this initiative?**
  - The Equity-Mindedness survey will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.
  - The Equity Scorecard surveys will take approximately 10 minutes daily (Monday – Friday) for a period of six weeks.
  - The interviews may take up to 60 minutes each
- **Where will the interview take place?**
  - The interviews will take place on Zoom.
- **What if I have other questions?**
  - You can contact me by phone or email for assistance with questions that arise.



## What Questions Do You Have?

Appendix N

*Participant Closing Meeting Presentation*



The slide features a dark grey background with three white circular icons at the top: a bar chart, two speech bubbles, and a hand-drawn arrow on a screen. On the left, there is a circular inset showing a stylized illustration of a Black man in a red jacket. The main title is in yellow and white text. The presenter's name and affiliation are listed in the bottom right corner.

## Equity Scorecard Change Initiative: Closing Meeting

Rebecca G. Childs  
Department of Human Services  
EdD Program in Educational Leadership  
Western Carolina University

## Recap: What's the Issue?

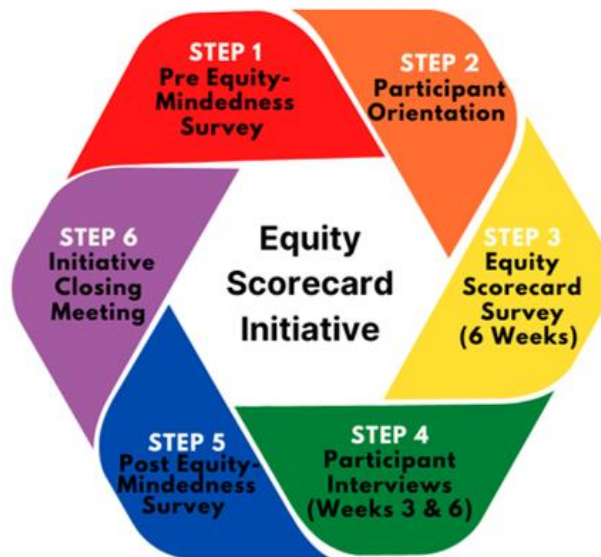


- **70%** of Black male students turn to community colleges as a gateway to higher education and upward mobility (Harris et al., 2015; Baber et al., 2015; Wood & Harris, 2017)
- **32%** of Black male community college students complete their academic objectives within 6 years (Wood & Harris, 2017)
- **Persistence** refers to the percentage of students who graduate or return to college for a second year (National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, 2022)
- A combination of root causes create community college environments that fail to support **Black male student sense of belonging** and **persistence** (Bush & Bush, 2010; Brooks et al., 2013)

# Recap: How Can We Improve?



# Recap: What's the Process?



# Today's Purpose:

## CLOSING MEETING:

- Allow participants to debrief collectively
- Foster the sustainability of equity-mindedness beyond the initiative

*Note: Data will NOT be collected today*



## What did you learn?



What  
surprised  
you?



What  
challenged  
you?



How will this  
impact your  
work?

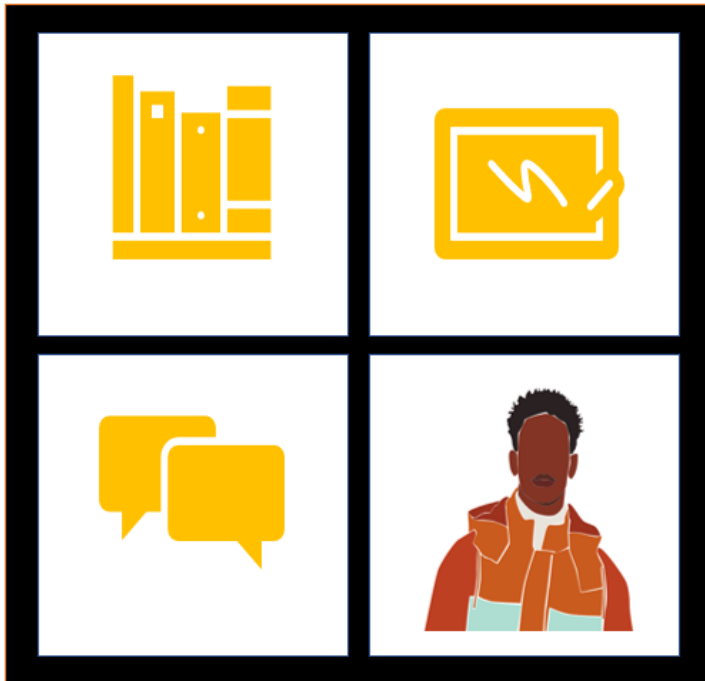


How can we  
spread equity-  
mindedness?





# What would you like to share?



**"Change must happen individually before it can happen collectively...Lasting change happens when educators understand both the meaning of equity and that meaning is represented through personal values, beliefs, and actions."**

**(McNair et al., 2020)**

**THANK YOU!**

**Appendix O**

*PDSA Cycle Modifications (PDSA 1 to PDSA 2)*

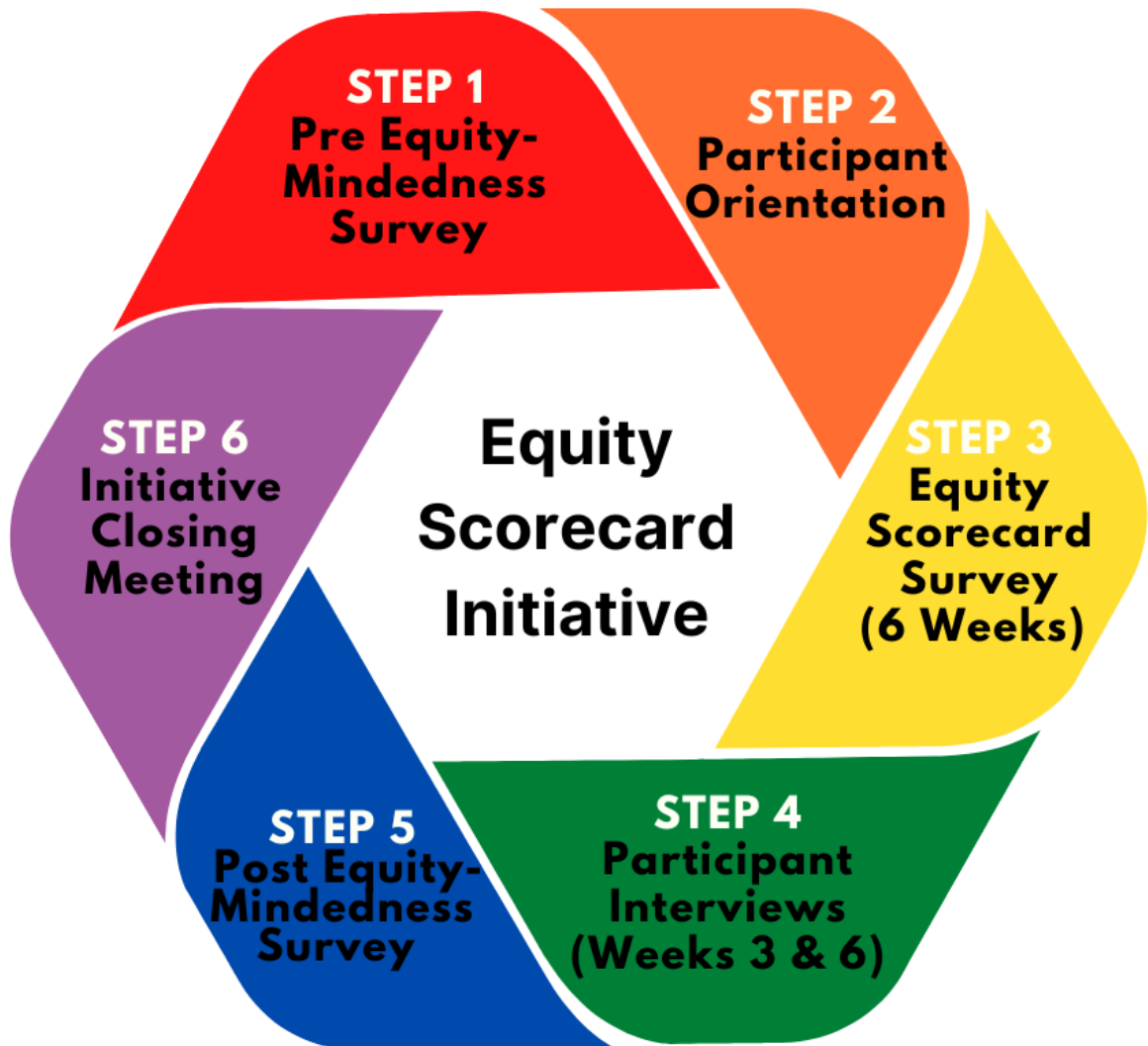
Element	Modification(s)	Rationale	Impact
Fidelity Checklist	Added to the process	Track levels of Equity Scorecard survey completion from week to week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Real-time awareness of activity levels</li> <li>- Increased understanding of participation trends</li> </ul>
Researcher’s Journal	Added to the process	Integrate reflection as a central component of the implementation and improvement process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased mindfulness about the initiative</li> <li>- Enhanced ability to identify initiative strengths and areas for improvement</li> </ul>
Random Selection without Replacement for Interviews	Changed from random selection with replacement	Decrease the interview burden on individual participants and increase the number of voices and perspectives collected in the data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased engagement from participants.</li> <li>- Opportunities to confirm findings across participants.</li> </ul>
Orientation Recording	Added to the process	Provide all participants with the opportunity to fully engage in the orientation session without distractions, interruptions, or schedule conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased ability to accommodate participant availability</li> <li>- Resource for participants to refer back to</li> </ul>
Equity Scorecard Survey	Reworded the open-response question	Allow for broader reflections on equity and stimulate greater equity-mindedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Responses focused on self-reflections rather than institutional observations</li> </ul>

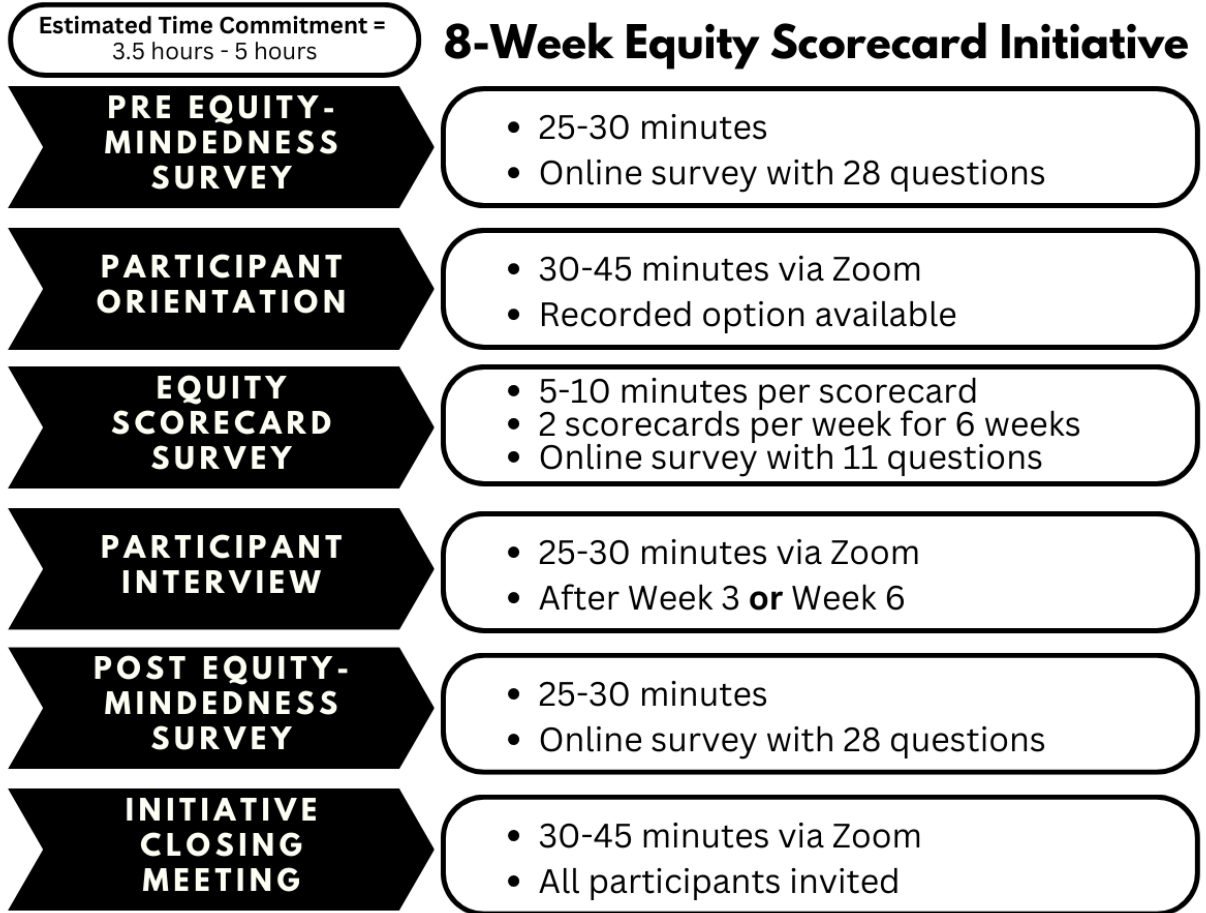
## AN EQUITY-MINDED APPROACH

Element	Modification(s)	Rationale	Impact
Pre & Post Equity-Mindedness Surveys	Reworded the open-response question	Encourage reflection on participant experience instead of institutional context	- More personalized reflections
Interview Protocol	Removed some questions	Reduce redundancy and decrease interview burden on participants	- Increased opportunity for follow-up questions - Greater variety in answers provided
Email Templates	Changed wording and content	Improved readability and response rates	- Increased professionalism - Clearer messaging - Higher response rates
Orientation Presentation	Added a slide with additional “helpful reminders”	Encourage participants to make completion an intentional process	- Opportunity to discuss the importance of intentionality during the initiative
Closing Meeting Presentation	Modified questions posed to participants	Reduce redundancy and expand the scope of the conversation	- More engaging discussion
Meeting Dates	Set dates and times in advance	Manage participant expectation	- Higher attendance rates - Fewer schedule conflicts - Clearer messaging

Appendix P

*Equity Scorecard Initiative Recruitment Graphics*





## Appendix Q

*Bank of Equitable Service Delivery Practices*

Practice	Description
Provide a Personal Hand-Off	Personally connect the student with a colleague who can assist with identified student needs
Know the Names	Intentionally learn the names of all of the family/friends who accompany students to appointments as a sign of care and respect.
Ask, Don't Assume	Be intentional about asking each student about their goals and interests. Don't assume that because they selected a certain major that means it aligns with their true aspirations.
Dig In	Incorporate questions that dig into the students' situation and well-being and offer the opportunity to connect students with the appropriate services and resources.
Demonstrate Genuine Interest	Identify and respond to personal information a student shares in a way that is authentic and sincere (not scripted). Get excited about what gets them excited.
Make Time for Bonding	Schedule appointments to allow time for critical chats. Start off meetings by taking time to check on them and ask the student how they are doing (in life). Listen to what they have to say to make connections and discover clues to guide the next steps.
Greet and Smile	Simple acts like saying hello or offering a smile can have an impact on a student's experience and can set the stage for future engagement, including seeking assistance when needed.
Practice Playback	Demonstrate active listening by repeating back what students say. This shows you were listening and offers the opportunity for the student to correct any misunderstandings before proceeding with service delivery.
Notice the Nonverbals	Be mindful of nonverbal communication, such as tone and facial expressions, that convey critical messages to students that support or undermine equitable service delivery efforts.

*Note.* These practices derive from participant survey and interview data in PDSA 1 and PDSA 2.

## Appendix R

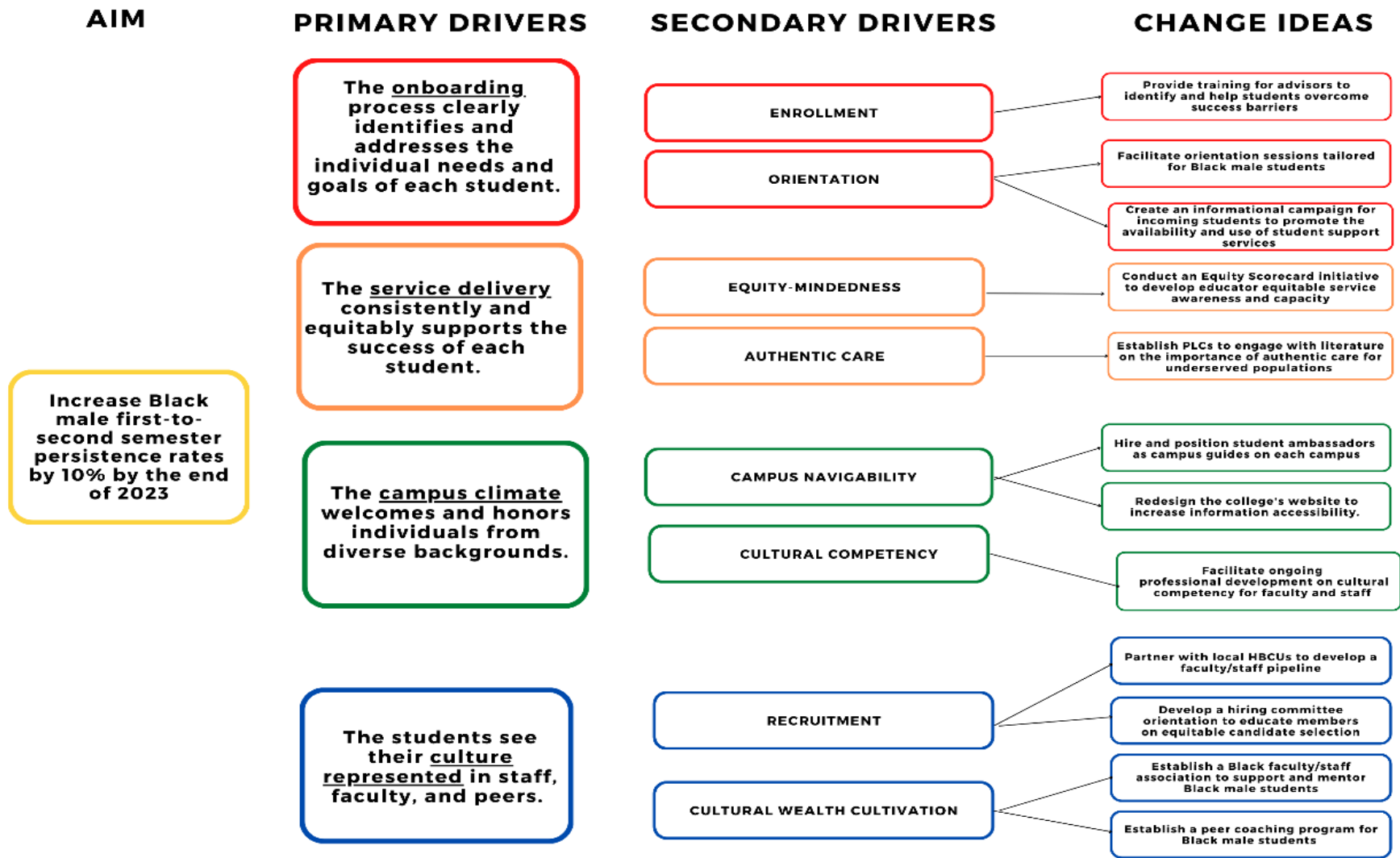
*Equity Scorecard Initiative Mitigation Strategies*

Barrier	Strategy
Slow Recruitment/Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage connections with campus colleagues and confirmed participants for additional insights and referrals to prospective participants.</li> <li>• Provide recruitment materials that clearly explain participation (time) requirements.</li> <li>• Work with supervisors to identify windows of availability for implementation.</li> <li>• Expand circle of prospects to include additional departments with critical service functions.</li> <li>• Leverage status as doctoral candidate to secure support from fellow educators.</li> </ul>
Low Equity Scorecard Completion Rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give positive reinforcement for participants who encourage and remind their colleagues about completing their Equity Scorecard surveys.</li> <li>• Offer direct encouragement for participants who voluntarily admit to having difficulties completing the Equity Scorecard surveys as prescribed.</li> <li>• Leverage campus presence and daily interactions to informally remind participants about the initiative.</li> <li>• Send out scheduled email reminders to participants.</li> </ul>
Self-Report Rating Reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate a combination of measures to collect data on equity-mindedness (ratings, interviews, open-response questions, etc.)</li> <li>• Use the participant orientation as an opportunity to highlight the importance of rating honestly.</li> <li>• Consider selecting a more granular scale that provides more rating options.</li> </ul>
Pushback/Hesitancy on Equity Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify institutional allies and leverage partnerships to launch the initiative.</li> <li>• Start small with an eye on future replication and scaling</li> <li>• Highlight the potential benefits to all student groups</li> </ul>

*Note.* These strategies were used by the researcher to overcome the two challenges and barriers presented during the implementation of this Equity Scorecard initiative.

Appendix S

Driver Diagram of Black Male Student Persistence at FCCC





Appendix T

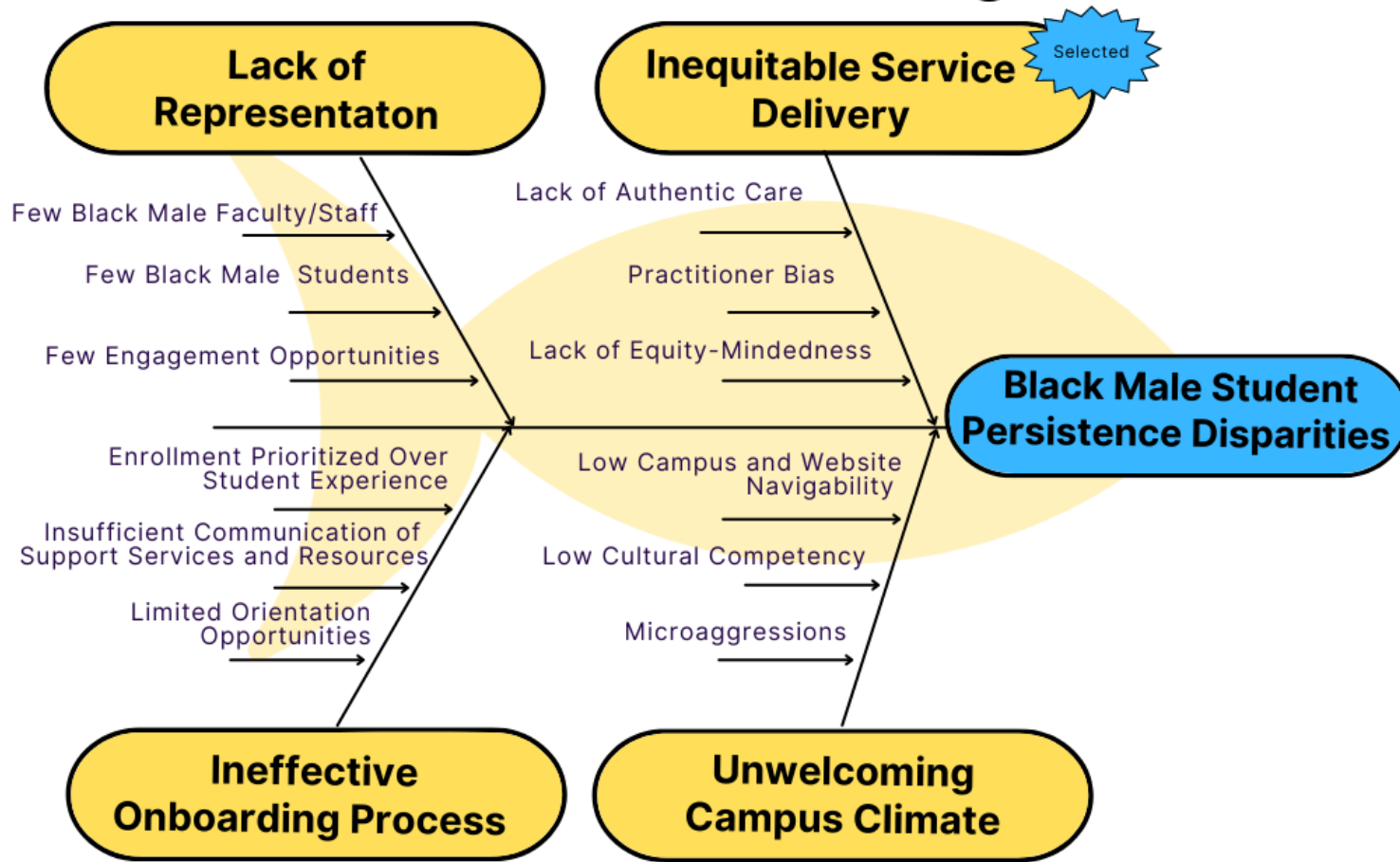
*Data Collection and Analysis Overview*

Data Collection & Analysis Overview			
Data Instrument	Stakeholder / Collection Timeframe / Purpose	Practical Measure	Analysis Method
Equity Scorecard Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FCCC Full-Time Student Support Staff Members</li> <li>March – May &amp; September – October 2023</li> <li>Self-Assessment of equity-mindedness, service delivery, and reflective practice</li> </ul>	Driver Measure	Mixed Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial</li> <li>In Vivo</li> <li>Focused</li> <li>Trend Analysis</li> </ul>
Student Satisfaction Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FCCC Students</li> <li>April – October 2023</li> <li>Student feedback on service delivery</li> </ul>	Driver Measure	Mixed Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial</li> <li>In Vivo</li> <li>Focused</li> <li>Descriptive Statistics</li> </ul>
Fidelity Checklist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Graduate Researcher</li> <li>September – October 2023</li> <li>Frequency of Equity Scorecard completion</li> </ul>	Process Measure	Quantitative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Descriptive Statistics</li> </ul>
Semi-Structured Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FCCC Full-Time Student Support Staff Members</li> <li>April/May &amp; October 2023</li> <li>Evidence of equity-mindedness, service delivery, and reflective practice</li> </ul>	Process Measure	Qualitative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial</li> <li>In Vivo</li> <li>Focused</li> </ul>
Equity-Mindedness Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FCCC Full-Time Student Support Staff Members</li> <li>March/May &amp; September/October 2023</li> <li>Growth in equity-mindedness, service delivery, and reflective practice</li> </ul>	Outcome Measure	Mixed Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial</li> <li>In Vivo</li> <li>Focused</li> <li>Descriptive Statistics</li> <li>T-Test</li> </ul>
Black Male Persistence Rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FCCC Black Male Students</li> <li>Spring 2023 &amp; Fall 2023</li> <li>First-to-second semester persistence rates</li> </ul>	Outcome Measure	Quantitative Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Descriptive Statistics</li> </ul>
Black Female Persistence Rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FCCC Black Female Students</li> <li>Spring 2023 &amp; Fall 2023</li> <li>First-to-second semester persistence rates</li> </ul>	Balance Measure	Quantitative Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Descriptive Statistics</li> </ul>

Appendix U

*Fishbone (Ishikawa) Diagram*

# Black Male Student Persistence Fishbone (Ishikawa) Diagram



**Appendix V**

*Persistence Data Visualizations*

