

Summary of UE Student Success Series

The True Instrument is You: The Personal Act of Teaching and the Collective Need for Equitable Learning

Presenter: Dr. Richard Edwards, Executive Director XCITE

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On Thursday, January 25, 2024, the Division of Undergraduate Education hosted its third UE Speaker Series on Student Success, focusing on the pivotal role of educators in shaping equitable learning environments in Undergraduate Education. Led by Executive Director of XCITE, Richard Edwards, the UE Speaker Series topic was titled “The True Instrument is You: The Personal Act of Teaching and the Collective Need for Equitable Learning.” Attendees were provided with the opportunity to learn, dialogue, and collaborate with colleagues on equitable learning and student success for UCR’s undergraduate students.

During their breakout group discussions, UE staff explored ideas and engaged in insightful conversations regarding their personal reflections on identity, positionality, and background within the scope of their equity-minded efforts on campus. Additionally, they examined how these reflections and insights have directed their individual initiatives in advocating for equitable learning and promoting inclusive practices on campus. They are the following:

- Foster empathy with students from disadvantaged backgrounds such as DACA/Undocumented students;
- Increase access to comprehensive information/resources (e.g. courses, placement exams, online courses);
- Offer varied approaches; and,
- Implement boundaries.

To implement this framework of support, there needs to be concrete strategies to facilitate greater faculty and campus stakeholder involvement in collective efforts around equity, inclusion and teaching and Undergraduate Education. Participant feedback for faculty included:

- Student nominations/endorsements for faculty/staff;
- Tie student feedback to merits, promotions, and grant opportunities for faculty;
- Enrich collective knowledge and contribute to a cultural shift -> embed professional development into department meetings;
- Senior level leader endorsement/support;
- Implement motivation with recognition through ADT awards; and,
- Encourage intrinsic motivation.

In terms of supporting collective inclusive teaching and equitable learning goals, a multifaceted approach was recommended for new or existing strategies or initiatives from the campus community in alignment with the UCR 2030 Strategic Plan. Strategies include:

- Furthering research on equitable learning to ensure all students receive the beneficial impacts of a supportive and equitable learning environment;
- Strengthening community building between staff and faculty (e.g. community-building activities and more committees with both stakeholder groups);
- Address this at the Academic Advising Town Hall annual event in order to share successful initiatives and discuss challenges;
- Put emphasis on these topics during the recruitment process to attract individuals who value diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- Educating one another using our lived experiences; and,
- Highlighting the expansion of R'Courses.

Ultimately, the collective recommendations outlined above offer a comprehensive strategy for advancing inclusive teaching and equitable learning at UCR. The collective responses underscored a shared commitment to further undergraduate student success. By implementing these strategies, UCR can propel itself towards a future where equity and inclusivity are integral components of its educational mission.