

RP Conference 2026

Embracing the
Messy Work of
Equity & Change
Together



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Breakout Session 1

Wednesday, April 15
11:30 am–12:30 pm

“I Hate Surveys”: Practical Tips for Managing Surveys and Sharing Results

Strand: Research in Action

Room: Royal A

Survey work is often messy, but it remains one of the most important ways colleges hear directly from students, staff, and faculty. In this session, we'll share how our institutional research office has learned to work with, rather than fight against, that messiness. We'll give an overview of the routine surveys we run each year and how they are built into ongoing cycles that support participatory governance and institutional effectiveness. We'll also discuss our survey workflows, including the use of dashboards, disaggregated results, and automated processes that help us turn results around quickly.

In addition, we'll highlight practical strategies such as clear privacy levels, thoughtful redaction, and approaches for sharing survey feedback with Student Services and faculty—using our Student Drop Survey as an example. Participants will leave with ideas for making survey work more sustainable, more transparent, and more actionable on their own campuses.

Presenters: Kyle Crider, Leslie Flaming, and Alvir Sangha, West Hills Community College District

The Messy Work of Writing Support: What We Got Right, What We Got Wrong, and What We Learned

Strand: Planning for Change

Room: Terrace ABC

This session shares the ever-evolving, iterative work behind evaluating Writing Center support at Bakersfield College—what we got right, what we got wrong, and what we learned. Using multi-term transfer-level English and EMLS data, we found that students who engaged with Writing Center-aligned supports, including the noncredit

ACDV B86NC course, showed significantly higher success and retention rates compared to peers who did not. At the same time, our analyses revealed meaningful equity gaps in who accesses support and why. To better understand these patterns, we developed a new Writing Center Engagement & Access Survey designed to surface structural, motivational, and logistical barriers.

Through Mentimeter-driven audience predictions and guided data reveals, participants will compare their assumptions to real outcomes and explore a replicable IRPE model that integrates institutional data, student voice, and practitioner insight to drive more equitable redesign of academic support programs.

Presenters: Kimberly Arbolante, Sooyeon Kim, Lysander Ramos, Susan Vicuna, and Tiffany Wong, Bakersfield College

College Enrollment Decisions and Trajectories Among Community College Applicants

Strand: Research in Action

Room: Terrace DEF

This session examines how applicants to Las Positas College make enrollment decisions by integrating large-scale quantitative data with interviews from students and prospective students. The project analyzes how demographic, educational, and socioeconomic-related variables from admission applications are associated with actual enrollment outcomes—including enrolling at a community college, enrolling at a four-year institution, or not enrolling in higher education. The qualitative findings complement these patterns by revealing how applicants' knowledge, perceptions, and access to resources shape their choices and contribute to points of disengagement in the enrollment process. Together, these insights highlight structural barriers such as unclear communication, limited advising access, financial and logistical constraints, and complex registration processes.

Attendees will gain equity-focused, data-informed strategies to improve enrollment yield and better support the diverse needs of prospective community college students, along with a replicable framework for analyzing applicant journeys and designing interventions that advance equitable access across institutions.

Presenter: Rajinder Samra, Las Positas College

From Imperfect Data to Equitable Insights: Using Propensity Score Matching to Understand Corequisite Impact

Strand: Research in Action

Room: Harbor

Corequisite remediation—enrolling students directly in college-level courses with concurrent support—has expanded rapidly as a strategy to accelerate progress and reduce attrition. Evaluating these models is challenging because students are not randomly assigned, and prior Multiple Measures Assessment Project analyses show mixed results in one-year completion, while more academically prepared students disproportionately enroll in corequisites. These patterns raise concerns about targeting, equity, and the real-world effectiveness of corequisite implementation under AB 705, where placement tests have been eliminated and colleges use varied local practices.

In the spirit of Embracing the Messy Work of Equity & Change Together, this study acknowledges the imperfect conditions IRPE professionals must navigate to produce actionable, equity-centered evidence. We use Propensity Score Matching (PSM) to construct a matched comparison group based on academic preparation, demographics, and high school performance, reducing selection bias and providing more credible estimates of whether corequisite models are improving outcomes for students the reform aims to support.

Presenters: Kevin Hsu, Irvine Valley College; Lauren Ilano, The RP Group

Diet Equity: The Great Taste of Equity, Without Systemic Change

Strand: Real Talk

Room: Pacific

Colleges consistently express a strong commitment to equity. Yet, despite these public declarations, Black students continue to experience racialized harm and lagging success measures. Too often, equity becomes “diet equity,” where institutions adopt the language of equity without changing the practices. This session explores how community colleges must shift away from a junior college mindset rooted in content-centered teaching that lacks cultural relevance, toward the true community college mission of support, access, and transformation.

Breakout Session 2

Wednesday, April 15
2:00–3:00 pm

Participants will examine how the educational trauma that Black students carry into college must inform the design of instruction and student supports. IRPE professionals will learn how to reframe equity conversations to challenge deficit perspectives and hold institutions accountable for change. Ultimately, Black student success reveals whether equity is real or simply a public message. A system designed to support those most harmed by its default settings becomes a system that works for everyone.

Presenter: Marcell Gilmore, Mt. San Antonio College

Weekend Update for Higher Ed: IRPE News You Can Actually Use

Strand: Real Talk

Room: Royal A

This presentation uses a creative SNL Weekend Update format to demonstrate how coordinated data, planning, facilitation, evaluation, and data storytelling strengthen institutional initiatives and advance equitable student outcomes. As co-anchors, Aeron Zentner and Erik Cooper deliver fast-paced “news segments” that highlight how colleges can navigate the messy work of equity and change by grounding decisions in clear, accessible, and culturally responsive evidence.

Through humorous yet practical examples, the session illustrates how disaggregated data surfaces equity gaps, how intentional planning structures support cross-functional alignment, and how ongoing evaluation ensures initiatives remain effective and student-centered. Participants will gain replicable strategies to humanize data, elevate diverse student experiences, and communicate findings in ways that foster collaboration. The session reframes IRPE work as a vital, engaging, and collaborative force that empowers institutions to design meaningful interventions, improve accountability, and drive continuous improvement across student success efforts.

Presenters: Aeron Zentner, Coastline Community College; Erik Cooper, WestEd

Equity Data – Now in 2D! Framework Unlocks Shared Vocabulary to Improve Equity Analysis & Comprehension

Strand: Research in Action

Room: Terrace ABC

Equity data just got its long-awaited sequel, a second axis. Find out how practitioners created and then built upon the Longitudinal Equity Evaluation Framework (LEEF) model by harnessing an innovative data approach, branded dashboard, and coalition building. This empowered East Los Angeles College to engage more strategically during equity conversations. LEEF simplifies longitudinal equity data so that anyone can analyze the gaps in their desired outcomes; beyond that, LEEF suggests broad, actionable steps based on the uncovered patterns. In this session, you will learn best practices on how to incorporate LEEF at your campus. You will then get hands-on with mock data to analyze and make your own strategic recommendations.

Presenter: Josh Summers, East Los Angeles College

The Work of Implementing an Equity Plan at Scale

Strand: Real Talk

Room: Terrace DEF

Imagine you have an equity plan, created and championed by your college constituents. The plan identifies the most troubling and compelling inequities at the college. Now what? Given these conditions, Foothill College decided to implement our Strategic Vision for Equity at scale. We used a collective impact approach to create coordinated efforts with decentralized control. In this session, we will share processes and project components that facilitated institutional efforts. We will also share our experiences with some of the messier aspects of doing equity work at scale. Specifically, we'll address how Foothill balanced the roles of research and planning; our tools for fostering ownership of outcomes; and the unexpected residuals of our project.

Presenters: Liz Leiserson and Chris Yang, Foothill College

OC–Works in Action: Turning Messy Regional Labor Data Into Equitable Student–Centered Insights

Strand: Research in Action

Room: Terrace DEF

OC-Works is a regional, equity-centered workforce analytics project co-created by IRPE professionals across Orange County. This session demonstrates how colleges transformed messy, inconsistent labor-market data into intuitive dashboards that support equitable program alignment, employer engagement, and student-centered planning. Participants will explore OC-Works tools—including the Living Wage Calculator, Skills Explorer, and Employer Map—while learning how counselors and students used them in practice. The presentation highlights collaborative lessons learned, EDIA-driven storytelling strategies, and replicable methods for cross-college dashboard development. Attendees will leave with practical approaches for turning complex workforce data into actionable insights that advance economic mobility and strengthen regional IRPE collaboration.

Presenters: Stephanie Feger, Coast Community College District; C.J. Bishop, Golden West College

Miles to Go: Addressing the Unique Challenges of Rural Transfer Students

Strand: Research in Action

Room: Harbor

Community colleges serve as vital access points to higher education, particularly for students in rural areas. Yet, significant disparities in transfer rates persist, hindering economic mobility and income equality—especially for historically marginalized populations. This session builds on our ongoing rural transfer research, sharing findings from recent qualitative data collected through interviews and focus groups with rural staff and learners, as well as results from a survey conducted among both rural and non-rural students. We discuss specific barriers, promising practices, and how policy can evolve to create more equitable transfer pathways for rural learners.

Presenters: Katie Brohawn, Alyssa Nguyen, and Daisy Segovia, The RP Group

Breakout Session 3

Wednesday, April 15
3:30–4:30 pm

Reimagining Outreach Through Race- Conscious Inquiry: How SMC Used Data Coaching to Understand and Address Equity Gaps in Successful Enrollment for Black/African American Students

Strand: Research in Action

Room: Pacific

The Data Coaching Program at Santa Monica College (SMC) brought together Outreach, Marketing, and Institutional Research to investigate why Black/African American applicants enrolled at disproportionately low rates. Through a yearlong, practitioner-led, race-conscious inquiry process, the cohort examined disaggregated data, conducted interviews with high school counselors, and surfaced systemic factors—mistrust of higher education, limited belonging, and institutional messaging—that shaped students' enrollment decisions. This “messy,” human-centered approach transformed understanding of the equity gap and directly informed the 2025–2028 Student Equity Plan's Successful Enrollment strategies.

This session shares how SMC redistributed data power, built practitioner capacity, and translated inquiry findings into race-conscious redesign of outreach and onboarding practices. Participants will engage in interactive activities and hear from cohort members about how the experience changed their relationship to equity data and their ability to act on it.

Presenters: Silvana Carrion-Palomares, Glendal Community College; Rebecca Agonafir, Sherri Bradford, Jose Hernandez, and Hannah Lawler, Santa Monica College

How to Quiet the Continuous Cycle of Complaints to Amplify a Continuous Cycle of Improvement

Strand: Research in Action

Room: Royal A

California community colleges are grappling with the full implementation of AB 1705 and how to approach closing disproportionate impact gaps in transfer-level math. Golden West College has developed a high functioning Community of Practice (CoP) centered on minimizing those gaps in enrollment and success. In this session, participants will examine potential structures for CoPs and initiate an institution-specific plan for replicating these efforts. We will share strategies for leveraging resources to support a CoP and outline how we established a culture of inquiry and facilitated data-informed enhancements to classroom instruction, student services supports, and campus culture.

We will focus on helping IRPE professionals manage setbacks, establish complementary relationships with campus partners, and facilitate challenging conversations with the goal of identifying and dismantling barriers and executing informed actions. Participants will also discover techniques for using the continuous cycle of improvement as an inclusive framework for their own CoPs.

Presenters: Erin Craig, Jeannette Jaramillo, Sacha Moore, and Lauren Sosenko, Golden West College

Making Meaning and Change Together: A Collaborative Approach to Strategic Plan Implementation

Strand: Planning for Change

Room: Terrace ABC

Join the San Diego Community College District (SDCCD) Institutional Innovation and Effectiveness District Strategic Planning team to learn how our newly minted division is transforming the process of strategic plan implementation to better facilitate equitable change within the strategic planning committee and the district by opening up the process of implementation to be more collaborative.

The team is using National Equity Project facilitation strategies and qualitative methods to co-create The SDCCD Roadmap to Implementation, understand the progress of aligned activities supporting the creation of a strategic planning dashboard, and unpack the ways in which colleagues make meaning (or do not make meaning) of the plan itself to guide improvement in future planning cycles. This process is catalyzing an ongoing culture shift, where humanized and equity-minded strategies for facilitating change create the very conditions in which the equity-focused goals of the plan can actually be achieved.

Presenters: Natalia Córdoba-Velásquez Alarcón and Jaime Sykes, San Diego Community College District

Transforming Mindsets: Using Adult Learner Research to Drive Belonging and Retention

Strand: Research in Action

Room: Terrace DEF

Adult learners—students aged 25 and older who balance work, caregiving, and other responsibilities—make up nearly half of our regional community college population, yet their needs often fall outside traditional academic structures. This session shares findings from the San Diego & Imperial Community Colleges' Adult Learner Study, which gathered insights from more than 600 students to better understand the personal, structural, and systemic barriers they face.

The presentation highlights how IRPE teams across 10 colleges partnered with the San Diego & Imperial Center of Excellence to identify adult learners, design an inclusive survey instrument, analyze results, and facilitate conversations about campuswide redesign. Participants will explore key findings on scheduling, re-enrollment, and access to support services, and will gain practical strategies for informing institutional change.

Presenter: Tina Ngo Bartel, San Diego & Imperial Center of Excellence

You Can't Count If You're Not Counted: Inclusive Data to Drive Black Student Success

Strand: Research in Action

Room: Harbor

Existing data collection often limits or excludes students who identify with more than one race or ethnicity, leading to the undercounting of African American/Black students. This session calls for a culture change in how race is counted, emphasizing that "You Can't Count If You're Not Counted." More inclusive identification methods, such as allowing students to "check all that apply" and reporting all selections, lead to more accurate data and a better understanding of African American/Black students.

We will present evidence from studies, including The RP Group's African American Transfer Tipping Point Study, which demonstrates that this inclusive method increased the identified population by 73%. These more comprehensive data are crucial for IRPE professionals to inform equity-focused policies and effectively allocate resources to drive student success.

Presenters: Temperence Dowdle, Cypress College; Lisa DiDonato and Marcell Gilmore, Mt. San Antonio College; Jeremy Smotherman, Santa Rosa Junior College; Darla Cooper, The RP Group

Creative Sessions Showcase

Wednesday, April 15
4:45–5:15 pm

Changing Composition Together: Addressing Equity Gaps Through Student Data and Faculty–Driven Vulnerability

Strand: Research in Action

Room: Pacific

This session shares the story of a faculty–IR collaboration that embraced the vulnerability and complexity of equity-minded change. Using multi-term, disaggregated ENGL C101 data, IR facilitated a confidential and supportive data-reflection space that revealed disproportionate outcomes for several student groups. Together, we moved through reaction, meaning-making, and action planning to redesign pedagogy, grading practices, and course materials with measurable improvements.

The project demonstrates how IR can create trust-based, relational spaces that turn uncomfortable data into equitable instructional change. Participants will leave with templates for running their own equity-minded data dialogues and practical techniques for building safe, humanizing partnerships between IRPE offices and faculty. This presentation aligns with the conference theme by modeling what it means to embrace the messy work of equity and change together.

Presenters: Jaclyn Kessler and Debilyn Kinzler, Cerro Coso Community College

Are You Really a Two–Year College? Diving Into Completability Data

What does it take to determine if a two-year degree is completable in two years? Our session walks participants through the steps we took to answer this question and create public-facing tools for deans and faculty to schedule courses more effectively and reduce uncertainty and other barriers to degree completion.

These steps included: (1) cleaning our “program of study” data; (2) checking the core and elective courses required

for each degree; (3) creating a “Course Availability Pattern” and publishing that in the catalog; and (4) creating a dashboard based on two years of course offerings to determine if a degree is completable or not. We will discuss how each of these things happen (or don’t) at our own campuses. We will then demo our dashboard completable tool and invite others to try it, ask questions, and brainstorm the steps they might take to facilitate similar efforts at their college.

Presenter: Adam Lange, Alcove Insights; Alex Claxton, Cañada College

AVANZA: An RCT-Based Intervention to Increase Persistence for Hispanic/Latine First-Time College Students

The AVANZA project at Irvine Valley College demonstrates how IRPE can transform data into an evolving student-centered intervention that attempts to address persistence-related equity gaps. Once equity gaps in persistence for Hispanic/Latine students were identified, a randomized call-center outreach, developed with student-centered intentions, unfortunately showed no promising results.

This led our IRPE office and other departments to collaborate and redesign the intervention into what later became AVANZA, a proactive model that integrates basic needs support, academic navigation, and timely outreach through a coordinated triage network spanning EOPS, DSPS, Counseling, ASIVC, Health and Wellness, Food Center (The Spot), and the Veterans Center. Although no increase in persistence was observed, we noticed a high utilization of priority registration among students in the treatment group. The session will share early lessons learned, while inviting participants to exchange approaches from their own institutions and brainstorm refinements that could strengthen the AVANZA project.

Presenters: Joshua Rhee, Irvine Valley College

Data Literacy in Action: Turning Educational Master Plan Goals Into Monitorable Metrics

Cerritos College is strengthening campuswide data literacy by positioning the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, Planning, and Grants (IERPG) as a continuous improvement partner during Educational Master Plan (EMP) development and implementation. IERPG built shared metric definitions, real-time dashboards, and recurring “data sensemaking” routines so leaders and teams can interpret evidence consistently and use it to monitor EMP priorities in real time.

This research-in-action session shares the steps IERPG used to scale evidence fluency beyond the research office: establishing common data language, aligning key indicators to EMP goals, and creating feedback loops from board/management to operational teams. Participants will gain adaptable strategies for building data literacy at scale, integrating meaningful metrics into EMP work, and sustaining a culture where data is understood, discussed, and used to support institutional effectiveness.

Presenters: Amber Hroch and Eden Ellis, Cerritos College

DataVista Essentials: Data on Demand Files and Structure

This session supports the conference theme, Embracing the Messy Work of Equity & Change Together, by helping practitioners engage with the deeper analytical work that drives equitable decision-making across California community colleges. While DataVista serves as the Chancellor's Office's longitudinal data system for monitoring outcomes across programs such as Vision 2030, SEA, and SWP, many equity questions cannot be answered through dashboards alone, particularly when working with data suppression or limited demographic markers. In response to demand, DataVista's enhanced data download function provides more flexible access to student-level information, creating new opportunities for detailed equity-focused analysis.

Presenters: Erik Cooper and Adriel Garcia, WestEd

Major Revelations: The Disciplinary Roots That Shape the IRPE Field and Can Inform Inclusive Recruitment

Although the trend is shifting, institutional research, planning, and effectiveness (IRPE) is still a career that rarely aligns with students' initial academic plans. Yet, IRPE offers a path that is both fiscally viable and empowering. As we build pipelines into the IRPE field, understanding where our talent comes from can reshape the way future professionals are recruited and hired.

This presentation centers around an analysis of IRPE academic disciplines (i.e., majors), with the goal of informing more inclusive recruitment and hiring strategies. Findings from an exploratory study are presented alongside results from The RP Group's Demographics Survey of CCC IRPE Professionals and educational journeys of current practitioners. We will share recruitment strategies to help colleges expand candidate pools by reducing bias tied to academic majors. This

knowledge can help practitioners transform the IRPE field to better reflect and elevate student voices and experiences.

Presenters: Rachel Miller, Palomar College; Darla Cooper, The RP Group

Measuring the Mess: A Monte Carlo Comparison of Disproportionate Impact Methods

California community colleges rely on quantitative metrics to identify disproportionate impact (DI), yet little is known about how these measures behave under the small sample sizes and uneven group proportions common in institutional data. This poster presents results from a Monte Carlo simulation study comparing commonly used DI measures—such as PPG-1 and the 80% rule—to established statistical approaches, including the two-proportion z-test, Fisher’s exact test, and unconditional exact tests (Barnard’s test with Berger–Boos and Boschloo corrections).

The analysis examines long-run Type I error rates and statistical power across 96 simulated conditions. Visual summaries highlight when different methods are more likely to over-identify disparities or fail to detect meaningful gaps. Embracing the “messy” work of equity means acknowledging that no single metric works well in all situations. Attendees are invited to engage in discussion around interpreting DI results, weighing tradeoffs between false positives and missed detections, and selecting methods that align with their data conditions and equity goals.

Presenters: James Clifton, MiraCosta College

Momentum for All: Early Results From the Summer Momentum Program at Hartnell College

Hartnell College launched its Summer Momentum Program in 2025 to increase access, reduce equity gaps, and strengthen academic momentum for all students. This session will introduce the origins of the Summer Momentum concept, describe how the idea was shaped into an actionable plan, and outline the responsibilities of the cross-functional taskforce that led the work. Presenters will share implementation challenges and how the institution adapted in real time.

Early results from summer 2025 show increased headcount, higher unit momentum, improved retention, and stronger persistence into fall. Participants will learn how IR provides ongoing data analysis, guided decision-making, and supported cross-department collaboration throughout the program design. This session offers practical strategies

for colleges seeking to build or refine summer interventions that support equitable momentum and student success.

Presenters: Ramon Serrano and Layheng Ting, Hartnell College

Reaching for the Laureate: Advancing Equity and Economic Mobility Through Community College Bachelor's Programs

California faces increasing demand for workers with baccalaureate degrees, yet degree production from state systems lags behind workforce needs. Authorized by SB 850 (2015) and expanded under AB 927 (2021), California's Community College Baccalaureate Degree Programs (CCBDPs) provide affordable bachelor's degrees in high-demand fields not served by CSU or UC systems.

This study combines policy analysis and program evaluation: (1) recommending strategies to expand degree attainment through the CCC system—such as automated dual admissions, enhanced transfer infrastructure, dual enrollment, credit for prior learning, and intensified student support—and (2) assessing CCBDPs' impact on equity and economic mobility. Using systemwide COMIS data linked with EDD wage records, we analyze enrollment, completion, and demographics of BDP participants, and labor market outcomes for BDP graduates compared to associate degree completers. Preliminary findings show that BDP graduates earn a significant wage premium, though returns vary by field, underscoring the need for targeted program expansion.

Presenters: Terrence Willett and Rujun Yang, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

Rehearsing Equity: Using a Custom GPT to Navigate Power, Politics, and Change

This interactive poster demonstrates how a custom GPT can serve as a confidential rehearsal space for equity-centered leadership communication in higher education. The tool is currently in a pilot phase, and attendees are invited to explore the concept, engage with examples, and offer feedback to help refine its design, guardrails, and practical applications.

Presenter: Viviana Unda, El Camino College

Thriving at Work, Thriving for Students: Research Findings on Workforce Sustainability

This session shares findings from a districtwide research study examining how employee working conditions influence institutional effectiveness and student success. Using a phenomenological, mixed-methods design, the project explored the lived experiences of staff, faculty, and managers to understand what helps them bring their best selves to work—and where inequities limit their capacity to support students. Themes of flexibility, belonging, and manageable workloads emerged as key drivers of a sustainable workforce. The session will highlight how IRPE professionals can translate qualitative insights and human-centered data into actionable strategies that strengthen the people who power student success. Attendees will gain practical tools for identifying small, unit-level changes that do not require new policies, but meaningfully improve the employee experience and the quality of service students receive.

Presenters: Emma Blackthorne and Kristin Rascon, Kern Community College District

Turning Systemwide Data Into Action: Understanding the Student Journey With the CCC Data Warehouse

The California Community Colleges Data Warehouse is a systemwide resource designed to strengthen research and planning through access to consistent, high-quality statewide data. This session introduces new capabilities that allow IRPE professionals to analyze student trajectories across colleges, including the Student Journey dataset and visualizations that reveal cross-institution enrollment, credit accumulation, and matriculation patterns. These tools provide systemwide data that afford individual colleges valuable insight.

Researchers will share how they leverage the CCC Data Warehouse, and how the Data Warehouse now supports their local dashboards and planning efforts by enabling data-delivery options that allow all colleges and districts to integrate valuable datasets directly into their local data warehouse and BI environments. Participants will gain a clear understanding of what the CCC Data Warehouse offers today, future roadmap plans informed by the IRPE community, and how researchers use the CCC Data Warehouse to support their research and planning.

Presenters: Julia Arreguy, Mark Cohen, and Jack Thompson, California Community Colleges Technology Center

Breakout Session 4

Thursday, April 16
10:00–11:00 am

What We Learned from DEI Student Focus Groups: Themes Around Equity

At Citrus College, the offices of IRPE, DEIA+, and Student Equity and Achievement partnered to conduct focus groups with disproportionately impacted student groups in spring 2024 and spring 2025. Beginning in fall 2025, the team initiated collegewide dissemination of the findings that revealed actionable strategies to ensure student success.

In this session, we will present the key outcomes and emerging themes from the focus groups, along with lessons learned about coordinating the sessions with an equity-minded approach, communicating the results, and implementing subsequent actions.

Presenters: Anthony Delgado and Ty Thomas, Citrus College

Saying the Quiet Part Out Loud: Centering Black People and Outcomes

Strand: Real Talk

Room: Royal A

Equity-focused data analysis requires more than reporting gaps. It requires deep reflection about how those gaps are created and why they persist. Building from Part 1, this session examines how IRPE professionals shape institutional truth through the analytical choices they make. Drawing from Lyndon B. Johnson's 1965 Howard University speech and Dr. William A. Smith's theory of Racial Battle Fatigue, participants will learn how historical and ongoing racism affects Black student success and why ignoring this context leads to harmful conclusions. The session challenges the myth of data neutrality and equips researchers with practical strategies for equitable inquiry and reporting. Participants will gain the tools necessary to shift institutional data storytelling away from deficit narratives and toward accountability and transformation. Black student outcomes become a mirror that reveals whether equity efforts are working or merely symbolic.

Presenter: Marcell Gilmore, Mt. San Antonio College

Redefining Progress: Estimating and Evaluating Time-to-Completion in Non-Traditional Educational Models

Strand: Research in Action

Room: Terrace ABC

Understanding how long students take to complete flexibly-paced, competency-based programs is essential to supporting learner success and understanding institutional patterns. However, traditional measures of time-to-completion offer little guidance for models without fixed terms, credit hours, or academic calendars.

As California's first statewide, fully online, and flexibly-paced community college, Calbright is developing new research approaches to identify and better understand the pacing patterns of the diverse population we serve. This session will share findings from an exploratory analysis for calculating and evaluating time-to-completion and discuss strategies for interpreting variation across student groups. We will also discuss how our findings inform program design, student support, and institutional effectiveness efforts. In this session, participants will leave with practical considerations for analyzing completion times in response to the shifting, often messy, virtual education landscape.

Presenters: Rebecca Poon and Logan Rowland, Calbright College

Tracking Change Together: Lessons From Lemoore's OERevolution and Data Journey

Strand: Research in Action

Room: Terrace DEF

This session explores Lemoore College's #OERevolution and the collaborative role of an Open Educational Resources (OER) librarian and IRPE professional in tracking and analyzing progress toward Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) adoption. Participants will learn how OER drives equity by reducing financial barriers, enabling culturally relevant teaching, and fostering student engagement.

This session will cover key data points such as cost savings, adoption rates, course success, and methodological considerations for defining ZTC students and improving data accuracy. Presenters will share lessons learned from a small, rural college, highlighting how organizational structures and technical systems both support and complicate this work. While IRPE professionals may not lead adoption, they play a critical role in assessment, transparency, and cross-departmental collaboration. Interactive polls and small-group discussions (cat memes included) will invite participants to reflect on their

own practices and explore strategies for visualizing OER data to inform decisions and advance equitable outcomes.

Presenters: Kelsey Smith, Lemoore; Leslie Flaming, West Hills Community College District College

From Compliance to Collaboration: Transforming the Perkins–Required Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) Into an Equity–Centered, Iterative Planning Process

Strand: Planning for Change

Room: Harbor

The Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) is a core requirement under Perkins V—one that informs each district’s local application, budget, and strategies for meeting State Determined Levels of Performance. Although the CLNA is intended to prioritize equity and close achievement gaps, colleges struggle to translate the statewide framework into meaningful, actionable local planning.

This session shares how San Diego Community College District redesigned the CLNA data tools to embrace the nonlinear, imperfect, and often uncomfortable realities of equity-driven institutional change. We highlight the challenges practitioners face when navigating overwhelming and inconsistent data sources and demonstrate how SDCCD addressed them through an equity-centered CLNA website and a collaborative, iterative design process. Participants will learn practical tools, communication strategies, and templates that make complex data accessible, strengthen trust with practitioners, and support more equitable CTE program improvement across campuses.

Presenter: Sunny Xu, San Diego Community College District

Strengthening CTE Insights Through Practitioner–Focused Embedded Research

Strand: Research in Action

Room: Harbor

Through the embedded researcher model funded by Strong Workforce, researchers at San Diego Community College District partnered directly with Career Education practitioners at San Diego Miramar College to better understand student persistence and award outcomes in Automotive,

Breakout Session 5

Thursday, April 16
11:30 am–12:30 pm

Diesel, and Aviation Technology. By working closely with the CTE deans, faculties, and counselors, we explored not only the data itself, but also the program structures, student circumstances, and practitioner insights that shape how students move through these pathways. By combining quantitative analysis with the lived knowledge of practitioners, we were able to create findings that are more accurate, more actionable, and more reflective of student realities. This session will share our approach, lessons learned, and how embedded research can support meaningful, student-centered change.

Presenter: Annie Li, San Diego Community College District

The RP Group and CAIR: Partnering in the Messy Work of Change in the IR Landscape

Strand: Planning for Change

Room: Pacific

The California Association for Institutional Research (CAIR) is a volunteer-run nonprofit that aims to create professional development opportunities and communities for institutional research, planning, and effectiveness professionals across all segments (e.g., CCC, UC, CSU, private colleges and universities) of higher education in California. Join members of the CAIR and RP boards, and Dr. Darla Cooper for an honest conversation about our vision for the emerging partnership between The RP Group and CAIR, and potential areas of mutually beneficial collaboration. Come provide your ideas and feedback for how we can best serve members of the IR community in California together!

Presenters: Kristin Rascon and Jaime Sykes, CAIR; Bri Hays, Cuyamaca College; Darla Cooper, The RP Group; Possibly RP Group Board member

Aligning SWP Projects to Vision–Aligned Reporting: A Framework for Equity–Driven Decision Intelligence

Strand: Planning for Change

Room: Royal A

California community colleges are entering a pivotal transition as Vision-Aligned Reporting (VAR) becomes the statewide framework for documenting program activities, services, and student impact. This session demonstrates how colleges can translate legacy Strong Workforce projects into the VAR structure to strengthen equity-centered evaluation and institutional effectiveness. Using a multi-year Allied Health case study (2016–2024), the presentation outlines a straightforward, replicable method for mapping activities to VR01–VR03 elements, addressing inconsistent historical labels, and improving data integrity in alignment with Vision 2030 goals.

The process and tools shared in this session can serve as a practical guide for aligning additional statewide initiatives and future projects to the VAR framework. Participants will gain insights into strategies that IRPE offices can use to enhance reporting accuracy, illuminate equity gaps, and strengthen data-driven decision-making without specialized technical exercises.

Presenters: Maricel Pedrals, Saddleback College; Denice Inciong and Nicole Ortega, South Orange County Community College District; Makuochukwu Nwabueze, Xelmetrics

Sankofa as Method: Reorienting Institutional Research Toward Memory, Accountability, and Archive–Building

Strand: Research in Action

Room: Terrace ABC

This session introduces the Sankofa Research Framework (SRF), a culturally grounded methodology that reframes institutional research as an intergenerational practice of memory, accountability, and archive-building. Developed at the Center for Policy and Research on Student Success at the Umoja Community Education Foundation, the session demonstrates how the four SRF stages—Return, Retrieve, Reinterpret, and Rebuild/Record—help IRPE practitioners confront inherited biases in data systems, recover omitted histories, integrate community interpretation, and design research products that serve as durable “artifacts of truth” in an era of misinformation.

Participants will learn how to apply SRF to reshape research questions, strengthen equity analyses, and construct accessible, contextualized archives that preserve institutional memory for future decision-makers. Through hands-on activities and dialogue, attendees will explore how Sankofa transforms research from technical reporting into a practice of collective witnessing and long-term stewardship of truth.

Presenters: Vernon Lindsay, Ahmed Naguib, and Myia Williams, Umoja Community Education Foundation

It Takes a Village to Earn CPL by Our Noncredit Credit by Exam Mechanism

Strand: Real Talk

Room: Terrace DEF

Credit by Exam, a type of Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) sounds like it should be a pretty straightforward opportunity. However, when it comes to practice, we saw quite the opposite. Despite having many active agreements (38+) from our noncredit college offerings, very few students (less than 5% of the 6,000+ enrollments) were eligible for credits. We will share lessons learned, the role of data as a guiding compass, and outline the commitment of five offices to improve the process over the past four years. But if you build it, will they come? Now that the process has improved and nearly 50% of enrollments are eligible, we are having the hard conversation that not all eligible students want to earn credits or are currently interested in transitioning to the credit colleges.

Presenters: Marc Grabiell and Hongling Yang, San Diego Community College District

Unlocking Opportunity: Rethinking Workforce Equity in Childhood Education

Strand: Research in Action

Room: Harbor

This session explores findings from the Center of Excellence's Childhood Education Opportunities report, which examines wage outcomes and long-term mobility for teaching assistants, preschool teachers, childcare workers, and self-enrichment instructors across the Bay Region. Despite many workers holding postsecondary degrees, these occupations offer low wages, limited mobility, and high exit rates. Using labor market data from Lightcast and Career Trajectories and Occupational Transitions (CTOT) data from the Department of Labor, the session identifies accessible lateral and next-level career pathways, both within education and in related fields, that align with workers' existing skills and require minimal to moderate training.

Participants will learn how this research can inform equity planning, program design, and advising, and how IRPE professionals can leverage data to advocate for sustainable, living wage career opportunities. The session demonstrates institutional research as a change agent, a tool for reimagining workforce systems, and a partner in improving long-term outcomes for students and workers.

Presenters: Liza Chavac and Marcela Reyes, Bay Region Center of Excellence

Facilitated Vision Aligned Reporting Working Session

Thursday, April 16
3:30–5:00 pm

Driving Equitable Change with Vision- Aligned Reporting Data

Join us for a showcase of key takeaways from the Chancellor's Office's inaugural Vision-Aligned Reporting (VAR) Academy, followed by a working session among peers focused on answering questions and sharing promising practices associated with VAR implementation. Dr. Giovanni Sosa from Crafton Hills College and Ruth Latendorf from the CCCCO will kick off the session by sharing what the initial statewide VAR data is showing regarding equity across the CCC system, and share how the VAR Academy and participating colleges are using VAR data to understand and address equity on their campuses. Participants will see how IRPE teams employ shared tools, cross-unit analysis, and structured inquiry exercises to turn required reporting into institutional learning that strengthens effectiveness and advances equitable outcomes. Together, these practices model how IRPE offices can lead the collaborative, iterative, and sometimes messy work of equity-driven transformation. At the conclusion of the presentation, participants will select from table topics focused on discussables such as:

- Collecting and reporting VAR data
- Setting definitions across campus
- Leveraging VAR data to eliminate equity gaps
- Strategies to braid efforts and reduce siloed reporting structures
- MIS reporting
- Data governance & working with IT

Facilitators: Ruth Latendorf, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office; Giovanni Sosa, Crafton Hills College