Daisy: Hi. Welcome back. This is Daisy Gonzales, deputy chancellor of the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. And you are joining us for part two of "Building a Data Culture for Student Success" with Dr. Sonya Christian and Dr. John Hetz [SP].

So, we often hear about data disaggregation. And I had a professor in college that would say, "Only data that is loved remains." And I wanna talk about data disaggregation because I think it's critical when we think about an equity agenda. But what I've seen happen is that it is often used as a request to delay conversations when we're presented with data that is challenging to accept. So, my question to the two of you is, what type of data, you know, disaggregated data, do we need to drive an equity agenda?

Dr. Christian: Well, I would say that equity needs to be front and center of everything we do. Whatever data metric we look at, we need to slice and dice that in disaggregated ways so that we can really understand what is happening. It is essential for making gaps in equity visible that we might not otherwise see.

So, an example I would give you from Bakersfield College, I spoke about the Nmap project and even though now, again, in the time of AB 705, it might seem like, "Oh, my gosh." You know, that was yesterday that that happened and now we're in a different world. I believe that the work of Nmap, which is a multiple measurements project really was the precursor to our understanding of the equity impact by placing students based on a single placement. So, at Bakersfield College, for example, when we disaggregated our data by ethnicity, we noticed that 72% of the students placed in two levels below transfer level English were our Latinx and African-American students, compared to 18%. So, 72%, two levels below.

And then when you turn around and you look at the success, if you were placed two levels below, it is extremely, extremely low. So, it's kind of a double jeopardy when you're looking at our African-American students and our Latinx students. And if you take those same students, for example, and other data snippet with GPA of less than 1.9%, if you place them directly into transfer level English, they had three times the chance of passing than they did if they were placed two levels below. So, this is a huge example that the disaggregation of a placement data brought to light something that was absolutely appalling and then galvanized change that needed to happen at BC. And I would say it galvanized change statewide to the implementation of policy changes in Sacramento.

At Bakersfield College, whether you're looking at our program review structure, it has embedded data slices to see performances of our Latinx

students, foster youth, African-American, low SES, etc. Our guided pathways momentum points dashboard allows the user to disaggregate by enrollment type, race, gender, education goal. And this truly empowers faculty within the program to be able to slice the data within the dashboard, and it makes the data accessible. And I feel that this level of resource in providing localized ability to disaggregate data is absolutely important for supporting a culture of inquiry that has equity as its focus. I also believe that the commitment to making this transparent and making this visible to the community within the college, to the community at large, it really creates pressure for us to perform at the college level at the program level, and it truly creates this sociology to advance performance.

Daisy: John, anything to add here?

John: I think one of the key things that Sonya flagged at the beginning that's really important here is making the invisible visible. And so, one of the challenges we have is that when we do not disaggregate or in our disaggregation are not being sufficiently sensitive to the variation within some of the groups that we actually miss some real equity gaps that are going on. A key focus for the system-wide data tools in the next year is going to be actually making some groups that in the past have been invisible more visible in that disaggregation. And so, we are moving forward with a much broader set of definitions of ethnicity that will allow us to look in a more granular level within subgroups of ethnicity, for example, and also to be able to better identify students who have different gender identities and different sexual orientations with a much greater degree of specificity than we have in the past.

And the importance of that is many of those groups may have had significant equity gaps in any of a variety of outcomes in our system, but we've not been able to see those and have not been able to address the types of supports that they may need to succeed. And so, one of the things we were trying to do is to make those invisible equity gaps visible so that as a system and as individual institutions, we can do a better job of supporting each and every one of our students in their opportunity to succeed in our system.

The challenge, of course, there's a couple of key challenges there. One is that on some of these we have to be very sensitive to the privacy of the students especially if the groups get small enough that we have to be careful about not representing their data in a way that someone would be able to tell who it is or would be able to track back the outcome to them. And that's an important challenge we continue to navigate.

But another challenge is we have to be able to do this in a way that allows people who are working with this data to be able to deal with the complexity of all the different identities that all of our different students bring. And so, one of the things we were gonna be working on is helping to flag where equity gaps may be existing so it's easier to see rather than having stakeholders have to look across all the different crosscutting categorizations that students may have to find which equity gaps they might see. We're gonna try and work harder to be able to make those more visible for stakeholders.

Daisy: Those are really great points, John. We are at our final question. And as I was listening to the two of you, three really big things came to mind. The first is this idea that we need to make data visible. So, yes, of course, data disaggregation, how we make it accessible, how we democratize data. The second one is this huge need in our system and across other segments for professional development and conversations. And then lastly, being extremely clear on what is our purpose, what are we using data for. So, if our goal is to use data and to collect data so that it becomes information, and that information leads to an insight, and that insight then drives an action, then we're staying true to having a culture that is student-centered, right? That is designed to make decisions that are meant for student success. From your experiences and as we close out this podcast, what advice do you have for college leaders who are using data to inform their actions to close achievement gaps?

Dr. Christian: Well, I would say three things. One, that college leaders, presidents, faculty leaders, deans, classified leaders, the achievement gap needs to be clear, and a goal needs to be set at an institutional level and at a program level. So, there shouldn't be ambiguity to what that goal is. So, by looking at what the gap is, there should be sort of an endpoint put in and everyone working towards that during that particular year. And it's that clarity of improvement the numbers that's going to drive the actions that are necessary. So, that's the first piece.

The second piece, again, for leaders maybe more on the administrative side is, to take bold actions to repurpose resources. I know often we feel really strapped for money, and yes, we need more money from Sacramento. The system here in California that, you know, doesn't get as much maybe as the other systems so I'm putting a plug for my other fellow presidents and we have the majority of our funding that we should consider repurposing it in this new way of doing our work. The new way of doing our work is getting students to the finish line — all of our students, not some of the students.

So, with that outcome defined, we need to shift the resources. That is administration 101 — how do we utilize resources including our people to

come up with different ways of doing the same work? And the final thing I would say that in addition to student data, a piece that has not been spotlighted is a curriculum data. Because the finish line of an associate's degree, for example, it's defined. It's made up of courses that lead up to that finish line which has 60 credits. If we on our college campuses don't organize it clearly for students to see the pathway and it's buried in cafeteria style in these catalogs that are very difficult to read, it will keep perpetuating what we have had in the past. And that is, at BC, to complete an associate's degree, a student would average 90 credits for an associate's degree.

So, organizing the curricular data with, for example, Program Mapper that shows the courses that are organized within the pathway clearly and making it pop for the students, particularly those students who live in a rural community, particularly our first generation students, when your student-counselor ration is 2,000:1, you're not going to be able to help all students one-on-one. So, using that high-tech strategy with high touch to be able to get those students, have a student ed plan that is effective and efficient, we need to organize a curriculum within the community colleges. I know about 30 community colleges are now using the Program Mapper.

And now, we need to think inter-segmentally. What about baccalaureate completion? Should we have the divide between the community college and then the transition to the university? How about providing a tool at the systems level where we could have the baccalaureate data organized like a roadmap by semester to baccalaureate completion. So, those would be my big points.

John: So, one of the keys for us as we move forward to try and encourage the use of data in a meaningful way at our colleges is to meaningfully engage the stakeholders at our colleges with data that makes sense to them. And so, finding ways to provide them with data that's clear, and most importantly, providing them with data that leads them to ask questions and giving them the space to work through those questions. Right? A lot of times, I think, when we are trying to encourage the use of data, we provide a lot of data to people to look at. But we don't do enough to encourage people to actively use data, to interrogate data, to play with data, to give them questions that engage their desire to search for information.

And so, if we can engage the stakeholders at our college in those types of questions where they become not the receivers of data but the users of data, then that leads us to develop a much more careful, thoughtful data culture at our colleges. And there are a variety of ways we can build that into our ongoing professional development, our flex days, college days. There are a few colleges elsewhere in the country that actually have specific days each semester that are

dedicated to data collection for part of the day for college purposes, and then data discussion for the other part of the day, to talk about things like what we learned at the last data collection day, but also what types of new things are we trying to understand with the information that we have.

And so, there are many things that we can do to support that, but really, ultimately, what we wanna do is engage all of the thoughtful people at our colleges to have them thinking about asking questions about our daily practice, our institutional practice so that they are users of data, not receivers of data.

Daisy: That is great, John and Sonya. I have heard a lot from the field in terms of how critical data and developing a data culture will be in the coming years. I think, as I've gone out on the road, I've heard chancellors talk about how they would like to design an entire day for their district to understand their data, how they track it back to their local goals, and how they set those aspirational goals that Sonya so eloquently talked about, where it's not just an aspirational goal for your college, but also your district as well as your specific programs that you're trying to design for your students.

So, with that, I'd like to close up our podcast for today. Thank you, Sonya. Thank you, John, for being here. And for our listeners, thank you for listening, and stay tuned for the next edition of the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office podcast.

Man: Be sure to join us for the next California Community Colleges podcast. This has been a California Community Colleges presentation.