About Us

Community College Research Center

CCRC has been a leader in the field of community college research and reform for over 25 years. Our work provides a foundation for innovations in policy and practice that help give every community college student the best chance of success.

Queensborough Community College

QCC, a campus of The City University of New York (CUNY), is one of the most diverse colleges in the country. In fall 2021 our student body identified as 31% Asian, 27% Black, 26% Latino, 14% White, and 2% Native American. These racial categories do not begin to capture the heterogeneity of each group. Queensborough proudly reflects the diversity of the Borough of Queens, with students representing 111 countries and speaking more than 60 languages.

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Objective

- Highlight **research-** and **practice-based** promising practices for supporting **Black, Latinx, and Limited-income** students **inside and outside of the classroom** that colleges engaging in reforms intended to improve outcomes among these groups of students may consider.

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Advising Redesign

Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS)

Degree Planning

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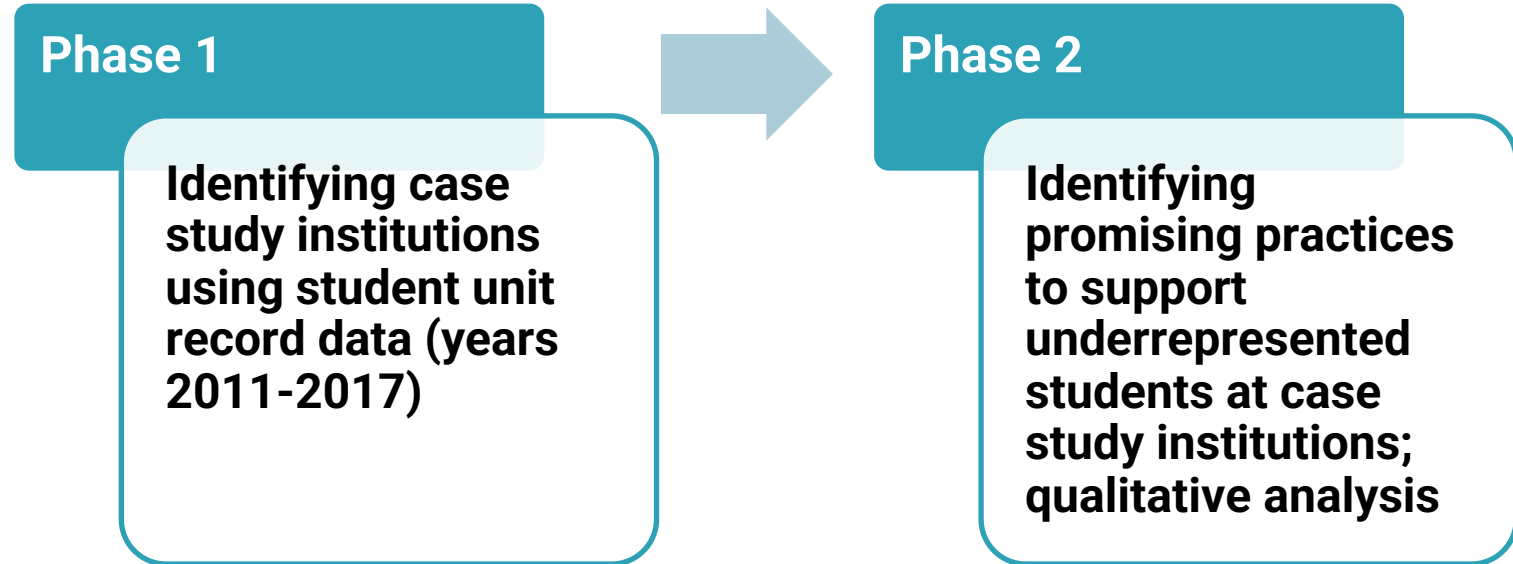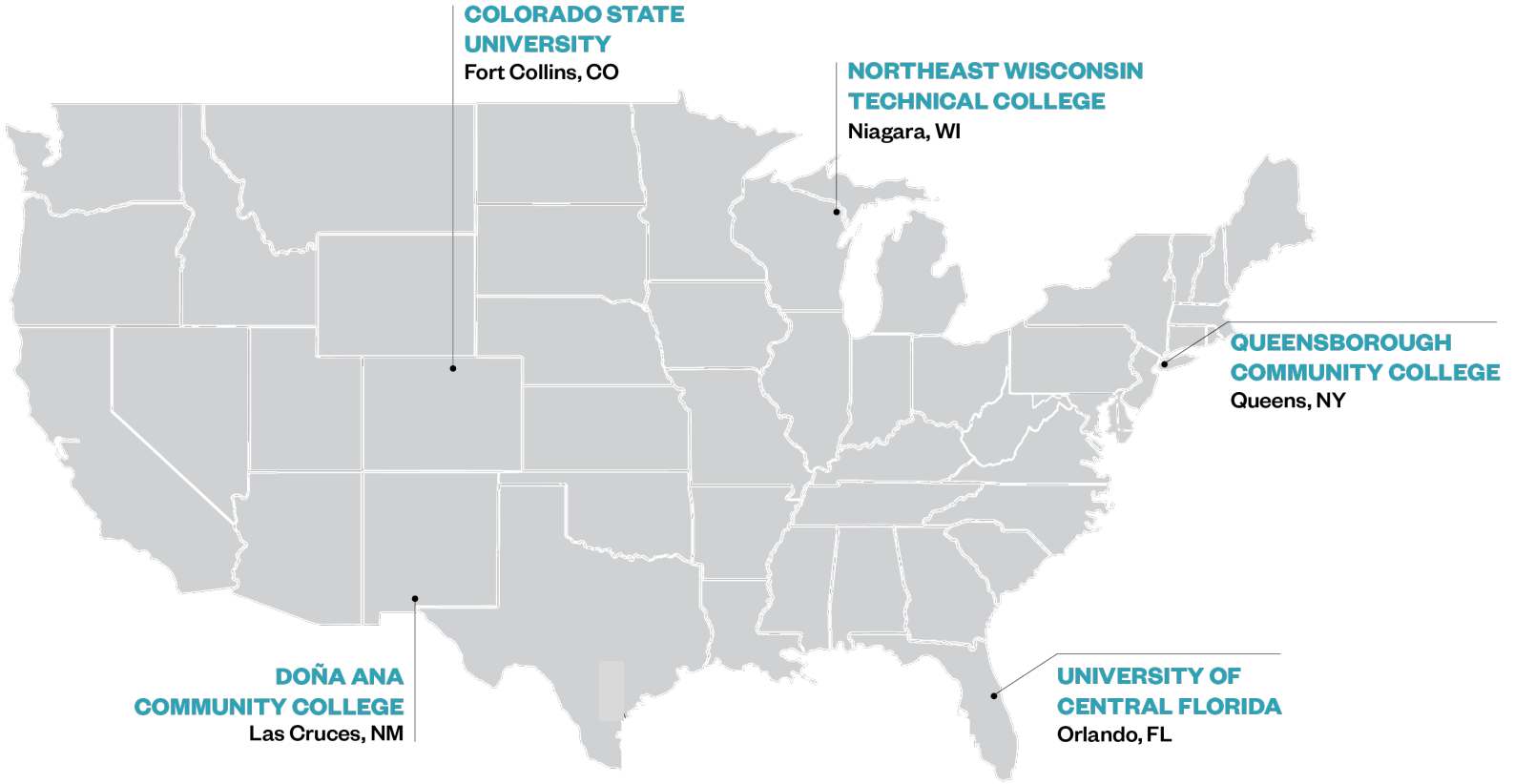Coaching & Advising

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Early Alerts & Risk Targeting
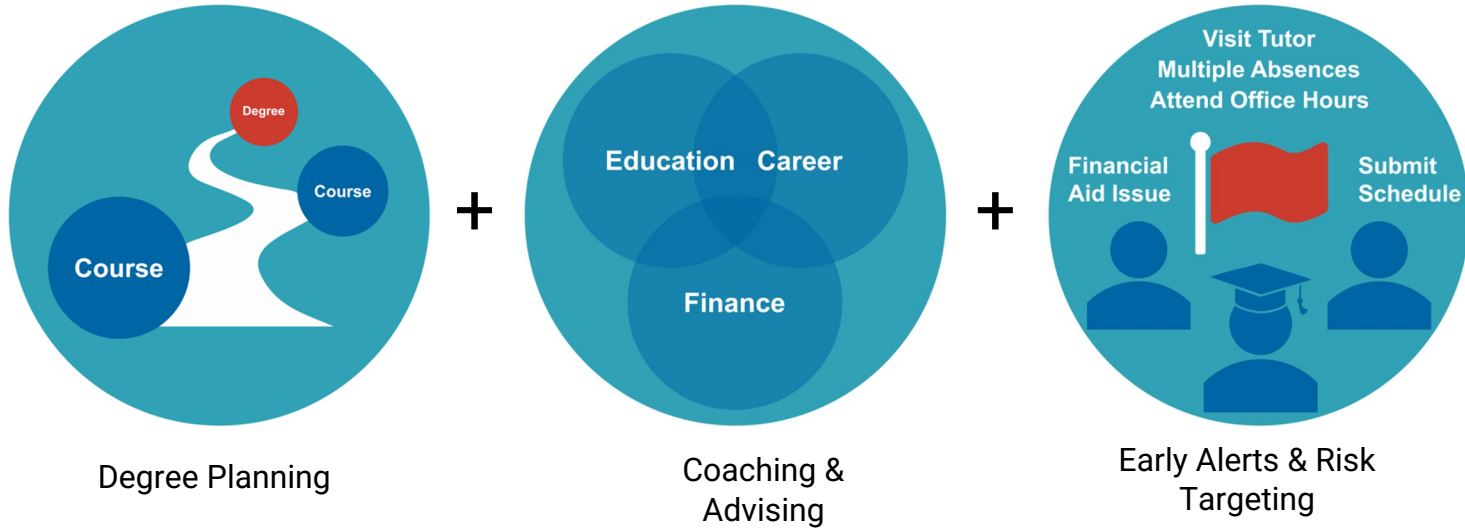
26 institutions were awarded iPASS grants to redesign advising in 2015

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Exploring the equity dimensions of iPASS reforms

- Previous iPASS research informed **evidence-based frameworks** for advising redesign using advising technologies (SSIPP; structural, process, and attitudinal dimensions of advising reform).

- The current project builds on these lessons by **exploring what practices, policies, and cultural changes contribute to more equitable outcomes**.

- **Black, Latinx, and Limited-Income students** face multiple barriers to the achievement of their postsecondary goals; good advising and student support programs can break down these barriers.

- **COVID-19 global pandemic, coupled with continued racial injustice**, have amplified the need for better understanding of best practices for supporting Black, Latinx, and Limited-income students in in-person and virtual contexts.

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Project Design

Phase 1

Identifying case study institutions using student unit record data (years 2011-2017)

Phase 2

Identifying promising practices to support underrepresented students at case study institutions; qualitative analysis

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COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
Fort Collins, CO

NORTHEAST WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE
Niagara, WI

QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Queens, NY

DOÑA ANA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Las Cruces, NM

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA
Orlando, FL

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Hurtado's Campus Racial Climate Model

- Data collection and analysis was informed by Hurtado's (2012) Multicontextual Model for Diverse Learning Environments.

- Hurtado's (2012) model identifies five institutional dimensions:
  - **Historical Dimension** (Legacy of Inclusion/Exclusion; Segregation)
  - **Compositional Dimension** (Staff and Student Composition)
  - **Organizational Dimension** (Structures and policies)
  - **Psychological Dimension** (Student Perceptions of Racial Climate)
  - **Behavioral Dimension** (Interactions between Different Identity Groups)

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Promising Practices

Student support practices
Classroom practices
Practices to improve racial climate
Management and organizational practices

Student Support Practices

To center equity, colleges worked to resolve biases in universal support structures and procedures.

- Colleges reconfigured support services to be more accessible to underrepresented students.
    - *Example*: CSU administrators had ongoing discussions to coordinate tutoring and career services with areas of the campus that students frequent such as residence halls and cultural centers.

- Colleges also redesigned policies identified as barriers to registration or progression, especially for underrepresented groups.
    - *Example*: By adjusting the dollar amount threshold that would trigger a financial hold, UCF was able to reach and assist students before their bills reached levels that would make it insurmountable to pay and register.

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"Exploratory" trainings helped advisors, support staff understand equity and reflect on practice.

" It's a training to really understand the **concept of equity**, understand who we are, who we serve. So a lot of it was to understand, how we operate, how we, we identify. "

– QCC administrator

" I've really become more aware of, or just **mindful** of the ability to make connections with students and develop those **student-advisor relationships** in ways that I previously hadn't before some of those trainings, **just because I know better … what their college experience** looks like and what they may be needing while they're here at CSU. "

– CSU advisor

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Students emphasized need for further racial diversification of support staff.

"I think it would be beneficial **to have more people that I can relate to in the advising programs,** like a Black woman who also has done what I'm trying to do. You know what I mean? Hiring people who can relate to the students that they're advising better, so that they're actually equipped to talk about the things that the student needs to [know] about.. I know they're not a counselor, but **they should at least understand the experiences without it being a shock**."

- Student

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Staff, students saw services focusing on specific identities as fostering belongingness.

First Four Weeks

- CSU implemented an action plan for creating equitable educational environments and assigned advisors action steps for intensive outreach to first-generation, low-income, and racially minoritized students during the first four weeks of enrollment.

" I go to the BACC [Black/African American Cultural Center] office because I know that I'm going to have support, and I know that I can also support the [other] people who are being impacted. **We're all sharing this impact together**, and that's **usually the only place I go**. "

– Student

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Classroom Practices

Faculty worked individually to improve their students' classroom experiences.

- Faculty took individual initiative to revise classroom policies and procedures to remove barriers from groups disproportionately harmed by these protocols.
  - *Example*: Faculty eliminated policies on not accepting late material and found minimal delays in submission of assignments.

  - *Example*: Faculty adopted flexible hours for testing allowing students to take the test at a time that worked best for their other responsibilities.

" So I had a student this summer I sent an email to after day two, and he said, '**Oh, that was really smart of you to think of going to my Gmail**.' ...And so I think that sometimes even if it's that kind of early intervention, **students still see that oh there's someone who's interested** and doesn't want [them] to fall through the cracks. "

– DACC Faculty

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Departmental approaches centered on redesign of syllabi.

" I've been leading a group in computer science. Again, the primary focus is for increasing women in computer science, but it's really about the concept of increasing diversity. And what we've been looking at are some of what I'll call **systemic issues, that is, looking at implicit bias**, looking at the classroom, and what we're doing in the classroom, and **how we're representing the topic** in this computer science to all students. "

- UCF administrator

" … we're definitely shifting away from the English departments of the past which seemed very centered on a right way to write. And we're opening up channels for **students to explore their voices through writing, through whichever background they come from** in order to build their sense of confidence and belonging and ownership with writing. "

- DACC faculty

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College-wide, leaders focused on faculty hiring, onboarding processes.

> I make them aware that we're an HSI, and **what our principles are.** At one point I had a checklist. I was, 'How many letters of recommendation have you written this year? How many of those letters were for Latino students? Undergraduate research in your lab. Look at the representation in your lab. Who's there? Who isn't there?'
>
> - UCF administrator

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Practices to Improve Racial Climate

Engaging staff in self-reflection considered important step for fostering inclusive environment.

NWTC's Faculty Training Modules

Living Inclusively	Teaching Inclusively
Serving Inclusively	Managing Inclusively

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Colleges' responses to negative incidents were often viewed as an indication of the prevailing racial climate.

- In addition to common communication tools like mass e-mails, students pointed to refinement of the college website and group discussions as powerful communication strategies to advance a positive climate.

" There's been several little ones, but the most recent national one that happened was the black face incident. I don't think the institution initially responded the best way they could. I think our email was trying to protect people. And doing that you harm the people; you did more harm. "

– Student

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Management and Organizational Practices

Dialogue on racial equity fostered awareness and a collective understanding of inequities on campus.

- Colleges convened **cross-functional working groups** involving both academic and non-academic staff to discuss what racial equity means and how it applies to the college environment.

  - *Example*: At DACC, after the murder of George Floyd, the President, administrators, and staff discussed racial inequities at the college and ways to address implicit bias

  - *Example*: At QCC, the President convened an optional book club; several reading selections addressed diversity, equity and inclusion.

  - *Example*: NWTC hosted a series of informal forums called "A Place at the Table."

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Colleges redesigned organizational structures dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- Formalizing senior-level roles dedicated to DEI created an avenue for campus-wide DEI efforts and signaled the emphasis on reducing inequities and promoting an inclusive environment.

    - *Example*: NWTC created the role of **Chief Officer for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**; this position is part of the President's Cabinet.

    - *Example*: QCC established an executive level position to advise the President on equity, inclusion, and belongingness – **AVP for Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging**.

    - *Example*: CSU renamed the Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice as the **Office for Inclusive Excellence (IE)** staffed by a Vice President, an Associate and three Assistant Vice Presidents for Inclusive Excellence.

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Department-based positions created the structure for broader integration of DEI work.

> "I've seen a continued evolution and commitment to understanding that **colleges have a role and responsibility to retaining our students of color**. That it's not external to what their responsibilities are. Getting there is more work, and I do think there's an increasing, continued commitment to that. "

– UCF administrator

> "[Institutional Effectiveness] is kind of **setting the platform or the benchmark** for what we want to do, this is the vision. And then it can be tailored based off of each individual college. But these right here are the principles, the **guiding principles of the work.** "

– CSU administrator

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Disaggregated data revealed unexpected inequities in practices and in student outcomes.

- *Example*: At NWTC, instructors were strongly encouraged to raise kudos or congratulatory alerts on Starfish's early alert system. In an effort to understand the equity dimensions of early alert practices, the college's institutional research staff calculated a kudos-to-flag ratio and disaggregated this metric by race.

" And one of the things that stood out to me was the [book] author said, **disaggregate every piece of data you possibly can because you never know where the insights are going to be**. And so I've started doing that with every piece of Starfish data I can find, and almost always something interesting is there even in the most unexpected places. "

– NWTC Administrator

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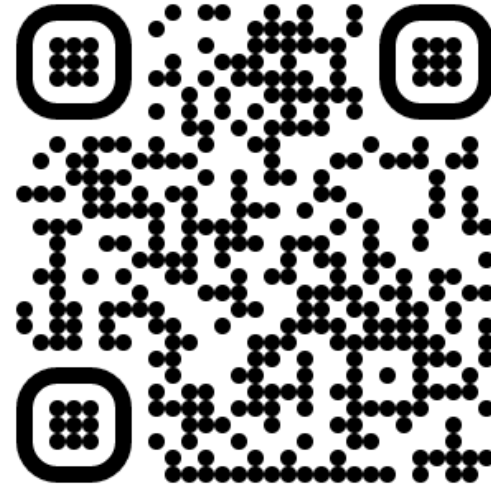
Thanks!

Dr. Elisabeth Barnett, barnett@tc.edu

Dr. Hoori Santikian Kalamkarian, hoori.santikian@tc.edu

Andrea Lopez Salazar, al3675@tc.edu

Amaris Matos, amatos@qcc.cuny.edu

Dr. Brian Mitra, bmitra@qcc.cuny.edu

Dr. Kerri-Ann Smith, ksmith@qcc.cuny.edu

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