

# Operationalizing Servingness through Reflexivity & Intentionality

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**HSI Summit**  
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## About Me

### Who I AM



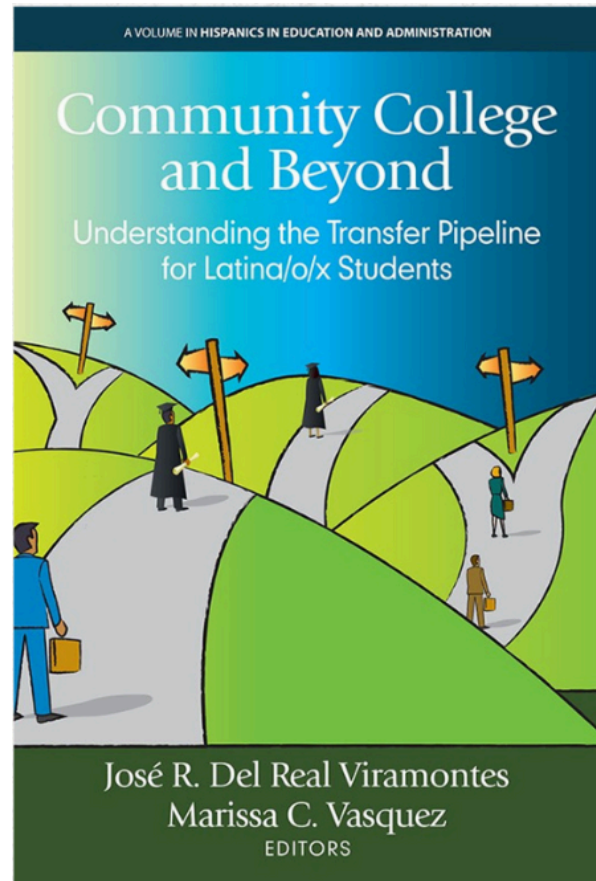
### What I DO



### HOW I do it



## Research & Assessment



- Latino Men & Masculinities
- Latino Transfer Pathways
- Basic Needs Insecurities
- Undergraduate Research for CC Students
- Institutional Equity Assessment

Scan to link to my webpage

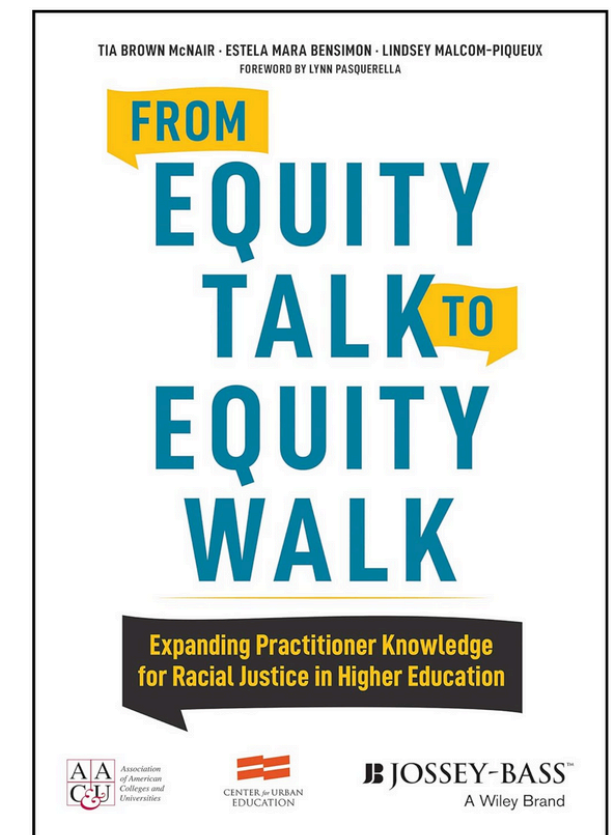


**How do YOU define Servingness?**

## Equity-Minded Institutions Begin with Equity-Minded Individuals

ACCORDING TO BENSIMON (2007) EQUITY-MINDEDNESS ENTAILS:

- recognizing the ways in which **systemic inequities** disadvantage minoritized people in a range of social institutions or contexts (education, employment, healthcare, the criminal justice system, etc.)
- (re)framing outcome disparities as an indication of **institutional underperformance** rather than students' underperformance;
- **critically reflecting** upon one's role and responsibilities (as a faculty member, student affairs staff, administrator, counselor, institutional researchers etc.).



## **Learning to become HSI-minded is a process – a process that requires self-reflection**

- What are we trying to do and why?
- How well are we accomplishing what we say we are?
- How do we know?
- How do we use this information to improve or celebrate success?
- Do the improvements we make work?

**Are we Walking Servingness? Or Just Talking Servingness?**

**An uncritical examination of our work/policies/practices**

**+**

**A discontinuous adoption of conventionally acceptable approaches results in:**

- Rejection of underrepresented voices, experiences
- Limited and partial truths
- Over-valuation of existing systems, particular knowledge
- Reproduction of inequality

# Reflexive Servingness



## Reflexivity... of our Data

## Collection - Analysis - Usage

- What choices of technique do we **privilege**?
- What do we systematize?
  - To what extent are we promoting unconsidered inquiry?
- What are our assumptions of homogeneity?
  - Do we **disaggregate** by intersecting identities?
- Contextual and historical factors
- Structures, conditional effects on outcomes
- **Are we even asking the right questions?**
- Who is analyzing the data?
- Who is generating the narrative about the data?
- Are the narratives **perpetuating deficit perspectives about Latinx students**?
- Who gets to see the data? Is it **accessible & transparent**?
- What are we doing with the data to help inform **decisions**?

# **Reflexivity... of Our Leadership**

## Leadership Matters

Leaders (at any level) set the tone and the priorities for servingness

- **Is your leadership/faculty reflective of your Latinx student population?**
  - take inventory of the diversity of your staff, instructors, and students to create **strategic plans, target HSI funding**, and structure Latinx community **partnerships**
  - intensive **review of documents**, mission statements, and **diversity plans** to see where additional Latinx-centric initiatives might be possible.
- **How are we engaging community partners?**
  - creative engagement with Latinx community partnerships could bring together Latinx students with local **non-profit organizations** and **industry partners** who want to support servingness efforts.
- **How are you supporting your Latinx faculty and staff at ALL levels to best serve students?**
  - How do you know you're doing it well?

## Leadership Matters

Leaders (at any level) set the tone and the priorities for servingness

**Create an Office, Director, Coordinator Position** - To help centralize your campus HSI efforts; create subcommittees

**Clear Communication of HSI Identity** - Communicate role, responsibility, accountability for being an HSI; convocation; board meetings; leadership meetings; community/media

**Support Professional Learning of Latinx Issues:** Engage faculty and staff in ongoing professional learning; during onboarding; online module for faculty training; research alignment

**Enhanced Recruitment & Retention Efforts for Latinx Faculty & Staff:** Interdisciplinary cluster hires; representation on faculty hiring committees; implicit bias training for search committees

**Create & Support Employee Resource Groups:** Latinx faculty ERG, Latinx staff ERG

SDSU HSI Office



SCAN ME

## Leadership Matters

Leaders (at any level) set the tone and the priorities for servingness

**Create a Latinx Resource Center** - To help centralize your campus Latinx community of faculty and students

**Create Culturally-Responsive Research & Writing Retreats** - To support faculty, staff, students in their scholarly activities

**Offer Latinx Commencement Ceremonies** - In spaces with enough capacity for families

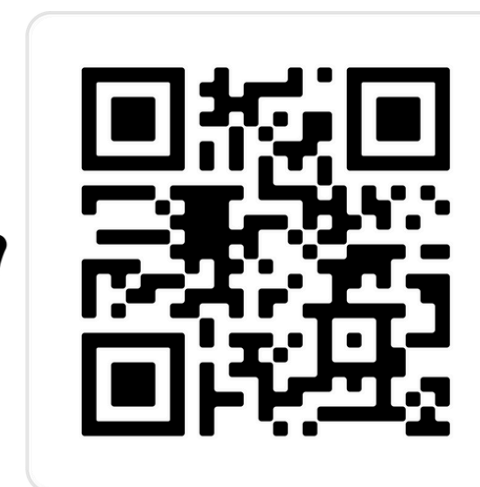
**Create a Community Concilio** - To help advise campuses of community SWOT

# **Reflexivity... of Our Policies**

## If it's not in the Policy... it's not an Institutional Priority

- Integration of Servingness into **Master Plans, Strategic Plans, Equity Plans, Hiring Plans**
- Who is setting your policies?
  - Who is leading your **academic senate**?
  - How are we educating and inviting **more diverse voices** in senate?
  - Do you have a DEI Senate committee?

SDSU Diversity Plans



*SCAN ME*

SDSU Hiring Criteria





## If it's not in the Policy... it's not an Institutional Priority

- **Remove Institutional Barriers:** Access to services, classes, resources, registration, financial aid, preferred name changes, undocumented students
- **Coordinate Efforts around Basic Needs:** Including transportation, housing, employment, and food insecurity. Must address all these areas as they are interconnected
- What **other policies (or lack of)** are limiting our servingness?

## **Reflexivity... of Our Engagement with Students**

**“I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”**

— Maya Angelou

## 3 Persistent Patterns of Inequity

- **Underserved** – Latinx students are underserved and not afforded the same care and attention as other students. “There’s nothing more I can do for you.”
- **Underchallenged** – Latinx students are directed to less challenging programs or coursework and/or questioned when they desire to pursue rigorous majors and programs. “That is a very rigorous major, I am not sure it’s best for you.”
- **Unwelcomed** – Latinx students are treated as though they don’t belong in colleges, libraries, or other academic spaces. “Why are you here?”

## Be Relational

- Demonstrate an “authentic investment” in students’ success—which is one of the most significant predictors of student persistence (Davidson, 2015)
- Facilitate engagement on academic AND non-academic matters
- Learn **at least one thing** about each student that has nothing to do with them being a student.
  - remember name/pronouns - a powerful way of conveying that their presence and personhood is important
  - hometown
  - hobbies and activities
  - special talents
  - favorite books, movies, music artists

## Learn Students' Academic Strengths, Interests, and Past Experiences in Education

Initial discussions should focus on:

- “What compelled you to enroll in college?”
- “What motivated you to pursue XXX degree?”
- “What do you enjoy most about learning?”
- “What are some things in school that always came ‘easy’ for you?”
- “How would you describe your relationships with teachers/instructors?”
- “How do you learn best? How can teachers/instructors best facilitate your success in class?”
- “What are some things you are experiencing outside of college that could impact your success in this course/in college?”
- “What are you looking to gain from your college education?”

## Assess Students' Authentic Interests in Majors, Academic Programs, and Careers

- **Academic and career goals can be misinformed by**
  - friends and family members
  - media & social media
  - racialized and gendered societal norms
- Provide transparent and accessible info about employment and further education (Strobel & Christian, 2016)
- Avoid tracking into into short term (non-stackable) certificate programs that do not align with their long term goals for degree attainment or transfer
- **Facilitate “critical reflection”**
  - “When did you first become aware of your interest in this career/major?”
  - “What are some past experiences that have prepared you for this career/major?”
  - “Who are 2-3 people you can interview about this career/major?”
  - “Identify 3 short term (3 months) goals for the next year that will help you get closer to your career/major.”

## Convey Unconditional Positive Regard

- Intentionally **reject deficit perspectives** about students' intellectual capacities or “fit” for college
  - Avoid unintentional micro-messaging
- Validation and positive message are critical! Students must hear: “**you belong**”, “**excellent work**”, “**you can succeed**”, “**you have the ability**”, “**I’m proud of you**”
  - Best maximized if task oriented (e.g., “**you did a great job on XXX**”)
- Serves to counter the void of positive messaging in **prior schooling and social stereotypes** of unintelligence.
- Can result in **healthier psychosocial** (e.g., confidence, perceptions of the usefulness of college, authentic interest in school) and **identity outcomes**
- **Authenticity** is key to the effective delivery of positive messaging



## Be Proactive

- **Avoid** “approach me first” and “ask me first”
- Connect with institutional agents who are validating, have high expectations for them, and care about their success (“people” not “services”)
  - **Transferring rapport;** Network of people who will treat them with respect
  - Reflects on their future trust in you
- Early alert system – **check in frequently** with students with additional responsibilities
- **Relationships** serve as necessary conditions for fostering use of services; **follow up and follow through** are essential
- Strategically position “near peers” to facilitate conversation, connection, and support.

## Check for Clarity & Next Steps

- Colleges have extensive codes, procedures, guidelines, and timelines that must be adhered to (policies can be difficult to grasp)
- Information presented in sessions can often be overwhelming and even contextual (i.e., if this, then that)
- Apprehension to ask for clarification due to socially constructed messages about gender and masculinity
- **Clarity check:**
  - “What department are you going to bring this document to?”
  - “What are you going to tell them when you get there?”
  - “After that step is completed, what are you going to do next?”
  - “What documentation will you bring to our next appointment?”
- Share handwritten notes, **follow up** via email or text message.

## Reflective Servingness

What are we already doing?

Are we doing it well?

How do we know?

How can we do better?

## Reflective Servingness

### What comes of reflective servingness ?

- Expose and address power, privilege, and structures
- Consider histories and contexts
- Make explicit assumptions and intentions

Servingness is a social and political act



Servingness begins with reflexivity





Reflexivity leads to dialogue

Dialogue leads to action

Repeat

## Thank you

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