Highlights of the UCLA Diverse Learning Environments Study
Background

- Perception Study
- Methodology
  - Online survey for students who had completed 24 units or more at the college
  - Student focus groups (by ethnicity)
  - Practitioner focus groups (by program type)
  - Administrator Interviews
- Caveats
  - Response rate was low
  - Survey respondents not representative of campus
  - Only three community colleges participated
Quantitative Highlights

- Our respondents were in general more likely to
  - attend office hours and use various campus services
  - participate in study groups
  - read the college catalog
  - taken courses that explicitly address diversity issues
  - interacted with people from other ethnic groups prior to enrolling and while enrolled at the college
  - had positive interactions with students from another racial/ethnic group
Quantitative Highlights

- Our respondents were in general also more likely to
  - conclude it will take them longer to graduate
  - stop attending college
  - miss school
  - have trouble getting required classes
  - have experienced some sort of harassment or subtle discrimination (although most of these incidents are off campus or outside the classroom on campus)
  - have had negative interactions with students from another racial/ethnic group
Quantitative highlights

- Our respondents were in general less likely to
  - have learned about other ethnic groups through the media
  - be committed to social and/or political action
  - feel a sense of community on campus or with students of their own ethnic group
  - feel they have sufficient financial resources
  - perceive that instructors are able to evaluate their level of understanding in class
Quantitative highlights

- Perception of caring
  - More than 75% of respondents indicated that faculty empowered them to learn and encouraged them to ask questions and participate
  - Approximately 55% of respondents felt that teachers recognized their academic work and showed concern for their progress
  - Fewer than 40% of respondents felt that instructors took an interest in their personal backgrounds
  - Respondents gave CRC a median ranking of 5 (on a 7 point scale) in the area of being socially inclusive, collaborative (versus competitive) and caring (versus impersonal)
Qualitative Highlights

- Three themes
  - Student difficulty in navigating the college environment
  - Relatively flat organizational structure is a strength
  - There is a need for deepening the understanding of cultural competence as comfort and fluency spans the continuum
Recommendations

- Diversity and Cultural Competence
  - Rearticulate meaning of diversity, cultural competence and privilege
  - Conduct trainings in intergroup dialog for staff and students
  - Enhance academic recognition for students
  - Further explore the experiences of African American students on campus
  - Build a common understanding about the need for ethnically based programs
  - Augment the institutional focus on equity with pedagogy and programming that harnesses the benefits of diversity
Recommendations

- Organizational Structures and Resources
  - Continue to work to diversify faculty ranks
  - Increase students’ opportunity to enroll in transitional courses and offer these opportunities in a variety of formats
  - Create course sequences for areas of study (including GE patterns)
  - Increase advisories and encourage faculty to incorporate success skills into coursework
Recommendations

• Diversify and expand counseling services
• Streamline, simplify and personalize the assessment, guidance, matriculation and support processes
• Continue walking students to services
• Enhance visibility of support services
• Create and communicate a motto and vision that clearly communicates the CRC is committed to helping students develop and reach their goals
• Be more pro-active in helping students identify the support networks that for many students are now invisible