Caring, Commitment, and Community Through COVID-19

Strengthening Student Success Conference 2020

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Welcome to Spring Semester at Mt. SAC!
And then life suddenly changed...
The Imperative

• Transform our complex college campus into one that is caring, responsive, committed, and responsible
• Stay focused on a commitment to equity
What we had to learn

• Find direction in the midst of a crisis
• Address racial injustices
• Reconnect and stay engaged
• How to stay the course
• Innovate and re-invent
• Focus on our mission
This presentation will share the voices we heard from our students, the strategies we employed to stay connected, and how we translated a crisis into a demonstration of **caring, commitment** and **community**.
But a crisis doesn't change disparities in equity...

• In fact the gap widened.
• Basic needs – food, housing
• Technology divide grows
• Lack of work; loss of work
• Difficulty in applying/accessing services (financial aid, CalFresh, unemployment, tutoring, counseling)
• Health concerns: self and family; lack of medical coverage means lack of medical care at early stages
• No place to study; lack of support
Pandemic Impacted Students of Color Significantly Harder

The black/white gap in basic needs insecurity was 19 percentage points.

Source: 2020 #RealCollege During the Pandemic Survey

Notes: Classifications of racial/ethnic background are not mutually exclusive. Students could self-identify with multiple classifications. For more detail on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed, refer to the web appendices.
• Triage: Responding to the onset of crisis
• Transition: Adjusting to the alternate ways of "being"
• Transformation: Revealing/discovering new ways of practicing
An Ethic of Care is a moral philosophy and relational theory centered around the relationship we have with ourselves and others. In education, the theory is put into practice by focusing on the importance of caring for our campus community, listening, identifying needs, and addressing needs.
Demonstrating Care - The "How?"
• In developing our services, we were learning in real-time, that everything should be done with intentional CARE
• Care of community and care of self

Demonstrating Commitment - The "What"
• Commitment to providing support services amid the start of the pandemic and during the campus closure

Demonstrating Community - The "Who"
• A collective responsibility
• Strengthening and building off and on-campus partnerships was critical to developing our community.
Ethic of Care at the Heart of Serving Our Students

CARE
COMMITMENT
COMMUNITY

Triage
Transition
Transformation
Triage: Responding to the Onset of Crisis

- **Triage**: the sorting of and allocation of treatment to patients and especially battle and disaster victims according to a system of priorities... (Merriam Webster)

- During the onset of the pandemic, we:
  - Operated with limited information
  - Scrambled to provide essential services to throw our students a life-line
  - Did not realize what the situation would be long-term
Study of 38,000 College Students by The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice

5.8 out of every 10 students experienced basic needs insecurity due to the pandemic
Academic Challenges by College Type

- I do not have a functional laptop:
  - Two-Year: 11%
  - Four-Year: 7%

- I do not have sufficient internet access:
  - Two-Year: 13%
  - Four-Year: 14%

- I do not have time for school:
  - Two-Year: 14%
  - Four-Year: 16%

- I cannot concentrate on school:
  - Two-Year: 50%
  - Four-Year: 63%

- I have to take care of my family members while going to school:
  - Two-Year: 41%
  - Four-Year: 36%

Source: 2020 #RealCollege During the Pandemic Survey

Notes: Examples of academic challenges due to COVID-19 are not mutually exclusive. Additional breakdowns are available in the web appendices.
Food Insecurity by College Type

- Couldn't afford to eat balanced meals: 43% (Two-Year), 37% (Four-Year)
- The food that I bought didn't last and I didn't have money to get more: 40% (Two-Year), 33% (Four-Year)
- Cut the size of meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food: 35% (Two-Year), 31% (Four-Year)
- Cut the size of meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food [3 or more times]: 23% (Two-Year), 20% (Four-Year)
- Ate less than I felt I should because there wasn't enough money for food: 36% (Two-Year), 32% (Four-Year)
- Went hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food: 25% (Two-Year), 22% (Four-Year)

Source: 2020 #RealCollege During the Pandemic Survey
Notes: For more detail on how food insecurity was constructed refer to the web appendices.
Mountie Fresh Food Pantry Transitioned to Remote and Drive-Thru

• Pre-Pandemic
  • Provided in-store and outdoor farmers market experience

• Pandemic
  • Drive-thru core principles:
    • Safe practices for students and workers
    • Easy access
    • Provide food products for broad range of needs
The lines are long, but when students arrive at the distribution tent...
...they are greeted by smiling faces and a bag full of food.
From the store to the trunk, each bag is prepared with care.
Laptop Loan Program (Drive-Up Distribution)

Identified the need and examined current resources

Provided first distribution of technology one week after the campus closure

Re-examined resources and the process, to identify improvements
A community centered collaboration to address the technology needs of students
3,500 students provided with a laptop and/or hotspot
Transition: Adjusting to the alternate ways of "being"

• **Transition**: *a movement, development, or evolution from one form, stage, or style to another* (Merriam Webster)

• Lessons learned during the Triage:
  • Figure out how to build life-lines
  • Re-think and re-prioritize policies, processes
  • Everything doesn’t happen in the “classroom”
  • Build new alliances “on campus” (community)
  • Mental health wellness is critical
Beyond the Facts and Figures, We Listened to Our Students

• I started the semester okay, then we stopped for 2 weeks, and when we came back it was all online and I had technology issues and then I was behind and then ... that was it.
• Although I know I’m not going through this alone, I feel all alone
• I have no motivation to do anything. I quit going to my classes. I’m not a quitter, but I quit.
• I’m afraid to move on. I’m afraid of becoming shy and isolated all over again.
• I’m taking the emergency withdrawal. I’m struggling to see the value in school.
What inequities were amplified among our students?

- **Individual Concerns** - self/agency, elders, family, social unrest
- **Mindset** - health and well-being, negative self-perceptions, imposter syndrome, isolation, sleep deprivation, grieving (death, hospitalizations, rituals), fears
- **Situational Context** - changing roles, family expectations, basic needs, essential work, loss of income, home environment
- **Challenges** - access and technology constraints; campus communication

Remind ourselves what privileges might obstruct a full view.
Onboarding of New Student (Smooth Sailing)

• Serving 11 high school districts, over 50 high schools (~75% on free or reduced lunch)

• Normal onboarding process (March-July)
  • High School Outreach
  • Inreach Services
Covid times
Onboarding
(Murky Waters)

Pre-Campus Closure
- Surveyed the high schools (early March)
- Created new virtual "how to" videos
- Wellness calls

Campus Closure (Mar 20-June)
- Newsletter for High School Staff
- Increased Communication
- Increased Campus Collaborations

Adapting Virtually (April-October)
- Virtual Outreach Forum
- "Normal" Services, virtual
New virtual on-boarding services

- Connect 4 make-up
- Summer Programs
- Student Help Center
- 1:1 specialist to student office hours

**STEPS TO FALL REGISTRATION**

**CONNECT 4 MAKEUP**
YOU WILL BE ABLE TO:
- Apply to Mt. SAC
- Complete the Assessment Questionnaire (AQ)
- Complete the Orientation
- Schedule an Appointment with a counselor

Date: June 10, 17, 24 and July 1
Time: 10:00 am - 11:00 am
2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Location: You will receive a Zoom link in your email to attend the meeting when you register


**REGISTRATION 101**
YOU WILL BE ABLE TO:
- Create your college schedule
- Learn how to search for classes
- Learn how to register for classes
- Learn how to use your Mt. SAC portal

Date: June 10, 17, 24 and July 1
Time: 11:00 am - 12:00 noon
3:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Location: You will receive a Zoom link in your email to attend the meeting when you register


**MT. SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE**

**SUMMER PROGRAMS**

**VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS**

Join Us Starting May 2020 on
Tuesdays from 11am-1pm and
Thursdays from 2pm-4pm

**STUDENT HELP CENTER**

**WHEN?**
MON AUG 24 & TUES AUG 25 9AM-5PM

Join our staff & faculty virtually for:
- General campus questions
- Open class search
- How to add classes
- Course selection
- Portal user assistance
- Completion of the enrollment process
- And more....
Silver Linings - Onboarding

- Virtual-flexible hours (community)
- Increased on-campus collaborations (community)
- Individualized, private assistance (care)
- Phone communication (care)
- Time flexibility for services (commitment)
Arise Program

• Funded by AANAPISI
• Serve Asian American Native American Pacific Islander (AANAPI) students, but also provides support to a diverse cross-section of students
• Instructional support/tutoring, counseling intervention, student and leadership development
• culturally relevant programming, digital storytelling, talking circles
Innovative Strategies: Reflecting on our work to date

Pre-Campus Closure
- Responding to evolving news
- Preparing ourselves & students
- Uncertainty around what programming would likely be impacted

Campus Closure (Mar 20-April)
- Created & launched the Arise Hub
- Communication Strategies & Platforms
- Continuity of Care

Adapting Virtually (April-October)
- "Normal" Programming
- Innovations and Silver Linings
- Lifelines to campus
Pivot to Re-create our Community: Leverage our "Cultural" Capital

Cultural Values = Ethic of Care

- **Fetokoni'aki** (responsibility for others in Tongan)
- **Tauhi va/tausi le va** (nurturing relationships in spaces we occupy in Tongan/Samoan)
- **Inafa 'maolek** (collective responsibility/restore harmony in Chamorro)
- **Utang na loob** (debt of gratitude in Tagalog)
Level of Anxiety by Survey Respondents

**Two-Year**

- **None to minimal**: 24%
- **Mild**: 27%
- **Moderate**: 20%
- **Severe**: 29%

**Source**: 2020 RealCollege During the Pandemic Survey

**Notes**: The Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale (GAD-7) was used to measure anxiety. Cumulative percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding. For more detail on how anxiety was constructed, as well as additional breakdowns, refer to the web appendices.
The Mission of the Arise Program is to support all students committed to their holistic development, addressing their cultural, personal, student, academic and leadership potential in a safe space that promotes respect, accountability, and integrity.

Tell us about our Hub, use our 'Suggestion Box' to leave an anonymous comment, idea, critique, or suggestion.
Reimagining our "Normal" and our Fetokoni'aki

- Maintain a sense of program normalcy
- Innovative strategies (opportunities & challenges)
- Silver linings - the possibility of transforming practice
Silver Linings – Arise Program

• Virtual office hours
• Key lifelines
• Hybrid models for the future
• Document celebratory events
• Community engagement re-imagined
• Family participation

Stand proud! You carry the hope of your ancestors . . .
What was to be: Commencement 2020 at the New Stadium
What it became: Commencement 2020...
A Memorable Virtual and Drive-Thru Ceremony Instead
Families and Friends from Around the World Joined In for the Virtual Ceremony
It took a Village...
...a very Big Village of Faculty, Staff, and Administrators Committed to Celebrating Our Students in Style!
The World-Famous Mountie Commencement Cheer Squad
Rolling Across the "Red Carpet"
Diploma Cover Presentation Streamed Live On-Line
Celebration with Family and Friends
Triumph in the Face of Adversity
Transformation: Revealing/discovering new ways of practicing

- **Transformation:** an act, process, or instance of transforming- change in structure, outward structure... (Merriam Webster)

- See the Silver Lining within the crisis:
  - Still learning, still feeling our way through, but there is a sense that transforming is coming
  - College is not just brick and mortar – it is about relationships
  - Continue using Ethic of Care as framework to do our work
Ethic of Care at the Heart of Serving Our Students

CARE

COMMITMENT

COMMUNITY

Triage

Transition

Transformation
What does transformation look like at your college?
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