

Evidence, Equity and the Role of Empathy in Everyday Practice

Catherine Ward, Ed.D.

Su Swarat, Ph.D.

Clint-Michael Reneau, Ph.D.

September 25, 2020

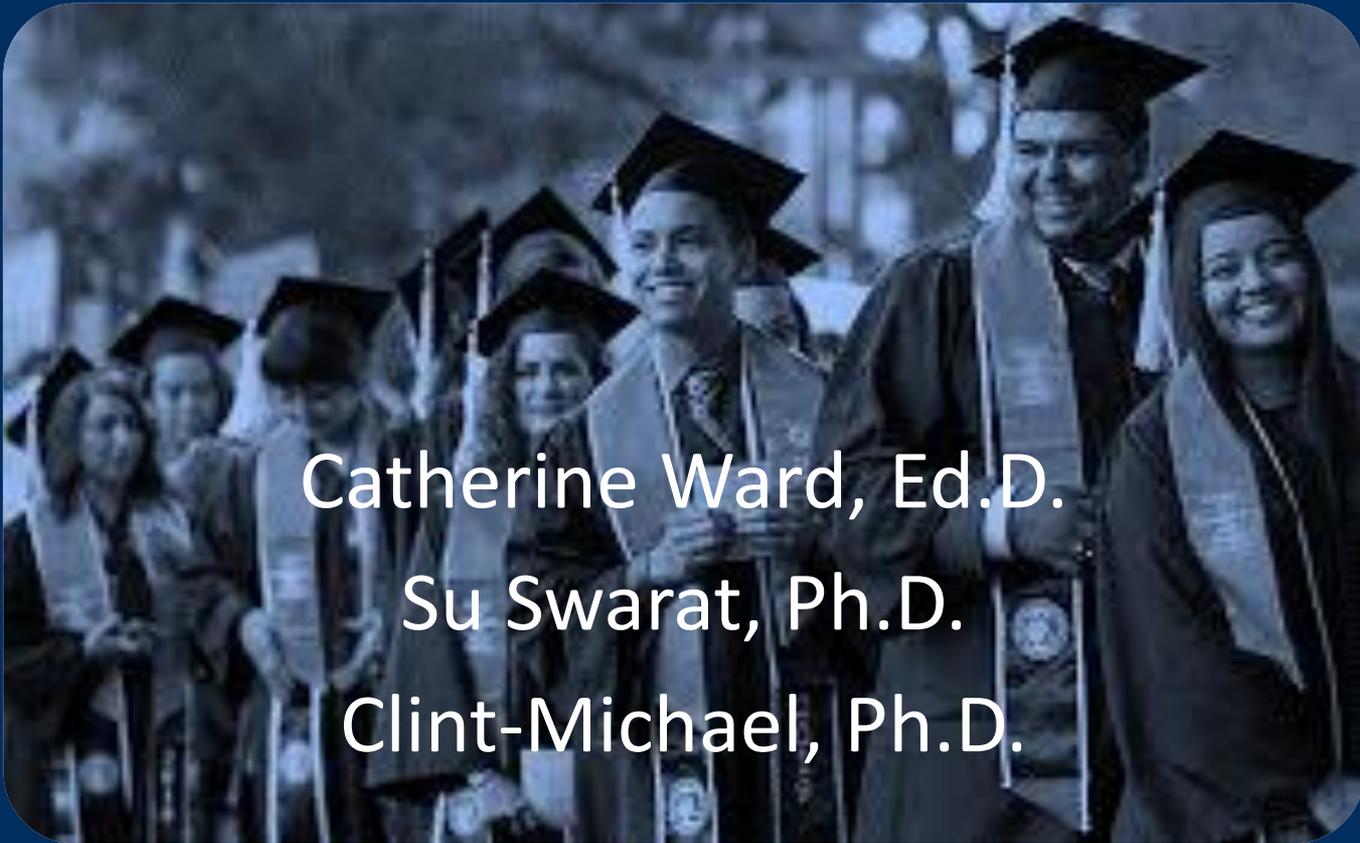


Change comes from within. It is the result of a collective effort to create a better world. It is the result of a collective effort to create a better world. It is the result of a collective effort to create a better world.

Dr. William E. Campbell (1901-1973)
Dr. C. Gordon Wells (1914-1989)
Dr. Miles D. Bell (1914-1989)
Dr. James Murray Cook (1914-1989)
Dr. Miles G. Cooke (1914-1989)

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Introductions



Catherine Ward, Ed.D.

Su Swarat, Ph.D.

Clint-Michael, Ph.D.

Learning Objectives

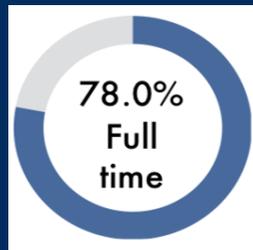
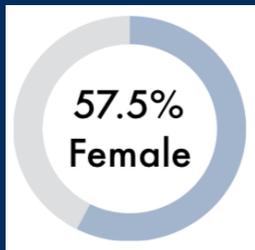
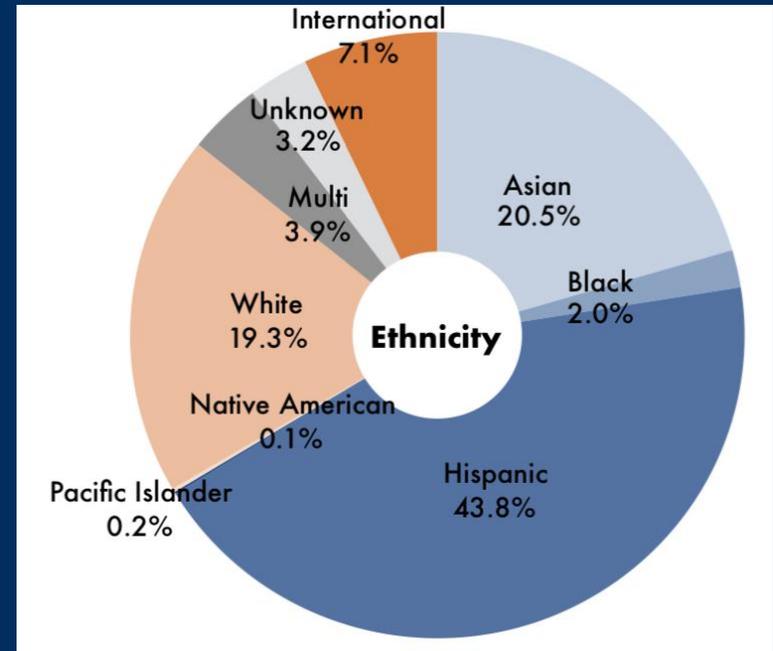
- Participants will learn how to use student success data to inform the perspectives of campus partners.
- Participants will gain a working definition of equity-minded practice.
- Participants will learn about the three types of empathy.
- Participants will learn how empathy can be applied in and out of the classroom.

Acknowledgment of Our Circumstances

- COVID-19
- Black Lives Matter Movement
 - Solidarity
- Anti-racist Awareness and Commitment to Change
- “The Political is Personal and the Personal is Political”

California State University, Fullerton

- A large, four-year public university
- A comprehensive, regional university with a global outlook, located in Orange County, CA
- Enrolls a diverse population of approximately 40,000 students

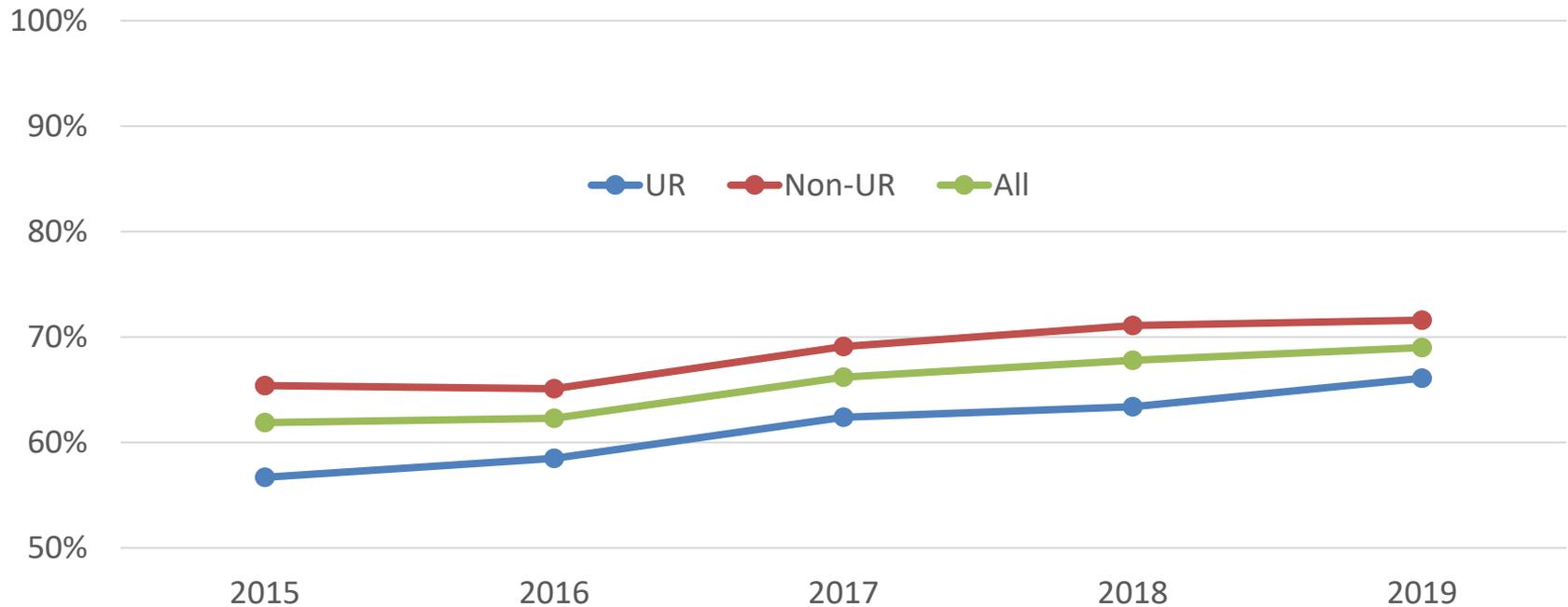


**Example enrollment data
from Fall 2019*

Evidence: Student Success Indicator – Graduation Rate

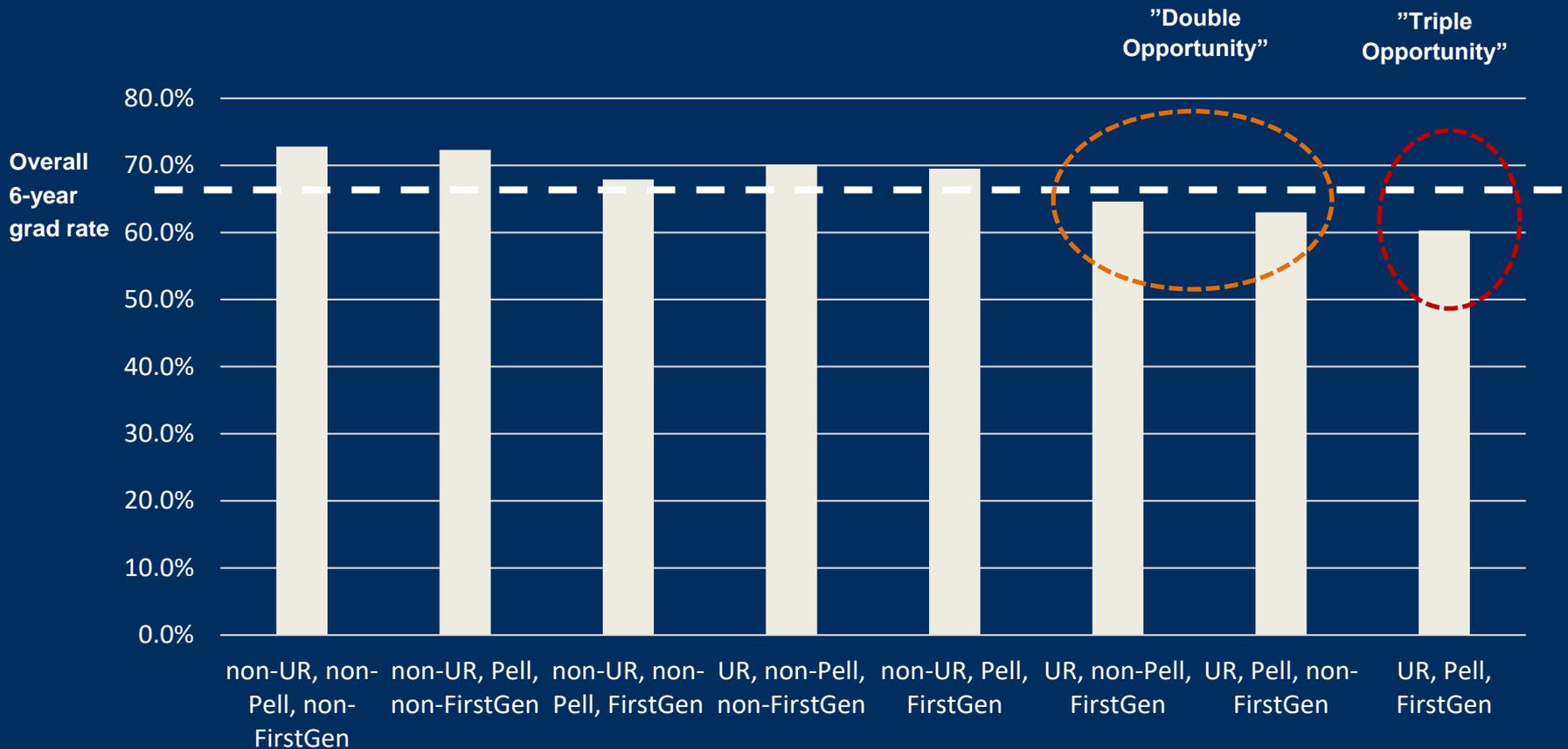
- Graduation rate is on the rise for all student groups
- Equity gap based on underrepresented (UR) status persists
- Equity gap starts as early as first semester

First Time Full Time Freshmen Six Year Graduation Rate



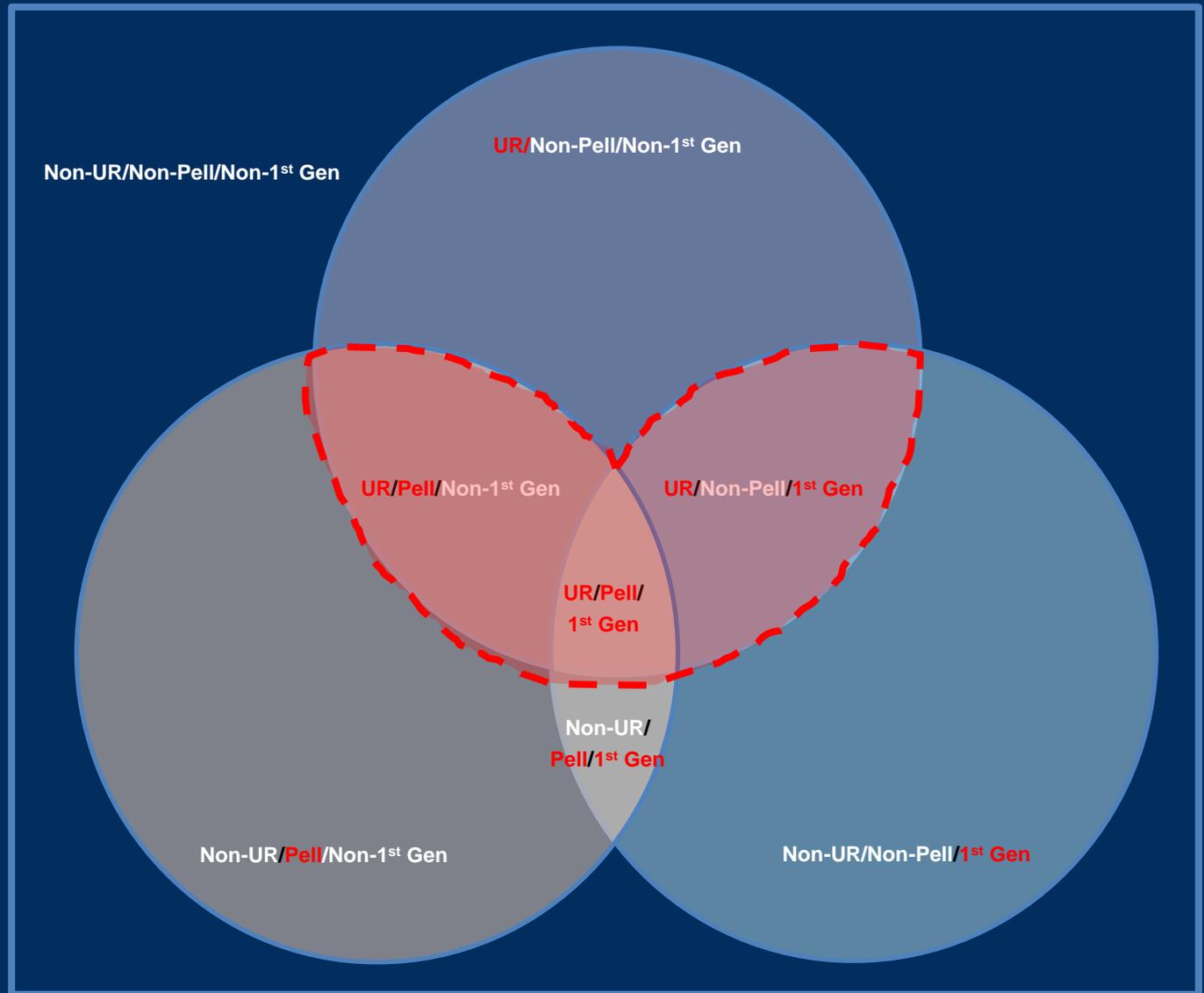
Evidence: Unpack Student Success by UR, Pell and First generation status

Example: Fall 2012 FTF Cohort 6-year Graduation Rate



Evidence: Focus on the "Heart" of Our Work

Targeted support
for "double and
triple opportunity"
students from
underrepresented
background



The Equity Gap

Represents our opportunity to investigate the systems and structures that contribute to the gap in academic outcomes and degree attainment



Equity

- Data tells us what is...
- We must ask, **why** do these outcomes exist?
- The equity gap is not the same as the attainment gap
- An understanding of the equity gap shifts the focus from student achievement/attainment to the systems, structures, and practices that may be creating and maintaining inequity in student achievement/attainment

The Difference Between Equality and Equity



Institutional Response Strategies to Close Equity Gaps

- Pedagogy based on cognitive science
- Institution organization & accountability
- Onboarding, engagement, & first-year experience
- Comprehensive student support services
- Degree planning & pathway progress (Roadmaps)
- Next-level advising
- Career development
- Financial wellness
- Enhanced cultural competence

Estela Bensimon

Contrary to the dominant belief that the solution to unequal educational outcomes lies in a new program or technique, somewhere out there, that has been validated as a “best practice,” I...believe that institutional actors, as a consequence of their beliefs, expectations, values, and practices, create or perpetuate unequal outcomes and that the possibility for reversing inequalities depends on individual learning that holds the potential for bringing about self-change. That is, individuals—the ways in which they teach, think students learn, and connect with students, and the assumptions they make about students based on their race or ethnicity—can create the problem of unequal outcomes. Such individuals, if placed in situations where they learn the ways in which their own thinking creates or accentuates inequities, can also learn new ways of thinking that are more equity minded. Individually and collectively, campus members can be the creators of the conditions that result in unequal or equitable outcomes. (p. 101)

*Bensimon, E. M. (2005). Closing the achievement gap in higher education: An organizational learning perspective. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 131, 99-111.

The Student Success Equation

Student Readiness + Study Ready Campus + Educator Readiness

- Student readiness
 - Individual characteristics, academic performance, community cultural wealth
- Campus readiness=Student Ready Campus*
 - Campus characteristics, systems, structures, policy, procedures, processes
- Educator readiness
 - Individual characteristics, knowledge, skills, and disposition
 - Equity-mindedness and empathy is found in our disposition

*McNair, T. B., Albertine, S., Cooper, M. A., McDonald, N., & Major Jr, T. (2016). *Becoming a student-ready college: A new culture of leadership for student success*. John Wiley & Sons.

A Story of How Equity-mindedness and Empathy Made a Difference



Empathy is a Cornerstone to Equity-minded Practice



Empathy

- Antidote to bias, prejudice, and discrimination
- Part of our disposition
- The foundation to *Emotional and Social Intelligence*
- Being empathic is a choice
- We can develop empathy
- Concern for another person's story
- Helps us form and maintain connection with others
- There are skills involved in demonstrating empathy
- Empathy can prompt outcomes
- There are three types of empathy

*Covey S. *The 7 habits of highly effective people*. New York, NY: Simon & Shuster; 2004.

*Goleman D. *Working with Emotional Intelligence*. Bantam, 1998.

*Whitham S, Sterling L, Lin CE, Wood JJ. Social cognitive learning theory. In: Volkmar FR, ed, *Encyclopedia of Autism Spectrum Disorders*. Springer, New York, NY; 2013. doi:10.1007/978-1-4419-1698-3

Three Types of Empathy

- Cognitive
- Affective
- Compassionate



- Each type of empathy builds on each other

Cognitive Empathy

- Cognitive Empathy (part of our thought processes)
 - Perspective taking
 - Imagining what it might be like to be in someone else's shoes
 - Imagining what it might be like for the person to be in their own shoes
 - Recognizing individuals lived experience
 - Understanding someone's thoughts and feelings
 - Beginning of a two-way connection
 - Students know they are understood

*<https://www.verywellmind.com/cognitive-and-emotional-empathy-4582389>

Affective Empathy

- Affective Empathy (part of our emotional processes)
 - Builds on Cognitive Empathy
 - Feeling with someone vs. feeling for someone
 - Sharing an emotional experience
 - Connection of our shared sense of humanity
 - We are not only cognitive beings, we are feeling beings, we are behaving beings, we are spiritual beings
 - When we demonstrate affective empathy, students begin to **feel seen and heard**

* Hodges SD, Myers MW. Empathy. In: Baumeister RF, Vohs KD. Encyclopedia of Social Psychology. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing; 2007 doi:10.4135/9781412956253.n179

Compassionate Empathy

- Compassionate Empathy (part of our behavioral processes)
 - Builds on cognitive and affective empathy
 - Feeling concern for someone and moves us to action
 - Synonym of Compassion: Care
 - Can be small gestures of concern, warmth, and kindness
 - Example: Taking the extra 5-10 minutes to help guide a student through a complex issue
 - Example: Sending a follow-up email just to check in

Role of Empathy in Everyday Practice

- Informs **why** we do what we do
- Guides **how** we do what we do
 - The manner by which we engage students
- Supports **what** we do



*Sinek, S. (2009). *Start with why: How great leaders inspire everyone to take action*. Penguin.

Empathy May Be An Intangible Quality

- Empathy is Demonstrated By Using Specific Skills
 - That Result in Specific Outcomes

Empathy Related Skills

- Active Listening
 - Tuning into verbal and non-verbal cues
- Curiosity
 - Keeps preconceived ideas at bay
- Objectivity
 - In place of subjectivity
- Leveraging Diversity
 - Awareness of diverse experiences and the impact of these experiences
- Political Awareness
 - Sensing and responding to issues of power and privilege and their impact
- Ongoing Practice
 - Requires a willingness to engage our own vulnerability
 - Emotional regulation
 - Balance

**<https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/empathy.html>

*Healey ML, Grossman M. Cognitive and affective perspective-taking: Evidence for shared and dissociable anatomical substrates. *Front Neurol.* 2018;9:491. doi:10.3389/fneur.2018.00491

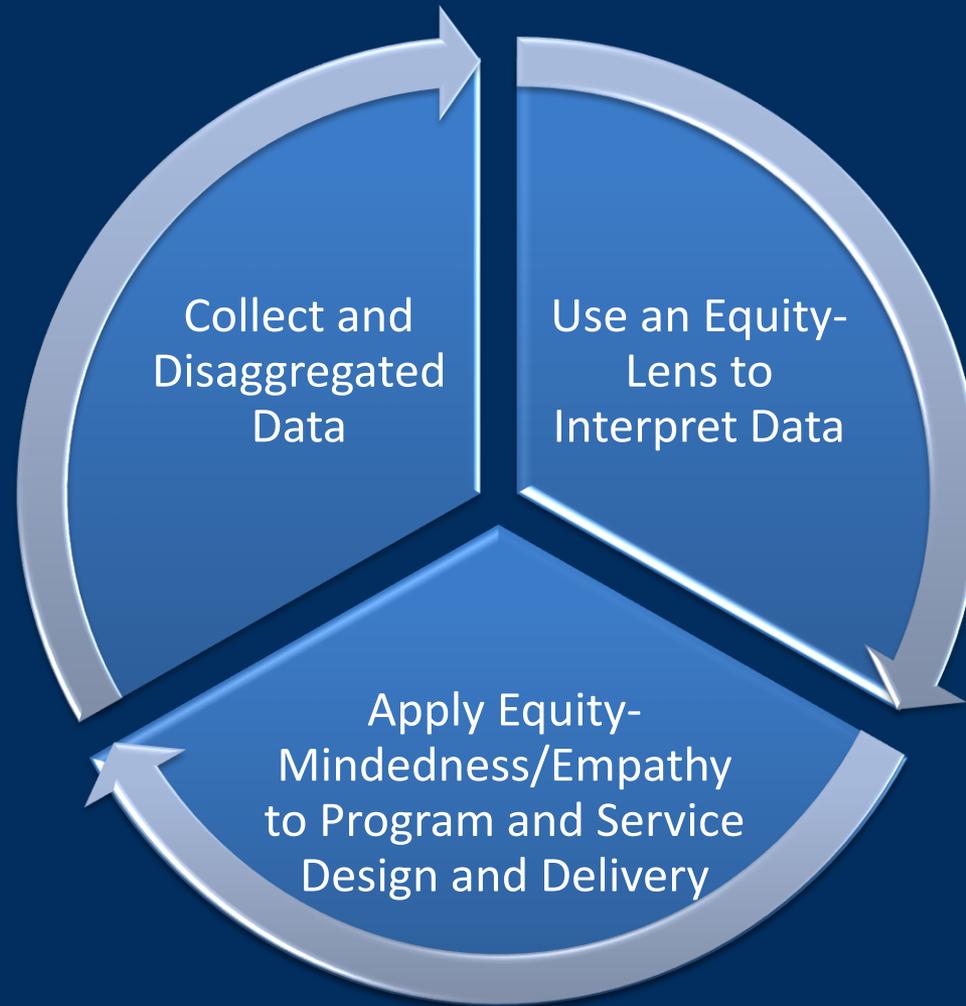
*Tamir M, Mauss IB. Social cognitive factors in emotion regulation: Implications for well-being. In: Nykliček I, Vingerhoets A, Zeelenberg M, eds., *Emotion regulation and well-being*. Berlin: Springer Science + Business Media; 2011. doi:10.1007/978-1-4419-6953-8_3

Outcomes of Empathy

- People Feel Seen, Heard, Understood/Mattering
- Provides Insight
- Assists in Identifying Needs
- Identify Solutions/Prompts Creativity
- Reduces Defenses
- Builds Trust
- Deepens Connection
- Strengthens Negotiation/Collaboration

*Szanto T, Krueger J. Introduction: Empathy, shared emotions, and social identity. *Topoi*. 2019;38:153-162.
doi:10.1007/s11245-019-09641-w

Operationalizing Empathy



Tuffy's Graduation Scholar Program

- Program Structure
 - Students - 759
 - FG/UR/Pell Grant Recipients
 - Campus
 - Across Division Collaboration
 - Staff – 2.3
 - Master's in Social Work
 - Master's in Higher Education
- Anticipated Outcomes – Close the Equity Gap
 - Support Retention
 - Improve Graduation Rates

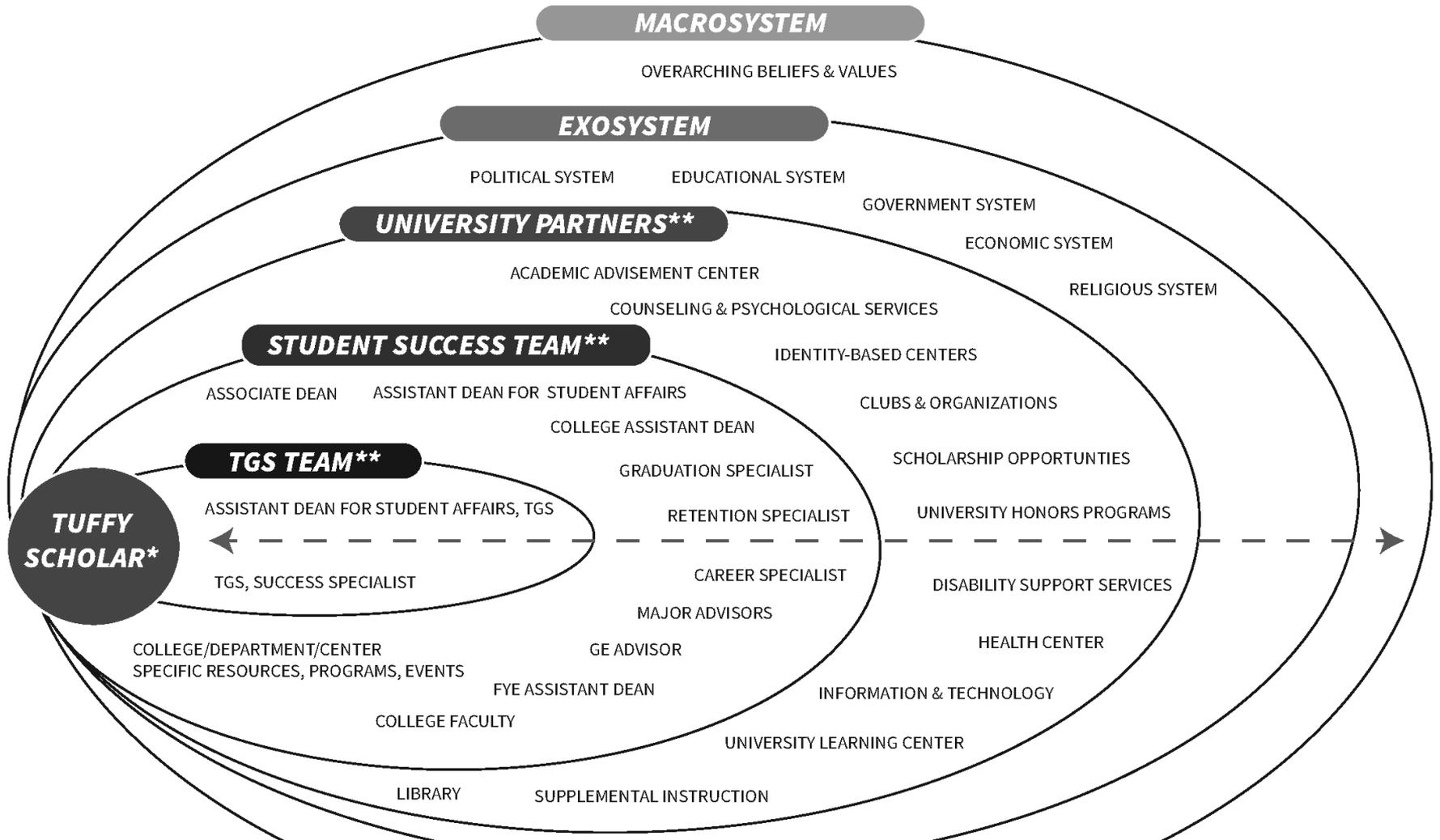
Tuffy's Graduation Scholar Program: Key Components

- Incentives
 - Laptop
 - \$200 a year
- Staff/Educator Readiness
- Ecological Advising Model
- Responsive, Culturally Conscious, and Across-Campus Collaborations
 - Referrals, workshops, peer connections

Educator Readiness

- Committed to **social and racial justice**
- Established a **proactive culture of care** (demonstrated empathy)
- Engage in **reflective practice**
- **Actively work toward racial, gender, socio-economic, and ability literacy**
- **Accountable** to each other (i.e. TGS goals and framework)
- Demonstrate **cultural humility** and center **culturally conscious** perspectives and practice
- **Responsibly** dis-aggregate, interpret, and **use data**
- **Comprehensively**, consider and act on all aspects of student characteristics, experiences, and context
- Design **responsive** programs and services w/an equity-lens

TUFFY'S GRADUATION SCHOLAR (TGS)-SYSTEM DESIGN



* MICRO SYSTEM

** MESOSYSTEM

Tuffy's Graduation Scholar (TGS) program is designed to serve students individually and holistically. TGS students will immediately belong to a system of support initiated by the TGS, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs (AD) and Success Specialist (SS). Throughout the duration of the program, the AD and SS will collaborate with SSTs, faculty, and campus partners to ensure students are supported in efficient and effective ways.

Student	Academic Status						Opportunity Status					Financial Aid Status			Student Identifiers		
	Enrolled >=12	Enrolled <12	Not Enrolled	Discontinued	PR*	PR Removed	URM/PELL/FG	URM/PELL	URM/FG	PELL/FG	PELL ONLY	SAP Not Met	Pending	Received	COLLEGE	Male	Female
1	X									X			X	HHD	X		
2	X						X						X	MCBE	X		
3		X					X						X	HSS	X		
4	X				X			X					X	HHD		X	
5			X			X	X				X			HSS		X	
6	X						X						X	HSS	X		
7	X									X			X	MCBE	X		
8				X				X					X	ZZZ		X	
9	X							X					X	ZZZ		X	
10	X						X						X	HSS		X	
11	X						X						X	ZZZ	X		
12	X						X						X	ZZZ	X		
13	X				X						X	X		HHD		X	
14	X						X						X	ECS	X		
15	X						X						X	MCBE	X		
16	X						X						X	NSM		X	
17				X				X					X	COM		X	
18			X		X		X						X	HSS		X	
19				X	X		X				X			ECS	X		
20				X					X				X	HSS		X	
21		X						X					X	HSS		X	
22				X				X				X		ZZZ		X	
23	X						X						X	MCBE	X		
24	X						X						X	COM		X	
25	X						X						X	MCBE		X	
26	X									X		X		NSM		X	
27	X									X			X	ART		X	
28				X	X					X			X	COM	X		
29	X					X	X						X	ART	X		
30	X						X					X		ECS	X		
31				X							X		X	ECS	X		
32	X							X					X	NSM		X	
33			X		X				X			X		HHD	X		

Tuffy's Graduation Scholar Program

- Early First Year Outcomes
 - 90% University Official Retention Rate
 - Fall to Fall Enrollment Rate
 - 98% University Retention Rate
 - Includes students who are eligible to stop out for fall
 - 94% Program Retention Rate
 - 69% Completed 30 or more units
 - 10% Need Additional Support
- During COVID-19
 - Students are disproportionately impacted

Q&A



Thank you!

What Empathy Is Not

- Sympathy – feeling for someone
- Oversharing or disclosure
- Over-identifying w/someone's experience
- Enabling
- Making indiscriminate exceptions for someone
- Rescuing someone or fixing something for them

Potential Barriers to Practicing Empathy

- What you learned about emotion
- Messages you received about the value of emotions
- How others treated you when you had emotional needs
- Fear of becoming overwhelmed
- Fear of getting stuck in emotions with another person
- Fear of not knowing what to do if someone shares their feelings with you

*<https://www.verywellmind.com/cognitive-and-emotional-empathy-4582389>