Centering Students While Disrupting Inequity With Dr. Regina Stanback Stroud Episode 161

00:00:00 **Dr. Stroud**

we don't change the structures, the practices, processes, procedures, the policies - if we don't change those structures, we will just simply be tinkering around the edges, and you will not change the student outcomes.

00:00:12 **Dr. Stroud**

So, it's not about what we're feeling or about what we're thinking, and sometimes even about what we're doing; it is about those structures in place that impact student experiences both inside and outside of the classroom.

00:00:29 **Christina**

Hi, I'm Christina Barsi.

00:00:30 **Sun**

And I'm Sun Ezzell, and you're listening to the Magic Mountie Podcast.

00:00:34 **Christina**

Our mission is to find ways to keep your ear to the ground, so to speak - by bringing to you the activities and events you may not have time to attend, the resources on campus you might want to know more about, the interesting things your colleagues are creating, and the many ways we can continue to better help and guide our students.

00:00:51 **Sun**

We bring to you the voices of Mt. SAC, from the classroom to completion.

00:00:55 **Speaker 1**

And I know I'm going to achieve my goals, and I know people here are going to help me to do it

00:01:01 **Speaker 2**

She is a sociology major and she's transferring to Cal Poly, Pomona! Psychology major, English major ...

00:01:06 **Sun**

From transforming part-time into full-time-

00:01:08 **Speaker 1**

I really liked the time that we spent with Julie about how to write a CV and cover letter.

00:01:16 **Christina**

Or just finding time to soak in the campus.

00:01:18 **Speaker 1**

To think of the natural environment around us as a library.

00:01:21 **Christina**

We want to keep you informed and connected to all-things Mt. SAC, but most importantly, we want to keep you connected with each other. I'm Christina Barsi, Mt. SAC alumni, and producer of this podcast.

00:01:32 **Sun**

And I'm Sun Ezzell, Learning Assistance Faculty and Professional Learning Academy Coordinator.

00:01:37 **Christina**

And this is the Magic Mountie Podcast.

00:01:43 **Christina**

What do students of color need? The work of addressing inequity consistently, the consistent challenging of ourselves and our colleagues, and the creation of programs, classrooms, and environments that foster belonging, validation, support networks, and cultural affirmation.

00:02:00 **Christina**

This quote is taken from this year's fall Flex Day's keynote, Dr. Regina Stanback Stroud, which she shared during her presentation called Centering Students While Disrupting Inequity.

00:02:12 **Christina**

This is only one piece of the multifaceted discussion Dr. Stroud shared during her keynote. Even if you caught this event live, listening again will only allow you to better absorb, process, and apply even more of what Dr. Stroud shares within this imperative discussion. Enjoy.

00:02:35 **Tania**

I'd like to welcome everyone back as we are excited to welcome with us today, Dr. Regina Stanback Stroud, who will be speaking on today's theme - The Student of the Future; Using Equity Data to Chart Our Course.

00:02:50 **Tania**

Dr. Regina Stanback Stroud is an anti-racist activist and committed practitioner facilitating racial and equity literacy development. She dedicated 35 years of her life's work to being an higher education leader and educator, including service as Chancellor of Peralta Community College District, President of Skyline College, various administrative positions and faculty in nursing.

00:03:15 **Tania**

She is now the CEO of RSS Consulting. Dr. Stanback Stroud served President Barack Obama on his president's advisory council on financial capability for young Americans. Her work in equity and leadership is recognized by the Academic Senate for California community colleges statewide, Regina Stanback Stroud's Diversity Award, and the Western Regional Council on Black American Affairs, Dr. Regina Stanback Stroud Leadership Achievement Award - both awarded to individuals committed to leadership, excellence, equity, and social justice.

00:03:52 **Tania**

Dr. Stanback Stroud holds a doctorate and master's degree in educational leadership from Mills College, a master's degree in human relations from Golden Gate University, and a bachelor of science in nursing sciences from Howard University.

00:04:09 **Tania**

Her scholarship and expertise has focused on student equity and diversity, education industry collaboratives, economic empowerment, and anti-poverty strategies, community workforce, and economic development, and regional and state educational policy.

00:04:28 **Tania**

We are so excited to welcome you Regina, thank you for sharing your day with us. And I will turn over the stage to you.

00:04:38 **Dr. Stroud**

Thank you. Thank you very much. I really appreciat it. It is a pleasure and a honor to be here. So, first of all, I'd like to also start with land acknowledgement. I appreciate that Tania did so.

00:04:50 **Dr. Stroud**

With this acknowledgment that this land that you work and study and feel entitled to possess was under the stewardship of the Gabrielino-tongva tribe, and that the college history on the website has a very sanitized statement.

00:05:07 **Dr. Stroud**

It says "Before Mt. San Antonio College came to be, the land was inhabited by Gabrielino-tongva Indian tribe, until Spanish explorers and pioneer settlers called it home." But I understand that sanitized version because it is how history is taught in America, if it's taught at all.

00:05:28 **Dr. Stroud**

So, I just want to start with saying, let's be clear, the so-called settlers didn't just call it home. They committed torture and murder to the point of genocide. They dispossessed a nation of people of their land, life, and liberty, and then revised the story to make it for a dignified history of just passively calling it home.

00:05:53 **Dr. Stroud**

So, I want to begin my remarks with the acknowledgment that the histories of the students of the future that you're interested in, are inextricably linked to the history as told within the white dominant framework today. And we love this nation enough to help it be honest about itself.

00:06:12 **Dr. Stroud**

I want to thank Dr. Scroggins for his generous and gracious hospitality and welcoming me to Mt. San Antonio College. On more than one occasion Dr. Scroggins has done so. He is a colleague who's support and friendship I will cherish. And I understand he wholeheartedly supported the plan to invite me even with the funding with only one contingency, that I not mention or make mention of a certain thing.

00:06:41 **Dr. Stroud**

So, let me clear that up right now. I want to talk about his ability or lack thereof, to do any kind of line dancing. Now, while we were on the State Senate Executive Committee, it was not pretty. And I shared with the committee that was telling me about this, that it would take a lot more funding to get me not to mention that at all, bill; they begged me for photographic evidence. And you are only saved by the fact that at that time smartphones weren't readily around back then. You are only saved by that fact.

00:07:18 **Dr. Stroud**

I also want to thank everyone committed to the professional and organizational development including the people responsible for this Flex Day coordination.

00:07:26 **Dr. Stroud**

Thank you to people like Dr. Lisa Rodriguez who bent over backwards and made sure I had everything that I needed, and giving me all of the information and the data that I needed; Tania Anders and Kelly Riviera, Roger Willis, Shiloh Blacksher, Beta Meyer.

00:07:42 **Dr. Stroud**

And I'm sure there are many that I'm not mentioning that worked behind the scenes to make sure that I was smart enough, and then had enough information to be able to speak to you in a particular context.

00:07:51 **Dr. Stroud**

And I was very, very careful to use that information to consume it, but not necessarily to spit it back to you because I'm really cognizant of what I call consultants that come in and ask you for data, and then charge you a lot of information to give you that data that you gave them.

00:08:07 **Dr. Stroud**

I want to thank Professor Banks who had invited me previously, because I spoke at the Umoja Luncheon, and also give him a little bit of a trigger warning that some of the requested speaking topics that I'll make today, were common to both events. So, you might hear about a 15% information overlap.

00:08:25 **Dr. Stroud**

And then I want to give a shout-out to Lisa Reinhardt. Professor Reinhardt was the 2015 recipient of the Regina Stanback Stroud Diversity Award, which is an award that's bestowed by the Academic Senate for California community colleges. And as a queer-identified woman, I am grateful to her for her work in supporting LGBTQIA students. Thank you, Professor Reinhardt.

00:08:47 **Dr. Stroud**

And then I want to thank my team that you see their names on today. Brandon Christian and Pcyeta Stroud; two community college success stories - if you want to see what it looks like when we're successful. They've gone on to achieve their bachelor's degree and respectfully, Pcyeta has achieved her master's degree. And they're an important part of the RSSC team that makes it look like I know what I'm doing. So, thank you Pcyeta and Brandon for being here.

00:09:18 **Dr. Stroud**

And I know that your theme is Using Equity Data to Chart Our Course, and I hope to present some ideas on centering students in the course of disrupting inequity. So, as we proceed, I want to acknowledge that you've been engaged in deep equity work and that this is not easy work.

00:09:36 **Dr. Stroud**

And that the social construction of race, which is a pseudo-scientific hierarchization system that has been used to codify and legally sanction practices that explicitly idealize and DFI the white dominant collective and explicitly serves to exclude marginalized, dominate, and oppressed people of color.

00:10:01 **Dr. Stroud**

Now, just over two years ago and almost three years now, many of us in the colleges across the state received these notices from our public health agencies that said go home and shelter in place. There's a worldwide pandemic of a deadly virus that will change the way we live, we work, we socialize the way we study, the way we even visited with our families forever.

00:10:23 **Dr. Stroud**

If we're honest about it and not including people who perhaps have epidemiological histories and theories and backgrounds and scholarship, or not including people in healthcare and medical care - if you're honest about it, we kind of thought we were going home maybe for a long weekend. That at top, this might be kind of exciting little few days to be able to work from home, because pre-COVID, we thought it was a big deal and didn't see how working from home was almost the exception.

00:10:50 **Dr. Stroud**

And we couldn't know that we would still be making decisions today that are related to our health and our safety of simply convening in the public space, but like our workspaces, and colleges or our classrooms.

00:11:05 **Dr. Stroud**

I mean, I had to do a little bit of adjusting, I'm just going to let you all know. I just learned how to wear shoes again. I just learned how to do that. I just learned how to kind of get dressed completely. I know what they mean by a dress rehearsal now, because I had to try on several dresses before I could go out in public in one.

00:11:21 **Dr. Stroud**

But aside from my struggles, which are all virtual struggles, this pandemic laid bare the impact of the systems and the structures that create inequity in our societal institutions, including our educational institution. We've suffered significant loss and we've lost millions of lives. And we continue to lose them in ways that accentuate these inequities, these disparities.

00:11:45 **Dr. Stroud**

There is a loss of learning, there is a loss of employment. There is a loss of business and industries, a loss of housing, no homes. There's a loss of financial resources, a loss of opportunity. And significantly, there is a loss of innocence. Indeed, we have received a rude awakening from our delusion of American exceptionability or exceptionalism.

00:12:07 **Dr. Stroud**

Our nation, which is one of the richest and most advanced, most educated nations in the world had no national response to the point that we were utterly losing thousands of lives each passing day. And we continue to lead the world in the number of deaths and cases.

00:12:24 **Dr. Stroud**

And indeed, the expected disparities played out even as we looked at the impact of the virus, or the secondary effects in society, such as like roll-out of the vaccine, and all of the disparities that go with our complex geopolitical social-historical context that can be predicted by a race in these United States. And the unique nature of these challenges we face, including the nature of the pandemic.

00:12:55 **Dr. Stroud**

It is widespread and it shows the structural racism. We see the national unrest, the polarization. It presents us with our opportunity to be our best selves though. Mt. San Antonio College is practiced and polished in serving the community in many ways that not most institutions and societal systems are having to grapple with. They're having to participate in that way.

00:13:18 **Dr. Stroud**

I learned that over the past five or six years, you've been very intentionally and deliberately focused on equity that just about all of your professional development and your keynote speakers, and the work that you're doing has been addressing issues around disrupting inequity; anti-racism, unconscious bias, bystander intervention, all of those types of things.

00:13:38 **Dr. Stroud**

So, this is the moment where you get to use that deep knowledge in this work, and you get to recognize the imperative of addressing inequity and perfecting one's self to be successful in your mission.

00:13:51 **Dr. Stroud**

So, let's think about our greatness, but also, let's think about our opportunities to get it right, because there are so many people that are counting on us to get it right. Let's examine where and when and how we show up with a level of critical, racial, and equity literacy that can model for the state, if not the nation, what's possible and what'll make a difference in the lives of so many.

00:14:15 **Dr. Stroud**

So, this has been quite a year. It's full of challenges that go beyond the customary things that students often face. You know, they often do things like go to work, do their academic work, carry out their responsibilities, go to class, turn in their assignments.

00:14:30 **Dr. Stroud**

They take their exams and they try to do basic things. Like make sure they have enough to eat, make sure they have enough transportation, make sure they have healthcare, make sure they have childcare, make sure they have a roof over their head, make sure there's a roof over their family's head.

00:14:45 **Dr. Stroud**

And that was all before we faced the pandemic. The spread of the disease across the globe at a rate that was only imaginable in an outbreak exacerbated those disparities. So, the types of challenges that we have cannot be overstated.

00:15:00 **Dr. Stroud**

And it's not enough just to say that we are distracted by the pandemic, which is unlike any event that we've experienced in over a century to rattle us. Indeed, long before, there was a health pandemic in this United States in the context of our geopolitical, historical context.

00:15:17 **Dr. Stroud**

We endure on a daily basis an unrelenting unforgiving pandemic of racism. And there is no vaccine for that; mask won't help that. And it is part of our societal systems, including our economic, our political, our healthcare, religion, politics, our employment systems, our housing systems, our finance systems, and yes, our educational system, because the academy is not exempt.

00:15:49 **Dr. Stroud**

And most of these systems are interconnected to be sure to prop each other up, so that we have the employment system that ensures drastic disparities in income and assets, creating housing patterns and laws that entrap communities of color and send students to under-resourced schools, where you can find for an example, schools in this state that are literally a mile apart, that fund students at anything from 16,000 per student to 4,000 per student. And these schools are literally a mile apart.

00:16:21 **Dr. Stroud**

Because we have these under-resourced schools because the funding is based on property taxes, which is by the way, by design, to get a certain racial outcome. And then that means that people are highly unsuccessful in these under-resourced schools.

00:16:37 **Dr. Stroud**

And so, then it leads to them not being able to attain employment. And then that means they're vulnerable to lack of resources, they're vulnerable to criminal justice systems because not only do they have lack of resources, but also because regular mundane activity is criminalized.

00:16:54 **Dr. Stroud**

And then that means, it leads to a disproportionate incarceration of people of color. And yes, education is a knowing, willing, cog in that structure. And so, the pandemic of racism is particularly vitriolic because it has the amazing characteristic of being so normal.

00:17:13 **Dr. Stroud**

Like the air we breathe, so normal that it's regularly challenged us to whether it even exists or not; "Regina, is it real? I mean, are we all just playing a race card? I mean, it wasn't that ..." Like my son said when he was little; "Mama, wasn't that a long time ago?"

00:17:26 **Dr. Stroud**

We engaged in debates about whether something is always about race. And then we ignore the complex interlocking systems that create outcomes and experiences that can be predicted by race and other intersecting entities. So, yes, it is even in the California community colleges that has a mission to make sure that we educate people and that education is not preserved for the elite.

00:17:50 **Dr. Stroud**

And that indeed all those who have the ability, the benefit of education, would have access to higher education. It is a system that enrolls the majority of the students of color, who are enrolled in higher education in this nation, are enrolled in the California community colleges. Yet, it has abysmally low completion and success rate, anywhere from 13 to 26% across the nation, quite frankly. But in this state even lower, if we're generous with the data.

00:18:16 **Dr. Stroud**

And so, we can be seen to be a part of that system that perpetuates that inequity and the results are race predictable. And that means that they are manifestations of structural racism.

00:18:28 **Dr. Stroud**

Now, look, we're not the most sophisticated folks when it comes to talking about race in this nation. It often gets reduced to some false dichotomy about whether you're racist or not, or good or bad, or as Robin DiAngelo says are good, bad, binary.

00:18:43 **Dr. Stroud**

And when we do that, it ignores the complex layers that exist, the other types of racism; the social, historical, ideological, individual, institutional, cultural, and structural racism, because racism is a system of oppression, an advantage based on race. And it involves the power to maintain that system.

00:19:04 **Dr. Stroud**

So, Paul Gorski, who is out of the Equity Literacy Institute, he's at George Mason University. And I'm a Paul Gorsky groupie. I'm just a fan of a lot of his scholarship asserts, that it means that one can be advantaged and participate in the oppression of others even if you don't believe that that group is inferior to yours, even if you don't subscribe to racist ideas or racist ideology.

00:19:32 **Dr. Stroud**

And so, that's why it's important to focus, not on just changing individual attitudes. I know it's important to do for an example, unconscious bias. That's very important work, but we can do all the unconscious bias that we want. We can convince all of our colleagues who may not be on board or not that we want.

00:19:49 **Dr. Stroud**

We can do everything we can in order to impact people's ideas or notions about other people and to disrupt the regular social things that we're socialized to see. But if we don't change the structures, the practices, processes, procedures, the policies; if we don't change those structures, we will just simply be tinkering around the edges and you will not change the student outcomes.

00:20:15 **Dr. Stroud**

So, it's not about what we're feeling or about what we're thinking, and sometimes even about what we're doing; it is about those structures in place that impact students experiences both inside and outside of the classroom, both inside and outside of that campus. And that means that we have to be intentional in these days. We have to be unapologetic in leading to transgress.

00:20:41 **Dr. Stroud**

It takes leadership and leadership matters. That's grounded in equity, and leadership where one is willing to use their position of influence and consequence to make a difference. And I want to say something about that. You don't have to be the board president or on the board of trustees or the CEO, the president - you don't have to be the vice president or the deans or director.

00:21:06 **Dr. Stroud**

You don't have to be in a faculty leadership role or a faculty role or a classified professional leadership role or a classified role or a middle management role - every position in the institution, every individual in the institution can use their position of influence and consequence to make a difference in the lives of students.

00:21:26 **Dr. Stroud**

So, I always ask the leadership to give me their leadership framework, how they feel about equity-minded leadership. And what I enjoy about what Dr. Scroggins provided is that his statement opens with a call to action. He recognizes that equity work is not a spectator sport. It requires action, and then it goes on after saying a lot of great stuff, calls for accountability.

00:21:50 **Dr. Stroud**

That's where he leaves us with at the end of the statement; that we hold ourselves and each other accountable so much so that we incorporate it into our systems of accountability. You were talking about your contracts, you're talking about your evaluations, you're talking about your accreditation processes, we talk about your metrics that are public to the public - those are all systems of accountability.

00:22:11 **Dr. Stroud**

And how we evaluate ourselves; if we say on the one hand, we support equity, but then we don't encode ourselves accountable, we're actually achieving results that cannot be predicted by race, then we're missing that mark. That means that we're just giving it that narrative. So, how we evaluate our programs - are you disaggregating data by race? And I know that you do.

00:22:33 **Dr. Stroud**

I saw that the great work that the faculty are doing for an example, and looking at their own individual data for their classrooms and seeing some of the difference, and then making changes as a result of the data that you see. That takes courage and intentionality to do that.

00:22:48 **Dr. Stroud**

So, how all of you are held responsible and accountable for equity and serving the communities that you serve. So, I want you to take this message and recognize this message as a lens through which your leadership provides the leadership in this institution.

00:23:03 **Dr. Stroud**

Use it, leverage it. You're asking for resources, you're trying to tie it into your different strategic plan, and your educational master plan and those types of things, you're trying to tie it into resource allocation - use this language that Dr. Scroggins put forth because he is sharing with you the lens through which his leadership team leads this college, because this is the commitment that you make to the public, the board makes to its constituency.

00:23:34 **Dr. Stroud**

It says, "Give me your precious few resources. Give me your young people who are trying to get their education. Give me your working adults, give me your adults who are interested in renewal and regeneration, give me your organizations and businesses so we can have partnerships, and give us your precious few tax dollars, and here's what we'll provide."

00:23:51 **Dr. Stroud**

But if you look at the data and the disparities that one can predict by race, I believe that strongly, it is not that the students can't learn, and it's not that we can't teach and serve, it is structural and systemic. We have to ask, what is it about our practices, processes, procedures, policy - what is it about our pedagogy that impacts the student's ability to get in, get through, and get out on time?

00:24:17 **Dr. Stroud**

I have a lot of respect for what you've been doing. The equity initiatives you've been doing are not easy, but I also recognize that these are hard conversations to have. You see, none of us are as racially literate or culturally fluent as we want to be. We're going to get it wrong, we're going to make mistakes. And we have to give each other permission to be imperfect.

00:24:36 **Dr. Stroud**

We have to have the compassion, and news flash for people of color - though informed our lived experiences, our racial literacy is not derived from the content of the melanin in our skin. And for people who identify as white as Robin DiAngelo says, "There is nothing in your dominant culture that gives you the information you need to have an informed opinion on one of the most complex, nuanced social dilemmas for the last several hundred years, and that's race."

00:25:15 **Dr. Stroud**

So, it's not that you can't have scholarship knowledge, that you can't make yourself smarter, that you can't get the literacy - and you can get it from so many places, but it won't just come from your dominant framework. That's what's you're seeing, and we have to be respectful of that.

00:25:31 **Dr. Stroud**

We have to create spaces so we can exchange these ideas, and then we have to create safe spaces to have these. Now, also, let me make a distinction between safety and comfort.

00:25:41 **Dr. Stroud**

If you leave your house and you get stopped by the police for a traffic violation, and there's a high probability that you will not survive that encounter, that's not safe. If you're walking from the store with some Skittles and you might get killed, there's a high probability of that because you're not recognized in a neighborhood, you will be killed. Now, that's not safe.

00:26:06 **Dr. Stroud**

If you're a 12-year-old child playing a regular game in the park with a water gun, and within 16 seconds of the police arriving, because this child has a blue plastic gun in their hand, that child is dead. Now, that's not safe. But if you're in a conversation and you're scared to say something because somebody might think you're racist, because you said black instead of African American or Latino, instead of Latinakis, that's just simply uncomfortable.

00:26:35 **Dr. Stroud**

And it's through that discomfort that we'll make progress in our racial inequity literacy as we serve students. That's what's required in order to dismantle the white normativity through anti-racist education that we consistently encounter these various forms when we're doing this.

00:26:57 **Dr. Stroud**

You will encounter various forms of intractable resistance, even in the most progressive academic settings. But I feel confident in saying that without being there, I'm certain that the work is done so far, is in the framework of equity, is in the framework of making a difference.

00:27:20 **Dr. Stroud**

And I'm certain that you're willing to do everything in your power to make your college an anti-racist institution. When you are up against an ingrained, ideological perspective, that is the foundation of this nation; the laws, the government, the societal institutions, no small set of forces - and to any of the bystanders that are that are letting those other people do all that work because I'm not on the equity committee.

00:27:46 **Dr. Stroud**

Silence is a form of complicity. You don't have the luxury of apathy because you think it doesn't immediately affect you. It is not a black and brown problem, it is a white problem to be solved. So, let's do the work. Let's do the work.

00:28:02 **Dr. Stroud**

You have students in your class that are counting on you to get it right. And so, how do we know our institutions are replete with structural racism? Because in this nation, our system is founded on a racialized and class as vision for society. It was designed to ensure a certain social order and to maintain inequity, and all of us tinker around those edges, sometimes being careful not to make ourselves too uncomfortable.

00:28:25 **Dr. Stroud**

As a matter of fact, we'll have a lot of people that will say "I really support this equity, but don't change the hiring process. Don't change who reports to everybody, don't change the procedures that we use. Don't change those job descriptions. Don't change those outreach. We're really concerned about quality and integrity. We'll add a little bit to our curriculum. In other words, we'll maybe add an author or two of something, but don't change our curriculum, our course outline. As a matter of fact, that's our primacy; don't step over that threshold."

00:28:52 **Dr. Stroud**

And there's actually a certain expectation that even in the ways that we talk about it, you have to talk about it in a certain way, that you don't take on a certain tone; "Regina, don't be an angry black woman" so much so that it is focused on the tone.

00:29:07 **Dr. Stroud**

If I'm talking about oppression and suffering, there's more of a focus and significance on the tone with which I talk about it, as opposed to the content of the oppression and suffering that we're talking about. So, it results in us doing a little bit of tone policing, but not necessarily taking on the structures that are required to be taken on, because it's not easy to address something that's invisible.

00:29:34 **Dr. Stroud**

So, as you think about Mt. San Antonio College, and I had an opportunity to read your student equity plans, I had an opportunity to look at your outcomes data, and the outcome data is very predictable. It is "Mt. San Antonio enjoys some successes, but has data and disparities that can be predicted by race, of course."

00:29:54 **Dr. Stroud**

So, as you think about the student for the future, I really have two strands of thought. The first thought is that across the state, most colleges are right to wonder about being ready for students of the future. But the reality is they're not ready for the students that are here right now. And they produce outcomes and disparities that can be predicted by race that show it.

00:30:14 **Dr. Stroud**

Because if we were ready, it wouldn't exist. And second as educators, we have to make ourselves smarter about what we mean when we say students of the future. It's not just what's coming in next fall's enrollment. It's considering the fundamental characteristics of future generations and how their influence shaped and defined our geopolitical historical context, and who we are, and what we value, and what we need.

00:30:37 **Dr. Stroud**

So, the students of the future, this new cohort that's been named by I think it's McCrindle, who has done this work; Generation Alpha. These are the people who were born completely after 2000. So, they're after the millennials, but this is the cohort. The cohort starts from 2010 to 2024.

00:30:57 **Dr. Stroud**

So, they're born completely, entirely and lived in the 21st century. That means they were born with the iPad. They're described as screenagers now because of the screen time. And they are the children - now get this, this is what really got me, I know I'm getting old.

00:31:18 **Dr. Stroud**

They are the children of millennials. So, this is who will be coming to your college, and they are immersed in technology. They will learn different. They are used to an excellent user experience. And so, they have different expectations of us as educators. They have different expectations of the college in providing that service.

00:31:40 **Dr. Stroud**

I saw this really cute cartoon where the man is giving baby food to a baby in a high chair, and he says, "Now, once we graduate to solid food, I'm going to need you to help me reset my password." And they probably will be more inclusive where there's no contradiction for her to want to be a princess and a scientist simultaneously. Where her intersecting identities are fluid and not locked into the rigid notions in which most of us as educators have been socialized.

00:32:13 **Dr. Stroud**

Here's the news flash; they don't care about what we think about those notions. They expect the top-notch user experience at work and attach great importance to societal impact and purpose, as well as employer brand. That means they will take you at your promise and commitment of excellence.

00:32:36 **Dr. Stroud**

They will not tolerate our convoluted processes that really should be straightforward. They will leave us in the dust and go elsewhere for a better experience, or they will create the experience themselves. So, we have to take care to ensure that our educational systems do not replicate and perpetuate the very inequity that we think we're supposed to eradicate.

00:33:00 **Dr. Stroud**

And we know we can do that. So, one of the things I wanted to do, because they asked me very specifically to talk to them about specific strategies. And thus, one of the strategies is about diversifying the faculty. The faculty and staff diversity increases the ability to integrate multicultural and culturally responsive pedagogy into teaching practices. So, they also wanted to share different resources.

00:33:24 **Dr. Stroud**

Gloria Ladson-Billings does a tremendous amount of work in culturally relevant pedagogy. And in California, we have these diverse classrooms and we have to be able to teach in an effective way so that it has relevance and it speaks to the different students strategies, learning styles, areas, and ways in which it relates to their lives, because we drive those racial divisions or those racial disparities, and we maintain them if we are not paying attention to that.

00:33:57 **Dr. Stroud**

So, we have to pay attention to the centrality and normativity, quite frankly, of whiteness in the academy because white culture operates all around us. And it's understood as neutral. The default is so normal that it's virtually invisible to the naked eye. It defines what's okay, what's professional, what's reasonable. It defines what's the just-right level of sensitivity or behavior, ways of knowing what's excellent.

00:34:21 **Dr. Stroud**

It tells you what knowledge to value and what knowledge not to value, speaking of the can; it tells you what's qualified and what's not qualified. It tells you what's good and what's competent without ever having to explicitly say so.

00:34:34 **Dr. Stroud**

It is the model of operating, and it is manifested in public policy, in every policy practice and interaction - the dominant unquestioned standards of behavior and ways of function are embodied in the vast majority of the institutions in the United States.

00:34:52 **Dr. Stroud**

So, the underlying ideology is pervasive, but we can do something about that. We can interrogate those notions. We can disrupt those notions, understand that students do come. It's not that they come when they're unprepared, they come with cultural wealth that you're not socialized to see, or that I'm not socialized to see.

00:35:13 **Dr. Stroud**

They come from families that present that familial wealth that we commonly pathologize and see it in the form of, well, they have a strong family network, but the families, nobody went to school, so they're first gen. Or we'll say, they're impoverished. And so, we miss the opportunity to see the wealth of the students. So, that's a foundation of us to be able to think about those things.

00:35:41 **Dr. Stroud**

So, we commonly get asked about is there a competitive advantage to diversity? So, I'll first start with the research that Harvard did, and it's in relationship to corporations. And in this research, it says that it can be that you can have inherent diversity or acquired diversity.

00:36:00 **Dr. Stroud**

And that's actually interesting because a lot of people do talk about, wait a minute, does it just mean that we do tokenism, that you have people here? And does that mean that because somebody comes from a minoritized group, that they have the right perspective around diversity, equity and inclusion? Not necessarily so. It talks about the multi-dimensions of diversity and literacy there.

00:36:22 **Dr. Stroud**

And that therefore, those were 2D; diversity that they're more likely to report that the market share is higher and they've captured a new market. And without diverse leadership, women are 20% less likely than straight white men to rein the endorsement of their ideas.

00:36:41 **Dr. Stroud**

That's the thing where you're in a meeting, and you say, "Didn't I just say that and so forth?" And when at least one member of the team has the traits in common with the end user, the entire team better understands that user.

00:36:53 **Dr. Stroud**

And so, that's where you can start to transfer some things as an academic, that the team member, that if you have a faculty that shares or that in some ways, reflects the students that you're serving, you're much more likely as a team to understand, or as a faculty member to understand the needs of that student.

00:37:13 **Dr. Stroud**

Because ultimately, regardless of whether you're corporate or education, diverse teams make decisions, make better decisions up to 87% of the time. That's almost 90%, that's pretty profound.

00:37:26 **Dr. Stroud**

So, there was a seminal study that was conducted at Foothill-De Anza that involved ... it conducted by some faculties at Foothill-De Anza. It wasn't necessarily a study of Foothill-De Anza. It involves some 30,000 students and 21,000 different types of classes. It was done by Fairlie and Oreopoulos. And this is a pretty seminal study, was done in 2014, I think.

00:37:53 **Dr. Stroud**

And in this study, they just basically said, look, if students have access to a diverse faculty, you find the changes or the increase in student success. You find increases in student success in terms of completion, and you find increase in student success in terms of retention, in terms of grade performance.

00:38:14 **Dr. Stroud**

I would strongly encourage you to get ahold of Fairlie's study, it's used throughout the system, and it's still very relevant. It's quite a seminal piece and probably will continue to be cited for many, many years in people's scholarship. But how are you doing at Mt. SAC?

00:38:32 **Dr. Stroud**

So, now this data comes from the Campaign for College Opportunity, but we also have the data that comes from the Chancellor's Office, Data Mart. And we also have the data that comes from USA, Data USA. And so, actually, Mt. SAC is to be commended because it's made some progress over the last 20 years, despite millions of dollars being invested.

00:38:53 **Dr. Stroud**

The California community college has only moved the needle 1% in terms of faculty diversity, particularly faculty diversity in the classroom. But Mt. SAC has actually moved the needle quite a bit.

00:39:04 **Dr. Stroud**

So, what I want to point out though, is that Mt. SAC, even today, has a student population of about 9% that would identify as white, yet overwhelmingly, your leadership, your tenure faculty, your non-tenured faculty, who are in the pipeline - the people who make the advice on the academic and professional matters, who have an influence on the policies are overwhelming white, which means they overwhelmingly come from a dominant framework.

00:39:33 **Dr. Stroud**

And there is room. Now, these numbers have changed quite frankly a little bit by about 10 to 12% in terms of your tenured faculty - maybe 10%. You now are no longer 58%, you're 47.2; Latinx - 21.9, black - 3.2, Asian - 11 . 8. And the same thing in the non-tenure, you're now no longer 48%, you're at 35.2.

00:40:00 **Dr. Stroud**

So, you've made progress in terms of ... and I don't know what it is in your Academic Senate, but I can tell you that you've made progress. That didn't happen serendipitously, that didn't happen by accident. That happened because you were intentionally and deliberately focused on that.

00:40:13 **Dr. Stroud**

So, I wanted to share with you based on what I saw in your database based on the work that you've done. You asked the question or I posed the question, what do students of color need?

00:40:26 **Dr. Stroud**

They need you to do the work addressing inequity. They need you to be real and to challenge yourself and your colleagues. And they need you to create programs and classrooms and environments that foster belonging, validation, support networks, and cultural affirmation.

00:40:43 **Dr. Stroud**

In other words, the same thing, they need the same thing that white students need, and that we teach and serve so well. So, this message, which was when you can't go anywhere else, you can always come home. That was an indelible message that Howard University, one of the nation's historically black colleges and university instilled in the arriving undergraduate students when I went to Howard.

00:41:09 **Dr. Stroud**

Such a message was delivered on my first day at Howard University's College of Nursing (first day). They didn't open with saying, "Let's have some housekeeping ..." I want to talk to you about this housekeeping and people of color meetings as well; housekeeping, they didn't say let's do some ground rules, they didn't say "Here's the rules for my syllabus."

00:41:30 **Dr. Stroud**

From the very first day, the first moment, the first class that they convened us as students, they talked to us about our graduate programs. For the community colleges, we have to consider students not disadvantaged, but as scholars. They talked about us. We were talking about where you can get your master's degree.

00:41:52 **Dr. Stroud**

And they said they were explaining why they ... in the dominant framework, there's a lot of conversation about changing and having diversity of your degrees, not coming from the same kind of insulated thinking of one single institution. But they recognize that they were talking to students that might not necessarily be welcomed in other institutions all the time.

00:42:16 **Dr. Stroud**

And so, they intentionally had a policy that if you want to work on your graduate degree, you want to work on a master's degree on a PhD - when you can't go anywhere else, you can always come home.

00:42:28 **Dr. Stroud**

That is affirmation, that is validation. That is an environment where we recognize that failure was not an option, that they expected us to be successful. And that is something that we can think about. We call ourselves educators and deans, but we fail to characterize the students as scholars.

00:42:50 **Dr. Stroud**

We are not on the front lines, they are not enemy combatants. They're not landmines that you're going to step on. We don't target students, they don't blow up your email. Those are things that we have to reconceptualize how we see students and how we use our language. And then as faculty and staff, we have the opportunity to start to talk to students about their futures from day one.

00:43:23 **Dr. Stroud**

So, rethink how you start the semester off, rethink how you start your classrooms off. Whether you start your classrooms, giving your dominant framework of "Here are the rules, and this is the structure, and what we do - we expect you to operate," or if you start your classroom in a different way.

00:43:39 **Dr. Stroud**

And I know that many people have lots of different things that they do very successful. So, I don't think that I'm giving you any new idea. And many of your students have been relentlessly subjected to the cruelty and the trauma of having to navigate and thrive in this framework in the academy, that's passed off as neutral, that's passed off as excellent.

00:43:58 **Dr. Stroud**

That actually has the impact of invalidating and destroying and traumatizing, marginalizing, excluding, and negating. Now, I don't want this message to be that we are doing everything wrong. I want this message to be a consciousness-raising message, so that you're interrogating your habits, your practices, your processes. And if in the interrogation you find that it is affirming, it is validating, et cetera - then continue those.

00:44:26 **Dr. Stroud**

If it causes you as the question - and certainly, I had to look at the way I did things and thought about things as I was teaching in the nursing program, because people could die. I had to kind of figure out, as they say in nursing, "Are we eating? Are we affirming?"

00:44:42 **Dr. Stroud**

And I went from the seriousness of it that, "Oh my God, people could die" to saying to students, "You're going to have a lot of fun this semester. And as a matter of fact, you can't get it wrong. And even if you get it wrong and they stop breathing, we still got four minutes. We still got four minutes before this irreparable damage."

00:45:02 **Dr. Stroud**

So, we have to pay attention to that. Indeed, we have to be caring and compassionate. We have to understand that there are some things we're socialized not to see. And so, we make ourselves smarter around that.

00:45:17 **Dr. Stroud**

Because I want you to know that if you are socialized from cradle to grave, if you're taught the valuable contributions that your people have made to literature, to science, to technology, to philosophy, to fine arts, creative arts, to business, and so much more, that the way you speak is valued and common, and considered to be the standard for communicating, quite frankly, around the world.

00:45:41 **Dr. Stroud**

Where your natural, physical characteristics are considered to be the standard of beauty, excellence, dignity, and grace, where it's considered professional the hair that grows out of your head is completed to be professional and beautiful, luxurious, where you represent the essence of goodness virtuosity and integrity in industry - if you've been taught that from cradle to grave, how could you understand or know anything different without being intentional and having some consciousness around it, and actively interrogating that.

00:46:17 **Dr. Stroud**

And it's not just that people in our dominant framework have been taught that, all of us have been taught that, which means all of the students experience that negative social association, that trauma, that cruelty. Not intentional cruelty but that cruelty, that psychological cruelty that can happen.

00:46:43 **Dr. Stroud**

So, weighs on the student's ability to see themselves as whole beings and being fully accepted, and creating feelings of social ineptness, and it devalues their experience. And yes, they succumb to things like stereotypes. So, we have to be careful to make sure that we have some consciousness around it.

00:47:02 **Dr. Stroud**

"Yeah, but Regina, what do we do?" Develop a comprehensive diversity framework. That means look at it beyond the individual thing; yes, you need to do curriculum audits. Yes, you need to colonize your classrooms. Yes, we need to make sure we look at our hiring practices.

00:47:15 **Dr. Stroud**

But look at an entire comprehensive diversity framework where you start with a fundamental overriding research question that says, what is it about our practices, processes, procedures, pedagogy, and policies that impacts a student's ability to get in, get through, and get out on time.

00:47:30 **Dr. Stroud**

And then you deconstruct that by multiple domains; how you outreach, how you communicate, what are your financial policies? What are your curriculum policies? What are your hiring policies? You look at multiple domains and figure out how you can create this culture of affirmation and validation.

00:47:50 **Dr. Stroud**

Take a look at your skill of engagement; how engaged are you in equity? And I'll share with you a skill that I developed and of course, could be perfected and you could take what you need and leave the rest from that. And you collaborate with diverse communities so that you can do things like modify your mission statement, get stronger in your mission statement, so that everybody understands from day one, why they come to Mt. San Antonio College, and what their role is at Mt. San Antonio College.

00:48:15 **Dr. Stroud**

So, that whatever that mission statement says, it's not your fault. What I say, you have what I call the regular required accreditation mission statement, where accreditation, as in the standards, all the things that are supposed to be in there.

00:48:27 **Dr. Stroud**

But I don't know that based on the way it is that anybody can actually, no matter how many years they've been, there can actually, if I walk up to them and ask them "What's the mission of the institution?" Meaning what's the purpose? Why are you here - that anybody could recite it to me.

00:48:42 **Dr. Stroud**

And so, for me, in my leadership, it was very important for people to understand why they came to work every day. So, in my particular institution, the mission statement was to empower and transform a global community of learners. That's why the custodians came. That's why public safety came. That's why the faculty came.

00:48:59 **Dr. Stroud**

And I want you to know, I want you to know - I realize I'm a few minutes over. I want you to know that everybody, that institution, particularly around accreditation was able to say to anybody who walked up to them why they were there.

00:49:12 **Dr. Stroud**

Continue your comprehensive professional development program, you have an outstanding program. Execute a strategic plan for diversifying the faculty. It does not follow just the probability factors that you would be so off to have an overwhelmingly white faculty, and so few white students that you serve. Create a safe environment for people to be able to have these discussions and stop hiding behind any of the bureaucracy, if you do.

00:49:39 **Dr. Stroud**

And that is commonly in the guise of governance and transparency and budget. And we'll have a lot of different fights about different things, but in fundamentally, it's often about equity. And so, these things are used to perpetuate or to keep certain things - and celebrate the good work that you are doing.

00:49:57 **Dr. Stroud**

I did go through your complete student equity plan, I see all of the different things that are there, and it will lead to some results. I see equity-focused programs and professional development, I see the research that's being done completely through that even all the way down to your onboarding processes that you have.

00:50:14 **Dr. Stroud**

I see the student academic and support centers' work, the work that came out of ... like the information that I heard from ACCESS this morning; Arise, DREAM, REACH - all of those types of things. So, I want to commend you and encourage you to continue to do those.

00:50:28 **Dr. Stroud**

And this is a scale of engagement where I said, evaluate yourself on a scale of engagement. And I'll share this with you; you can determine whether it is something that you ... it's not continued to be linear. You can determine where you want to be. Sometimes institutions occupy several spaces on this continuum. Sometimes institutions, they're completely siloed about it.

00:50:49 **Dr. Stroud**

Some of them have really perfected at the symbolic, "We start with the commitment statements," there's all kinds of resolutions passed by the Senates and the boards and those types of things, there's a statement on the website. It gets reflected in the mission statement; we open with the land acknowledgemnts, we pay attention to offensive mascots. We do all of that fun, fair, fashion, food.

00:51:12 **Dr. Stroud**

Then there's further where you actually have the equity projects and initiatives. You have that at Mt. SAC, you do professional development, you have affinity groups, you have an equity ... it's an equity additive approach. That means you keep your regular dominant framework, but you add authors of things or you add things to what exists the regular.

00:51:30 **Dr. Stroud**

And then there's the transformational where you actually change your processes, where you actually change your design, your curriculum, your sequence, and your pedagogy, where you've audited your policies. And then of course, there's a comprehensive diversity framework that you have, and there's accountability measures in place.

00:51:48 **Dr. Stroud**

If no one's being held accountable and you come in to work and you still have these outcomes, then that is because of the normativity. That is because of the normativity of failure of students of color. And what do I mean by that?

00:52:03 **Dr. Stroud**

It means that if we were to walk in today and the data showed that white students were doing drastically worse than black and brown students in completion, in retention and transfer, we would call the IT department and say, "Look, shut down the system, we have been hacked. This is not normal, something is wrong."

00:52:25 **Dr. Stroud**

And all systems would stop. They call in the forensics people to take a look at the data, you get a little note saying the data warehouse is down now because there is no way that would be considered normal. And if it's real, it necessitates a stopping the presses, stopping work as usual. Yet for decades of ... since the existence of the institution, that was possible.

00:52:50 **Dr. Stroud**

We come in and we see that data about black and brown students, and we do business as usual. We go out and talk about how great we are and knowing full well that the students, that there is a significant disparity in the performance of the students, which means we haven't re-conceptualized it to say it is not "Why can't those students learn?" It is why are we so consistently unsuccessful in teaching and serving black and brown students?

00:53:19 **Dr. Stroud**

Because we know we can teach, we know we can serve. We know we can lead, we know we can be administrators in certain areas. We can serve as staff, as well as faculty. We know those things because we do so well with white students.

00:53:31 **Dr. Stroud**

So, why are we so consistently unsuccessful? And that when you ask it from that way, you'll no longer have the needs or the answers be "They need more tutoring," which they may need. "They need more counseling," which they may need.

00:53:45 **Dr. Stroud**

All of that is important, but it means that you start to internally reflect; what do you need as an institution to pay attention to, and how do you address your systems and your structures of that great institution? Because it is not passive, it is intentional. It is deliberate.

00:54:04 **Dr. Stroud**

I just want to leave you with just encourage you to take a look at the Equity Literacy Institute, and the commitments that Paul Gorski makes, and all of the work that quite frankly, you may find it to be very helpful to you.

00:54:17 **Dr. Stroud**

And I have found by becoming an Equity Literacy Institute groupie and taken just about anything that he puts out, any class that he gives - I have found it to be tremendously informative and to support me in my own development of racial literacy, because it is that, that you need in order to disrupt - in order to disrupt the inequity that is apparent in so many of the institutions across the state, including Mt. San Antonio

00:54:50 **Dr. Stroud**

I think you're going to have a wonderful, wonderful fall semester. I think you will get to those outcomes that we're talking about. I think you'll be celebrating many, many things at Mt. San Antonio College. And I really am grateful to you for the opportunity to at least make this comment and offer to you ways that as you chart your course, how you recenter students in the middle of that charting, in order to disrupt the inequity. Good luck to you. Thank you.

00:55:25 **Christina**

Thank you for listening to the Magic Mountie Podcast, and don't forget to share your favorite episodes.