Cristobal Rodriguez [00:00:00]:

Despite that, currently it's easy to feel silenced, to be in fear, to be traumatized. We think about our families, our students, our communities. We hear the stories. We see them. We've lived them. But we never lose hope.

Chisa Uyeki [00:00:17]:

Welcome to the Mount San Antonio College Podcast. I'm Chisa Uyeki a Mount SAC professor and librarian, and I'm pleased to be your host for this season. Our goal is to keep you connected to our campus by bringing you the activities and events you may not have time to attend to share the interesting things our colleagues are creating and innovative ways they are supporting and connecting with Mount SAC students. Join me as we explore Mount sac hi and welcome back to the Mount SAC Podcast. I'm Chisa Uweki.

Ivan Sanchez [00:00:56]:

And I'm Ivan Sanchez and we are your hosts for this episode. Today we bring you the highlights from spring Flex Day 2025, featuring segments from our keynote speaker, Dr. Cristobal Rodriguez, who starts us off on the theme of Healing Centered Engagement.

Chisa Uyeki [00:01:12]:

You'll also hear key moments from three sessions, common course numbering, healing and Empowering. Rising scholars and future healers lead with early alerts, and you'll hear Ivan and I jumping in to provide context where needed. We'll kick off our key moments with Dr. Rodriguez. Enjoy.

Event Host [00:01:36]:

So it's my honor to introduce Dr. Cristobal Rodriguez, a nationally recognized leader in educational equity. He currently serves as an Associate Provost for Equity Centered Initiatives at Western Michigan University, where he works to embed equity and inclusion across academic programs and policies. Beyond his leadership in higher education. Dr. Rodriguez was appointed by President Biden to the Advisory Commission on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence and Economic Opportunities for Hispanics, advising on national policy for Latinx communities. His research and advocacy focuses on systemic equity, culturally responsive leadership, and expanding opportunities for historically marginalized students. His lifelong dedication to justice, mentorship, and inclusion aligns perfectly with today's theme of Healing Centered Engagement. So please join me in welcoming Dr. Cristobal Rodriguez.

Cristobal Rodriguez [00:03:29]:

After the election, we knew that what was coming for us was trying to think about the sense of hope and aspirations that we would want to hear or listen to. And it really brought me back to an article that I had published with a good colleague of mine when I was at Howard, Dina Khalil. Her and I wrote a piece called no Ban, no Wall, and we centered around this concept of an education of love. And we used reference to works of MLK reference the works of Audre Lorde as well, and bell hooks in the Ethics of Love. And the idea was for us to begin to conceptualize. Now I had done A little bit of conversations before that on leadership of love, what that could look like.

Cristobal Rodriguez [00:03:29]:

But we wanted to speak from that framework and to really try to connect the dots as to what does that look like when it comes to really what I would say is being responsive to today's realities, politics, challenges. I heard earlier a little bit about, and I really appreciate the level of empathy that is reflected by you all when it comes to thinking about your students, thinking about your community, and the level of empathy that that reflects. And I think that's critically important as opposed to thinking more about the preservation of an institution or the preservation of a space. Identity does matter. To have culturally, linguistically reflective leaders and spaces is part of the conversation that we can push for in connecting the dots. So as we think about that framework, it is about serving Latino communities, period. But also acknowledging that there's power in our identity to be able to connect the dots culturally and linguistically to a greater level. And we use that by acknowledging additional frameworks like Gloria and Zaldua's Borderlands consciousness.

Cristobal Rodriguez [00:04:37]:

What does that teach us there and how does that connect to our work? And the emphasis is that being culturally responsive and hopefully through this idea, we can roadmap to better prepare our leaders to serve our communities and to really push the conversation forward and improving how we can be more responsive and at the end of the day, improve educational equity and access and success for all of our communities. So borderlands epistemology, when we think about nepantla as a concept or just overall consciousness, it's understanding, having the expertise, the experience, the wisdom that for many of us who grew up in the border, in the Frontera, like I have, like we're always been going back and forth culturally, linguistically, are transitioning. But in that, we also build this kind of level of wisdom to be able to understand multiple context perspectives, even when they're conflicting, you know, one side or the other, especially in that dualistic society that we live in, but also when we think about what it means to them, bridge that at some level, we are bridges that we do draw connections. And think about your old roles as educators, you're in the constant process of doing that and bridging, right? And always thinking about multiple contexts. And as experts, as you know, historically, soothsayers, healers, you're thinking about all those multiple perspectives and considerations and bringing that wisdom to bear in the way that you're bridging, right? So that's part of that process, also acknowledging terriosis, community, cultural wealth as key aspects in that social familial. Linguistic and aspirational capitals and communities are powerfully and critically important. Now my other favorite ones that I didn't highlight is like, especially during this times, like resistance capital or navigational capital is part of that process, right? But all those play critical elements when it comes to giving us these kind of unique, exceptional abilities to do what we do. And really moving away from a continuing challenge today in policy and practice and leadership is that we're still fighting deficit thinking assumptions about our community.

Cristobal Rodriguez [00:06:45]:

It still informs practice, it still informs policy, it still informs leadership. So shifting away from that becomes critically important. So how do we do that? So we move away from assumptions to an asset based approach when it comes to an equity centered approach when it comes to our communities. Good example is we often think about our students and who is able or not able and who can achieve or not succeed. And we've not given enough credit to think about, well, what are the inequities that have plagued our communities from the preschool through high school? For one, Latino communities by far have one of the lowest rates of accessing college readiness indicators. AP coursework, math, science coursework, 8th grade algebra, being identified as gifted. Those all become pathways. But moreover, it's access to those resources.

Cristobal Rodriguez [00:07:34]:

So when we look at standardized test scores, we'll see how that plays out. Those are the symptoms of those inequities. So when we get our students at our level in higher education, they've been experienced those inequities, that lack of access, the lack of resources. And it's not just that access to such programs, it's also the access to teachers, high quality, highly prepared teachers as part of the conversation and in the midst of segregated realities, you see those inequities play out. Now, when you look at how that translates to our success or lack of success in college as undergraduate studies or at two year institutions that then contributes, whether or not they will continue on, transfer or contribute to, whether go on to graduate studies or professional schools. When we look at our numbers of Latina, Latino, Latinx, Latin A students going on at such levels or to such transitions, that's where we see the underrepresentation, right? That's where we see that our students need to be able to hit the ground running when they start college and do exceptionally well so that then they can meet those aspirations to go on to professional schools, medical schools, graduate studies, or go on to four year degrees and so on, but those inequities continue. So even though we've done a good job of increasing the number of associate level Degrees and four year degrees, it's not translating onto the next level. So as a community, we're about half the rate when it comes to graduate and professional studies in Rome.

Cristobal Rodriguez [00:09:00]:

So when you beg the question how leadership matters and how we're very underrepresented in leadership roles, in faculty roles, in lawyers, doctors, those things matter. But there's a huge, huge underrepresentation from that level. So connecting the dots and understand how it's all systemic and moving away from this process of we tend to blame the victim, we tend to kind of, at the end of the day, some kids work hard and some kids don't, right? There's all these assumptions that still play out today and they shape policy and leadership. But as we think about love, right? Quoting even this is important. MLK Jr quote, I've decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear. I say that because we can look at today's politics, political reality, there's a lot of hate. And the counter to that is love, right? When we think about what does that mean to have love as a transformative force, looking at MLK's concepts, it transcends that.

Cristobal Rodriguez [00:09:57]:

Personal serving extends to a collective struggle for justice, right? Not as mere affection, but as principled, deliberate choice to build a just society. So when we think about education, particularly a critical education, it nurtures that empathy, that understanding, that solidarity. That's the power of leading with love, right? Really, as educators, it's part of our philosophy to serve, right? So that's how we also enhance that and to be deliberative again in that process. But I also think that in that process we're modeling leadership for the next generation. I've always believed that part of the process that we should really think about is working in community to the extent where particularly our youth can begin to model and see and experience how they can use their identity, their wisdom that they already have, and caring for others in the community so that they can be solutions to our communities. I was advocated when community centered approaches to educator preparation are part of the conversation, become critically important. In that same centering is also that culturally responsive engagement. In that same process, we begin to see that in fact we do have solutions in our communities.

Cristobal Rodriguez [00:11:13]:

We're here to bless students so they can bless others. That's the work we're trying to achieve, right? That we're building community leaders, whether they go into a tech field or they go into STEM or whatever it may be, we are building leaders, right? And we need to model some of that and we need to acknowledge their own cultural, linguistic assets that they do carry. And then that next step of that consciousness of being able to see themselves as solutions so that they're not in this idea of I just want to get out of the battery, I want to get out of the hood and get out of the resin. That's it. But to see themselves as solutions is powerful. And for them to see that and achieve that is very, very important. So this modeling leadership for the next generation is more, I think, is our role as educators in our philosophy, in our wisdom, in our truth saying. And that's part of the work we do.

Cristobal Rodriguez [00:12:04]:

That's why we work at public institutions to connect those dots. Despite that currently it's easy to feel silenced, to be in fear, to be traumatized. We think about our families, our students, our communities. We hear the stories, we see them, we've lived them. But we never lose hope.

Chisa Uyeki [00:12:27]:

Next, we'll go to the Common Course Numbering Flex Session, presented by Kelly Rivera and Jamaica Fowler. In this excerpt, we'll hear from Kelly, who's serving as the faculty coordinator shepherding Mount SAC through the process of implementing common course numbering. Kelly provides an overview of the what and why of this legislative mandate to make course numbering consistent across the California Community College system. To learn more, check out the links in the show notes.

Kelly Rivera [00:13:01]:

Okay, so at the state level, what is this thing? Why was AB 1111, otherwise known as common course numbering, passed? Well, it was passed from Senator Berman's office basically to address longstanding issues and inconsistencies in course numbering across the community colleges. The inconsistencies made it difficult for students to transfer between the colleges. This sometimes led students to take unnecessary extra un. The idea was that by establishing a student facing common course numbering system, the initiative would simplify articulation and transfer pathways. The legislature recognized that when different colleges use different numbering for the same course, it creates barriers for students. And so they've passed this bill essentially mandating that common course numbering system be built and implemented. So the Chancellor's office is basically responsible for implementation. They work closely with the ASCCC and faculty work groups.

Kelly Rivera [00:14:16]:

The directive is more than just names and numbers, though. It's about standardizing course equivalency across the system. So how do they do this? The Chancellor's office established the Common Course Numbering Council to oversee implementation, and that council collaborates with the AS Triple C to ensure faculty involvement in curriculum decisions. Faculty have purview over curriculum. So as curriculum is designed, it requires faculty input and design to implement the main task of this work group. Is to organize course alignment over various phases which we're going to discuss. And the Chancellor's office is then overseeing system wide rollout of these phases. The AS Triple C is organizing this kind of faculty driven implementation.

Kelly Rivera [00:15:09]:

So they're organizing the faculty work groups and they're working with local senates to recruit and to ensure that these are indeed faculty driven groups. So AS Triple C's role, they've really taken leadership over how to implement this because of course it should be faculty driven. We don't want the legislature mandating what is the actual course content, nor do we want the Chancellor's office doing that. This should be faculty driven work. So faculty engagement is key in this transition. They have ensured faculty voices shape the process. They do that through work groups. They're also working not just with the community college faculty, but also with California universities like the CSUs and the UCs because they want to ensure that the new common course numbering cors do not disrupt transfer articulation.

Kelly Rivera [00:16:04]:

So that's another piece to the puzzle that we have to be mindful of. There is still some urgency for certain departments where things may move more quickly than we'd like. Not because things are happening locally that way, but because of the mandates that are coming down from the state. We have to comply with the legislature and the timeline we get from the Chancellor's office. As soon as a template is released, you'll hear from me and I will tell your department through your chair, here's your template. It has to be updated and your chair really if you're involved in any of these phases already, they've already heard from me. So hopefully this is on your radar. So catalog when names and numbers changes that can cause confusion.

Kelly Rivera [00:16:49]:

Let's take for example speech, right? So let's say a student goes and looks for speech, but now it's the prefix is comm. How are they going to find it? Or maybe they're a returning student or maybe they they're working off an ed plan that said something else. Right? So if they look up speech, they're going to find calm. The idea here is let's make it so there's no confusion. These searches will reference each other and there will be information that says all speech courses as of 2526 are comm courses. Right. The idea is to make it seamless and as clear as possible for students so if they look for it, they find it. So multiple phases.

Kelly Rivera [00:17:27]:

This is not happening all at once. So that's the other piece is that for the next few years our current Students are going to be kind of experiencing this sort of layering in, of course, as names and numbers changing. In five years from now, students will just be locked in. The names and numbers should be pretty well established by then. But right now we're in a transition phase.

Ivan Sanchez [00:17:51]:

In this session, Healing and Empowering Rising Scholars, we hear from Graciela Padilla and Joe Hernandez, two leaders from Mount sac's Rising Scholars program. We begin with Graciela, who shares incredible national data on recidivism, the rate at which people return to incarceration after being released. Recidivism is defined as when someone reoffends and is rearrested, reconvicted, or re incarcerated. Currently, about 42% of people released from prison in the US are re incarcerated within three years. But as Graciela explains, education is this powerful disruptor in this cycle. She walks us through these compelling statistics and shows how earning a college degree, especially an associates, bachelor's or even a master's, can really lower the likelihood of of returning to prison. Then you'll hear from Joe Hernandez, director of Rising Scholars at Mount SAC and someone who has lived experiences with incarceration. Joe shares their insight from their dissertation work and also talks about how acceptance, accountability and belonging helps students at Mount SAC succeed.

Ivan Sanchez [00:19:00]:

He also shares how faculty and staff play this incredible role in what he refers to as cultivating the soil. So this segment reminds us that the educational journey can be a deeply healing one, especially for students who never thought college was in their future.

Graciela Padilla [00:19:18]:

Hello. So now let's go a little bit about the Data. So the US accounts for 5% of the world population, but it accounts for 25% of the world's incarcerated population with 7.3 million people under supervision. So and 95% of those that are incarcerated will come home. So as far as recidivism. So recidivism is when a person reoffends and can include being rearrested, reconvicted or returned to prison. And the current rate stands at 42% of those released will be re incarcerated again within three years. The spending, so we're spending over $81,000 are spent per person in prison.

Graciela Padilla [00:19:55]:

And the impact of this is 1 in 2 adults in the United States have experienced incarceration in their family. So as far as the recidivism rates go, a student or someone with no degree, the national average for recidivism rate for release offenders is about 42% within three years and 82% within 10 years if they have an associate's degree. The studies show that those who attain an associate's degree while incarcerated experience recidivism rates of approximately 13.7%, compared to the national average of around 40%, while once they receive a bachelor's degree, that rate drops to 5.6%. So the studies indicating that the rates drop. So as you can see, the rates kind of keep dropping as they're getting more degrees or higher in their education. For students who have their master's or doctorates, the individuals who earn a master's degree exhibit even lower recidivism rates. So it drops to under 2%.

Joe Hernandez [00:20:51]:

For my dissertation, I interviewed students, and then I asked the students who impacted their educational journey the most, and then I went and I interviewed those people who are their mentors. So. And then we'll get into that. But that's really what you all could be here, right? As faculty, you interact with our students much more. You know, we have a big impact in their life, but you also have some stuff that you could do for them. And most of our students have used out what Kevin talked about. Una Rocio and everybody, right? They come here already with the knowledge that is inherent in them. And I call them streetwise scholars.

Joe Hernandez [00:21:23]:

Right? With lived wisdom. Right. Used to. We used to say experience, but wisdom now, as they're getting educated, gives them a better understanding of how to navigate the system, how to get ahead and really get through these goals, you know, and through that, like you saw, they build their own families. Some of you might be a part of what they call their family. We are a big part of their family. And then the other thing that we see often here is they help each other out. So they kind of get their own homies from here.

Joe Hernandez [00:21:49]:

So we have students that form unofficial study groups. They'll get each other. They'll take classes together. That's why you'll see groups of students that take four or five classes together. I'll give you an example. We had a new student who was being onboarded at the beginning of the semester, and one of our peer mentors was like, you know what? I'm going to have you take this class with me because it's on your educational plan. I'm taking this class. You're taking it with me, and we're going to get an A, you know, so.

Joe Hernandez [00:22:13]:

So things like that. And what they asked for, that I got from a lot of the students. The first one is the double A, which is instead of doing two, it was acceptance and accountability. A lot of my people really talked about that, their counselor, their professor that they Were able to talk to them about experiences that they were having in the classroom, but not just in the classroom, but things like coming home. They might have gotten re. Incarcerated or might have experienced something traumatic as a professor. They got some acceptance because they didn't feel chastised for what they were going through or if they relapse and being able to talk to somebody about that and the accountability became, as they developed that relationship with that professor or that person, they felt accountable to that person for when they said or did something that they were going to follow through. They also talked about being watered.

Joe Hernandez [00:23:01]:

And this part right here, being watered, is really looking at the experiences that the students get being taught or even being pushed to do things that they wouldn't expect that they could do in the community college. You know, sometimes we get students that we have them present, we have them do panels. You know, I know Kevin, last year took two of our students to the American Criminology Society. So that was something big, right? Like, so myself and Kevin together, we weren't presenting anywhere until we were in a master's program or in our bachelor's programs. And some of these students are getting those experiences as community college students. And then the other one that I think that's big, that they talked about was pushing hope that you all could do when you see something in the student. You know, I could give you just, I think for myself, when I was a student here at Mount Sac, you know, my. My counselor, Diana Felix, used to talk to me all the time about how I was going to get a master's and how I was going to work at a community college.

Joe Hernandez [00:23:56]:

And I honestly thought she was crazy, right? I didn't think I'd get anything, you know, let alone, you know, with the felonies that I had, that I was going to get a job anywhere. But she saw something in me that I couldn't see. And I think that's the big part that you all play in their lives. And what I learned as you play this part in their lives, what you all do is what I like to call cultivating the soil. I'm going to point them out. Chase Jones had a class with our students, and they love the way that he taught them. And I think one of the most important things that they love that they talked about is he used an article that I wrote. And a lot of the students came to me and were like, you wrote an article? And I was like, yeah, it's peer reviewed.

Joe Hernandez [00:24:35]:

It's empirical research. I tell them a lot about it, but I Think using things and letting them know, like, hey, this person was incarcerated, or these things, but you get to change things to create kind of a form of acceptance for them on campus. The other thing that I found that's important, right? I'm calling it experiential humility. You know, and sometimes I think we get this mentality that because, you know, I did it, you could do it, right? And it's not so much because I did it, you could do it, but it's letting them know, like, listen, this is what I did and this is how I struggled. But you can do it as well. But it's also, you know, like in our mind and thinking about it. I experienced incarceration, but I didn't experience incarceration to the level of some of our students, right? We have students here that come home to us that may have had a life sentence and never thought they were coming home and have done 20 years, 25 years, 30 years. I think we have a student that might have done close to 40 years, you know, so these students experience long term incarceration and we can't tell them, like, oh yeah, you know, like I did 30 days.

Joe Hernandez [00:25:36]:

It's the same, it's the same. It's not the same. They're different experiences. And allowing the students to have their own experience and just acknowledging it. And I think the next one is you can plant those seeds of hope similar to myself, that you could be that person who knows what the next rising scholar that comes into your classroom is going to accomplish. If you really want to look at it. There's research that shows that when you have these conversations, they're called transformative ruptures by Dolores Delgado Bernard and Enrique Leman, where if you have conversations, if you give experience, it creates these ruptures in the students thinking that have been kind of imposed on them by society at large. And what I kind of want to get to that I saw that happens that you all can facilitate is a healing rupture.

Joe Hernandez [00:26:23]:

Is that experience that that student needs to heal, right? And kind of form an area in their life where they no longer see what they experience as a deficit, but understand that it was a part of the story that they're still writing as they're going along.

Ivan Sanchez [00:26:40]:

In this next session, Future Leaders Heal with Early Alerts, we'll learn how early alerts, human connection and Healing centered education can help students thrive. We begin with Kenny Yen, who gives us an overview of the early alert system at Mount sac. These alerts are a way for faculty and students to raise their hands for help, whether it's academic counseling, tutoring, or even support with basic. Kenny also shares promising data showing that students who receive alerts and follow up with support services actually succeed at higher rates than those who don't. He explains how the system works a little bit behind the scenes and what faculty can expect when they do submit an alert. Then we transition over to counselor Yolanda Haro, who offers a really powerful perspective on the healing power of connection. She shares stories of students who have struggled to feel seen or to believe that they belong in college.

Ivan Sanchez [00:27:32]:

Yolanda emphasizes the importance of one on one moments, building trust with our students and letting them know that it's okay to be confused or overwhelmed and ask for help. She reminds us that for many students, simply knowing someone cares can actually be life changing. So let's listen in.

Kenny Yen [00:27:52]:

How can we help students? One person here, Joyce, she mentioned about referrals, referring students, and that is what we're going to segue into and talk about in this platform. EAB Navigate is what we use to submit our early alerts and early alerts what it is. Essentially it's a program designed, here's the formal definition, but in summary, what it is, it's a tool that we can use, that we leverage to really engage our support services. So it's a simple tool, has a great feedback system. We'll go more to detail about the tool itself, but it's just an easy way for you to connect students with our support services on campus. And so what are the features of early alerts? Okay, so the first feature is we have a feedback loop, which is great because a lot of times with our old system, what we've noticed is a faculty member will submit an alert and months or weeks will go by and nothing happens. Well, not that nothing happens is that you don't know what happens. Now with this tool, we do have a feedback loop.

Kenny Yen [00:28:56]:

So you submit an alert. It can take some of our staff members working on these alerts that generate cases some time. But like Yolanda is one of those members that help us with managing these cases. She's great at it and she does inform faculty of what happens along the way. But at the very least, you'll know at the very end of the case when it's closed, you'll know what happens in the form of an email. And that email will tell you either this student was helped or, or we couldn't reach the student. But you'll know at end of the day what happened to that student after you place the alert. So the second feature I want to highlight today for early alerts is it's not just negative.

Kenny Yen [00:29:35]:

So it has a negative connotation like early alert. We're trying to reach out to students that might have trouble early on. But a good thing about this tool is we have a positive alert, which is great because it helps students that are doing well carry forward that momentum that they already had, that they're already using and doing. So sometimes it's all it takes is just one recognition to recognize the student that they're doing well, and that's all the energy that the student needs to really keep up the work and keep going forward and succeeding in the class. And lastly, another thing I want to highlight here is the early alert teams always available. So that includes me, Yolanda, and some other team members. So we're always here if you have any questions, you need any help, or have any ideas. We're always, always receptive.

Kenny Yen [00:30:19]:

And we're all here to create a community and support for the students and yourself, really, to really build on that relational trust that we all have on campus. So the next thing I want to highlight is the available alerts. So here are some of the examples of some alerts. Here are some of the most popular that we have. So we have academic counseling, tutoring, basic needs, writing, center support, and the kudos. These are some of the most popular ones that we've seen. And if you want to go through, Yolande may just talk a little bit about academic counseling. Just so we have.

Kenny Yen [00:30:51]:

So just so you all understand some of the work that goes into working on these alerts after they're received.

Yolanda Haro [00:30:58]:

Yeah. Thank you, Kenny. So when you select, there's a dropdown menu that you can select which alert you want for your student, and it can be more than one. So, for example, you could select this student can go to counseling, and I think the student would benefit from tutoring. So you can select both of them. For each one of these alerts that you'll see on the dropdown menu, there is, you know, for lack of a better word, we call it a case manager or someone that really works through the alert. In my case, I get all the alerts that have to do with counseling. So they send me the alert, I contact that student, I try to reach with them, I try to make an appointment with them and a counselor and really connect them to the right resource.

Yolanda Haro [00:31:42]:

But sometimes through that conversation, I find that it's not just counseling that they need, that they might need, you know, basic needs, maybe they're lacking food Maybe they're sleeping in their car. And so that gives me more information as to where to send them. But you do have the capability of selecting those alerts. And for each one of those alert options, there is a person receiving the alert and working on it. And then when we eventually close the case, then you get the message that the case was closed and what the solution or what happened with the student in that alert. You know, helping students feel safe and a sense of belonging and connection. We talk about diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging is a really, really key factor because a lot of our students may have not had family who went to college or even a mentor in their family. So sometimes they come here and they feel like, do I really belong here? Am I really cut out for this? And somebody like you who sees them, who makes it very safe for them to ask questions, it's okay to be confused.

Yolanda Haro [00:32:50]:

It's okay to not understand. You know, call me, get in touch with me. That makes a student feel like, oh, wow, like, I can call my professor. I can ask questions. And I feel so intimidated because there's an. I didn't know how intimidated students are to reach out to the faculty because I think in some of our cultures, there's a cultural power dynamic that happens where the teacher is a person who knows the person of authority. And in our homes, sometimes we're taught you don't question authority. So it's very threatening.

Yolanda Haro [00:33:22]:

It's very scary. It's very intimidating to go and ask the professor a question. Even more to say, I'm confused. I don't know. I don't know what you said, what you're doing. And so creating that space, that safe space, is really, really key. And then letting them know, like, you belong here. You deserve to be here, and you can do it here.

Yolanda Haro [00:33:40]:

And making that connection with them is really, really key. Those are some considerations to think about as we are mindful about this healing perspective in working with students, how do we tap into our healing power? One thing I've learned is that we need to meet students where they're at. Sometimes they come to us very broken. I've dealt with students that were shaking as they were speaking with me, and I wondered, well, what happened? What thoughts did they receive at home? Or what beliefs do they have that they're so scared to talk? So just, you know, kind of making them at ease, just saying it's okay to ask questions and meeting them where they're at, whether they're on a high or they're in a low. One thing that I want to emphasize is that you are a healing power, a healing force in these people's experience through college. Some of them probably didn't do very well in high school, or even if they did, this is a very different environment here. They have to be responsible here. Their mother's not holding their hand or their teacher through the college experience.

Yolanda Haro [00:34:45]:

And so it is a very different environment for them. And to meet someone that's so healing and so accepting, it's really a game changer. Your care, your love, your selflessness and influence can increase their motivation. Help them engage in the material, help them engage in the classroom with you or in the conversations that you're having with them. If it's a counseling interaction that really contributes to our retention and success of these students, this is really key that I loved. A lot of this material comes from a book that I read and helping students see a different version of themselves. And one example of that is that when I was at UCLA and I had one professor look at me and say, yolanda, you are so good at writing these political science papers. You're really good at critical thinking and analysis.

Yolanda Haro [00:35:38]:

I had no idea that I had those skills, which led me to then major in political science. Otherwise, I would have been lost in that huge UCLA campus. You know, tapping into our compassion, being curious with students, being curious about our own thinking, our own assumptions, willingness to create connection and community is all part of this healing centered approach which Dr. Martha Garcia is talking about, which is now becoming sort of like the approach for Mount SAC as we interact not only with students, but with each other. So one way to create this learning space is to really listen. You know, oftentimes when we're in a role of authority and giving advice, then we go there, we just give advice, we just tell them how it is, what they need to do, but to really listen carefully and to really understand where they're coming from, it's like the other side. And sometimes if we do more of that, we learn a little bit more that we didn't know before. You know, asking questions and welcoming insights that were different than your own.

Yolanda Haro [00:36:42]:

So this is about being curious, asking them, well, what do you think? How do you think you should solve this problem? How do you think we should go about this? Providing theories that are open for discussion or to get their theories, because oftentimes we're the educators we know, but maybe they have theories and life practices that are very different, that can also work, and then encouraging students to help each other learn. So oftentimes, a lot of the work that we do is individual assignments. But I know a lot of teachers are doing group activities, partnering up in discussions. We learn a lot because we hear other people's experiences and perspectives, and so group discussions are awesome. So the more we create those learning environments, the more discussion and the more learning that can happen. And making it safe and making it very open and creating that safe space for people to have the courage to speak up, because it's very scary. We don't want to be judged, we don't want to be criticized, and it's very scary for some of us to come out and speak. So those learning spaces can be very healing in the way that you facilitate them and open your own heart so that other people can open their hearts too.

Chisa Uyeki [00:37:57]:

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