



## ***State of Higher Education for Black Californians Webinar Q&A***

**The Umoja Community is AWESOME! We run a program in South Alameda County (Region 2 - Union City, Fremont, Hayward, Newark) where we focus on Black youth. How do we plug in to the Umoja program for middle and high school aged scholars?**

Umoja Community Education Foundation is working on securing funding to provide Umoja courses on high school campuses. In the meantime, we have encouraged Umoja affiliated programs to adopt a high school in their region. In adopting high schools, Umoja Coordinators can use their student leaders to reach out to high school students through educational presentations, community college tours, and other engagements. Recently, the Umoja Community Education Foundation provided Umoja programs with additional resources that could be used to develop marketing materials to educate and inform high school students about Umoja, as well as holding events on high school campuses. Visit our website at [umojacommunity.org](http://umojacommunity.org) to see which of the Umoja programs is in your feeder area.

**Dr. Wood, thank you for your comments. I agree with your strategies/tactics, and I wonder if you have thoughts about the accountability strategy statewide that will incentivize college/university leadership, including faculty senates, to take action?**

The Senate can help provide more stringent accountability to administrators by providing recommendations via resolutions and policy change. For example, they may want to encourage accountability to be embedded within administrative reviews and evaluations. Possibly, they want outcomes to be tied to the ability to hire in the future. Or maybe they want a system in place that recognizes those who have done well but also calls to attention those who are not. Faculty Senates have a lot of power, and their voice is needed in the conversation.

**How are students' experiences and perspectives directly incorporated into faculty/admin/staff trainings intended to improve students' academic success? Will students have a way to be involved in the development of these trainings?**

In most cases, they are not. Most trainings provide general feedback on student experiences based on anecdotal data. However, this is one place where I think we are changing the pattern. At SDSU trainings, we have collected data from students on experiences with bias and microaggressions. Their narratives have been masked and are being shared with faculty and staff members so that they can better understand how these issues manifest. Even more, we are aligning the narratives by college so that faculty do not hear abstract concerns about what is being done in other settings, but what is happening within their own classes and among their own ranks.

**Dr. Aldredge, do you have any data on how participating in an Umoja program affects Black students' graduation rates, compared to students who don't participate? Or any other measures of academic success or well-being?**

The Umoja Community Education Foundation recently commissioned an evaluation of Umoja affiliated programs. The Institute for Social Research, at California State University, Sacramento conducted an independent evaluation of our affiliated programs to determine their effectiveness. This evaluation includes Umoja student survey data from 2017-2018 and Umoja student record data from 2011 to 2016 and examines their short, intermediate, and long-term outcomes of participating in the Umoja program. The report concluded that African American students who participated in Umoja “out-performed non-Umoja students in the average number of units earned, transferable units earned, course success rate, movement from Basic Skills to Transfer Level English and Math, persistence, retention, and number of awards.” [ISR Report Link](#).

**In South Alameda County, data reveals that 80% of Black youth are graduating from High School but only 15% are completing their A-G requirements. How can nonprofit community-based programs, like The Village Method, garner support for focusing on Black youth academic achievement and enrichment in middle and high school? Also, how can we partner with the Campaign for College Opportunity to raise awareness?**

Many K-12 school districts have included improvements in A-G completion as part of their accountability metrics under the Local Control Funding Formula. If South Alameda County does have A-G as an accountability metric, we would encourage you to review progress and engage in appropriate local advocacy if improvement is not occurring. At the Campaign for College Opportunity, we have joined other education and civic organizations in coalition to make A-G the default curriculum for all students at the Los Angeles Unified School District. In terms of building awareness with middle school students, the Campaign for College Opportunity created an Early Commitment to College Toolkit that includes activities middle school students can engage in to raise college awareness, including a pledge they can take with their parents. Read more [here](#).

**Umoja sounds like an amazing program. What (or who) are the barriers keeping this program from being at every California Community College (CCC), California State University (CSU) & University of California (UC)?**

The largest barriers to having an Umoja affiliated program on every California community college campus is capacity. While the Umoja Community Education Foundation has been in existence for over 10 years, it has only been funded for the last three years. In these three years, Umoja affiliated programs have grown significantly and continue to add more programs each year. The goal is to have Umoja affiliated programs on all 115 campuses. This will take a ramp-up of resources, staff, and commitment from the state and the colleges.

Along with the barrier of capacity, there is also a financial barrier to having Umoja affiliated programs on all CSU and UC campuses. The UC system has partnered with the Umoja Community since 2016 and works very closely with Umoja to educate their administrators and outreach staff about Umoja students, practices, and activities. We have also held several events on UC campuses including symposia and a Student Leadership Summit. However, the reality is that we only have one affiliated program on a CSU and one on a UC campus. The fiscal resources we receive from the CCC Chancellor's Office cannot be used to provide resources to UC and CSU so our ability to expand on those respective campuses is limited including our ability to provide them with capacity building and technical assistance. New funding sources would need to be garnered to fulfill this goal.

**How does understanding this data lead to meaningful transformation in our higher education institutions that will lead to better outcomes, sooner rather than later?**

Like all of our reports, the data in the *State of Higher Education for Black Californians* is meant to be acted upon. The report clearly identifies actions that can be taken by state leaders as well as college and university leaders immediately to improve Black student success. We encourage everyone to utilize their own networks and influence to urge legislators and college leaders to take action. Share the report widely, meet with elected and college leaders about the findings of the report, use social media and the news media to elevate awareness, for example.

**Dr. Wood gave us strategies for faculty diversification, we have a great team that does training for search committees for faculty. As HR staff members, how can we ensure our search committees and HR managers are appropriately prepared to hire administrators, managers, and fellow staff members that will represent our students and how can we on the staff side equip our search committees? Any recommendations?**

A number of strategies and practices can be put into place. You can try masking candidate names on letters of interest and CV's for certain types of searches as a pilot. You can require the trainings for participation in a search committee. Oftentimes, when it is required, people can take a training one time and then that suffices for several years. I recommend that going through the trainings are a requirement for each and every search. This is a way to ensure that the training is both intensive and ongoing. In addition to training, I also believe that we must begin to certify pools based on demographics in the field. If the demographics are not representative, then the pool should not be certified.

**Is there information you can share or direct us to regarding attendance and success rates for Black students from California who attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)?**

The only data available on California students attending HBCUs are the number of California freshmen who enroll at an HBCU as a first-time student. While we do not know how many of them were Black, in 2016, over 1,000 California freshmen enrolled at an HBCU. Since roughly eight out of 10 freshmen at HBCUs are Black, if we apply the same percentage to California freshmen, we would estimate that roughly 800 Black Californians enrolled as freshmen at an HBCU in 2016.

**I continue to have concern for graduation rates versus entering rates. The strategy sounds great, and I appreciate the efforts, but how is California truly making moves to implement changes on campus that are so impactful to improving retention and graduation rates?**

There are many reforms underway that are promising. Some of the most significant are in remedial education both at the CSU and Community College level. The CSU has eliminated remedial education and early data is indicating that students who would have previously been placed into remedial education, have been placed in college-level courses and many have completed those courses successfully. Starting this fall, community colleges are required to utilize a students' high school performance for placement into math and English instead of an unreliable standardized assessment that has placed a majority of students into remedial education where few will ever complete. If implemented well, this will make a significant impact on the number of students who start college taking transfer-level English and math and complete.

**More Black women and men have graduate degrees than ever. Why is it so difficult to get them engaged and hired at institutions for higher learning? As an adjunct, I have been approached regarding starting Umoja on a particular campus. It looks like a wonderful program for Black students but I am concerned that it would be the only way for them to succeed. Why is there just not more realistic outreach from colleges to draw in these stranded students?**

The California Community College *Vision for Success* has two very admirable goals of reducing the equity gaps among traditionally underrepresented students groups with the goal of cutting achievement gaps by 40 percent by 2021-22 (Goal 5) and reducing regional achievement gaps across the regions with the lowest educational attainment of adults with the ultimate goal of fully closing regional achievement gaps by 2026-27 (Goal 6). We believe that the importance of support programs like the Umoja Community at all segments of higher education will help the system reach its goal. See the full report at their [website](#).

**Thank you for your leadership and on-going commitment to building awareness and coalition on behalf of Black students. As you pointed out, much more is necessary for postsecondary to move the needle on Black student outcomes. While UC serves the fewest number of Black and California students in general compared to CCC and CSU, I'm encouraged that their Black student admissions have increased. That said, I'm curious what else they did besides get more funding. Can you share other specific strategies that they used to be successful?**

The University of California Office of the President has a Diversity Pipeline Initiative designed to expand the academic pipeline to the University of California for undergraduate students, graduate students and faculty members from underrepresented groups. The initiative places a particular emphasis on increasing the number of African American students and faculty, who are persistently underrepresented at UC. To review all of their activities and outcomes, read the report [here](#).

**What aid would be portable for HBCU transfer students that Dr. Aldredge referred to?**

A strategic goal of the Umoja Community is to support efforts that allow students to take their financial aid awards with them to their educational institutions regardless of the location. We (the Umoja Community) are excited about the new Senate Bill 291 introduced by Leyva, 2019 called the California Community College Financial Aid Program that will significantly increase the amount of aid awarded to community college students based on the total cost of education. We are hoping for additional reforms at the California Student Aid Commission that build upon these efforts. Visit [TrueCollegeCost.com](http://TrueCollegeCost.com) for more information.

**Where do you get the 6-year graduation rate data from (UC & CSU)?**

The six-year graduation rates can be found on the systems' websites. Here are the links to the specific grad rate pages:

[University of California](#)

[California State University](#)

[California Community Colleges](#)

**Is there data available that disaggregates the outcomes and experiences for Black women and men, rather than only viewing them as an aggregate cohort? This will allow us to be intentional about serving our students and creating relevant policies.**

In this report, we did not disaggregate by sex, but the systems' websites and the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System data can be disaggregated by sex.

**Does the statistics include Black students with disabilities?**

No, the data are not disaggregated by disability status. Data privacy laws keep much of this information protected.