Identity-Based Resource Centers Research Project
Testing Phase Report
February 2022

In Fall 2021, the Identity-Based Resource Centers Research Project team conducted an extensive analysis and research on the importance of identity-based resource centers at CSUN. The Identity-Based Resource Centers Research Project report was produced and presented to President Beck on January 24, 2022. As part of the Equity-Centered Design Thinking framework used for the study, the team conducted a series of conversations and Town Hall meetings in January and February 2022 that tested the recommendations in the report. Six meetings were held, including four targeted meetings and two open community Town Hall gatherings. A total 131 unique participants attended a conversation: 26 students and 105 faculty, staff and administrators. The Testing phase included curating honest feedback from participants, welcoming challenges to the findings and the report and assessing for bias.[1] This report provides a summary to the post-research study survey, data gathered during the Testing phase and concludes with next steps to move recommendations forward.

Testing Phase Conversations
The Testing Phase for this project allowed the campus community to attend one of six conversations to learn about the findings and recommendations presented by the research team. Table 1 below, provides details about the participation in each session.

Table 1
Number of Testing Phase Participants by Faculty, Staff, Administrators & Students

Type of Meeting	Number & Type of Participants	Date of Meeting
Black House Staff	2 *(Staff/Administrator)*	January 31, 2022
Ethnic Studies Participants	10 *(Faculty/Administrators)*	February 4, 2022
Early Targeted Meeting Participants	38 *(Faculty/Staff/Administrators)*	February 7, 2022
Town Hall #1	63 *(Faculty/Staff/Administrators)*	February 18, 2022
Town Hall #2	25 *(Students)*	February 18, 2022
Asian American Studies/Asian American Studies Pathway Project	14 *(Faculty & Students)*	February 25, 2022

Note: *Total Number of Participants: 152; Total Number of Unique Participants: 131; 26 students and 105 faculty/staff/administrators. These numbers do not include Drs. Bocanegra, Quintero and Watkins who attended several meetings.*

Post-Research Study Survey
A post-research study survey was administered to participants who attended a Testing Phase presentation; 63 participants completed the study (47% of all testing phase participants). Results

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[1] Clifford, D.H. (2017). We inspire & develop the creative confidence of educators & support innovators catalyzing powerful models for teaching & learning. d.K12LabNetwork; Liedka, J. (2004). Design thinking: the role of hypothesis generation and testing. In R. J. Boland & F.
Collopy (eds.), Managing as Designing. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

demonstrate high level of transparency and engagement of the campus community throughout the process. Table 2 below, provides descriptive statistics from the Likert scale questions in the survey.

Table 2
Overall Mean Scores and Frequencies of Participation Experience

	N	M	SD	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I had an equitable opportunity to share my thoughts during the research process.	63	4.30	1.06	57.14%	28.57%	7.94%	0%	6.35%
My voice mattered during the data collection process.	63	4.27	1.09	55.14%	30.16%	6.34%	1.59%	6.35%
The research study was conducted in a transparent manner.	63	4.37	1.06	61.90%	25.40%	6.35%	0%	6.35%

As noted in Table 2, over 85% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they had an equitable opportunity to share their thoughts during the research process, their voices mattered and the research study was conducted in a transparent manner. Less than 8% of respondents (4-5 individuals) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the way the process was conducted or they did not feel heard as part of the study. As part of the survey, participants were also asked if their views were well-received during the data collection process, overwhelmingly, 90.48% of participants stated that their views were well received. In addition, participants were given the opportunity to provide additional feedback, some comments are included below:

> Very comprehensive data gathering process. More importantly, the shared report provides hope that CSUN will be able to embark on the deep systemic changes we need to truly serve all students. (Latinx/a/o Faculty)

> The interview that I participated in was truly the first time in 30 years that I felt listened to about frustrations around grants and centers. (White Faculty)

> Thank you Dr. Gammage and Dr. Sanchez for on this important work! I'm amazed at the care and thoroughness in which you conducted your research and opportunities for feedback from multiple stakeholders. Thank you, thank you, thank you! (Asian/Pacific Islander Faculty)

From everything I saw, this study was conducted in a broad-reaching, equitable, ethical, and transparent way. I felt my voice was listened to, and I was very happy to contribute to the research. Thank you. (Middle East/Southwest Asian)

I particularly liked how every question and or comment was taken into consideration as the group was discussing particular issues. (African American/Black Graduate Student)

I greatly appreciate Dr. Sanchez & Dr. Gammage doing the research & work for promoting diversity, equity, & inclusion @ CSUN. I look forward to seeing the cultural centers implemented on campus. I welcome & would be honored if there's an opportunity to be a part of the identity/cultural centers at CSUN as they will promote improved student success, retention, graduation, & a sense of belonging. (Multi-Ethnic Staff)

I feel that this was quite exceptional work and it should become the model for CSUN henceforth. (Latinx/a/o Staff Survey)

As noted in Table 2 and through the survey open-ended responses above, the majority of participants thought the process was a conducted in a manner that solicited honest feedback. There were two comments that allowed us to continue to reflect on our own biases and on how findings were presented, "I feel researchers were looking for specific responses and the results may have been skewed by confirmation bias" (White Undergraduate Student), and "A more-clear definition of how current programs that already serve some of the purposes of the identity-based resources will be included/built upon (Asian/Pacific Islander Student). After reflection, the research team understood that the concerns raised were due to the limited amount of time during the Testing Phase conversations and that the full-report could provide answers to many of the questions raised by participants. Overall, the post-research study survey results demonstrate that the Equity-Centered Design Thinking framework utilized in this study allowed the majority of participants to feel heard, validated and included in the process, thus validating our recommendations in the report. In the following sections, we address additional feedback provided during the Testing Phase of this process.

Disability Culture at CSUN
During the student Town Hall, it was further highlighted the importance of creating a campus climate that supports students with disabilities, including the opportunity of creating a Disability Cultural Center on campus. This section highlights important information about students with disabilities and creating a Disability Cultural Center.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the American Disability Act of 1990 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 are thought to be contributors for students with disabilities to access higher education institutions. In compliance with the Rehabilitation Act and the American Disabilities Act, nearly all colleges and universities in the United States operate disability resource centers that provide mandated supportive structures and accommodations for students with disabilities that are professionally staffed.[2] At CSUN, the Disability Resources and Educational

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[2] Zehner, A. L. (2018). Campus climate for students with disabilities. In Evaluating Campus Climate at US Research Universities (p. 125-149). Palgrave Mcmillan, Cham.

Services (DRES) provides student services, accommodations, programs, training and education[3] to 2,317 registered students with disabilities, including students who are registered with NCOD: Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services. As noted in the mission of the department, DRES is "guided by the belief that each individual has strengths, ability and talents" and further advances inclusion on campus. There are differences between Disability Cultural Centers and Disability Resource Centers; a Resource Center manages the academic needs and accommodations of students, while a Cultural Center serves as physical places "for students to connect with other students, faculty, and staff with disabilities and share their experiences, helping to build identity and a sense of belonging at their institution."[4] According to the same report, there are only 10 Disability Cultural Centers in the United States, and none in the CSU. As many other cultural centers in the United States, the majority of Disability Cultural Centers were created by student activism.

Although not a significant theme in the focus group and during the Testing phase, there is a need to continue to explore Disability Culture at CSUN. A student participant in the Town Hall shared:

> DRES provides accommodations but please look at the value of a disability cultural center. Our campus has a large population of students with visible and invisible disabilities. Affirming disability identity in a positive way is important because it communicates to disabled students that they are valued and important human beings.

After reviewing the original transcripts of the initial data collection process, three additional comments were identified:

> Ensure disability support in all centers and spaces across campus. (Faculty/Staff/Administrators Focus Group)

> Disability Centers throughout campus. (Student focus group)

> Make deaf Black students feel CSUN is accessible, welcoming and representative, including focusing on disability justice. (Faculty/Staff Targeting meeting)

We recommend additional assessments be completed by the campus to understand Disability Culture and the need for a Disability Cultural Center to understand our campus inclusive practices in supporting students with disability. As noted by Kimball et al., many "disabled students experience a 'chilly' campus climate involving stereotypes, microaggressions, misconceptions and exclusion"[5]. Our original recommendation was to include accessibility and inclusive spaces throughout campus to ensure our students with disabilities felt included and seen in all campus spaces. Similar to the recommendations in the report, if a Disability Cultural Center is created,

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[3] https://www.csun.edu/dres

[4] https://www.diverseeducation.com/demographics/disabilties/article/15287582/only-ten-disability-cultural-centers-exist-at-us-institutions

[5] Kimball, E. W., Moore, A., Vaccaro, A., Troiano, P. F., & Newman, B. M. (2016). College students with disabilities redefine activism: Self-advocacy, storytelling, and collective action. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 9*(3), 245–260

students with disabilities should feel included in all facets of our campus community. There is an opportunity to explore if DRES could become a Disability Cultural and Resource Center, similar to the University of Miami's Miller Center for Disability Services, listed below. During their annual assessment in April, DRES will include questions about Disability Culture at CSUN and the need for a Disability Cultural Center. Additional information will be learned from this assessment.

Other Campus Models

Syracuse University Disability Cultural Center
Miami University Miller Center for Student Disability Services
University of Illinois Chicago Disability Cultural Center

A New Division-Identity-Based Resource Centers & Ethnic Studies Center
The Testing Phase Conversations resulted in 100% buy-in for the recommended new division for equity, justice and inclusive excellence. Participants in the testing phase agreed that both Identity-based Resource Centers and the Ethnic Studies Center should be a part of the divisional structure of the proposed new division. Additionally, faculty representatives from AB1460 Implementation Working Group (IWG) and Ethnic Studies Center subcommittee recommend that the Center for Ethnic Studies be strategically placed within the proposed division and be in the same physical space as the recommended cultural identity-based resource centers. As evidenced by the leading literature on equity and inclusive excellence and resource centers, this organizational structure will most effectively align the Universities equity-efforts with the mission of the Ethnic Studies Center and the proposed cultural identity-based resource centers. Overall, the testing phase provided insights into the direction that the campus community would like to see CSUN establish in order to institutionalize our core values and priorities on equity, justice and inclusive excellence.

Existing Programs & Services
As we noted in the report (see *Maintaining and Sustaining High Impact Programs that Cultivate Student Success*, p. 135) and also highlighted frequently during the Testing Phase Conversations, we acknowledge the importance of current programs and services to continue building on what is working on campus. It was evident, that the Asian American Studies Pathway Project is assisting with elevating the experiences of Asian American and Pacific Islander students at CSUN and have created partnerships across campus to assist with recruitment and retention of AAPI students, including working with Student Outreach and Recruitment – a recommendation we offered in the report through developing strategic enrollment strategies supported by the Ethnic Identity-Based Resource Centers. We also heard the need to engage other programs (e.g., Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), CSUN Food Pantry and other Basic Needs Initiatives) that are supporting students and identify strategies that are already working, in order to elevate and create more opportunities for larger campus engagement. These intentional collaborative partnerships will allow CSUN create a campus culture where various entities work together to provide the best support to advance inclusive excellence on campus.

It is important to also highlight that this Tasting Phase reaffirmed the importance of creating cross-divisional teams to implement the recommendations in the proposal. There are campus constituents already doing some levels of work in various departments on campus, thus it will be important to

bring those individuals together and create working teams to advance the recommendations. As an example, in order to implement and sustain supportive services for members of the Black and African diaspora community (we are recommending test piloting the services of a Black Resource Center with the Black House), it will be important to develop a working team that will support the implementation of these services, it cannot all fall on the Black House Director, it will create what are recommending avoiding -one person departments. In the next section, we detail how to implement the recommendations.

Implementation Recommendation

Based on the feedback received during the Testing Phase, we recommend the full implementation of the recommendations included in the Identity-based Resource Centers Report, with additional consideration from the items addressed earlier in this document. We understand the complexities of creating a new division, thus we recommend implementing new positions within a focus on Equity, Justice, Inclusion, Belonging and Inclusive Excellence in the Divisions of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs that can serve as conduits in the implementation process of the recommendations. In addition, in order to aid the process, we recommend the creation of a working group that can focus on the implementation process, that will be cross-divisional, with student representation and key stakeholders.

The Road Map to the Future Steering Committee can serve as an example on how we can develop the Identity-Based Resource Center implementation team:
1. Develop a Steering Work Group Committee comprised of key stake holders: At least one representative from each Ethnic Studies department, Thrive Center members, Rise Center representation and students.
2. Create sub-groups as part of the Steering Committee that will create timelines and assess best options to move forward.
   a. Work with Black House to develop implementation strategy as noted in the report. (Spring/Summer 2022)
   b. Work with Cultural Houses to develop the plan to hire directors in Cultural houses. (Fall 2022)
   c. Identify vacant space to develop American Indian Cultural House – separate from Central American & Transborder Studies
   d. Work on process to develop Ethnic Identity-based Resource Centers
   e. Work on process to develop Thrive Center
   f. Work on Priority III: Further Call to Action