



Equity in Mental Health on Campus: Needs Assessment Report



The Steve Fund's vision is that every student of color is fully supported by programs, services, and institutional culture that values and promotes their mental health and well-being.

The Steve Fund has partnered with San José City College to prioritize and invest in the mental health and emotional well-being of students of color on their campus. This report represents a campus-specific needs assessment and recommendations using existing institutional data, and student, staff, and faculty listening sessions. The recommendations are tied to the Equity in Mental Health Framework which are implementation strategies to help inform and strengthen mental health support and programs for students of color.

In partnership with San José City College



Executive Summary

A commitment to student diversity is a thread throughout San José City College (SJCC)'s history. As part of their commitment to campus diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), SJCC is working towards deepening their commitment to creating and sustaining increased connectedness and making SJCC a place where all students feel supported, validated, and included. To this end, SJCC has established policies, practices, and programming that honors the experiences of students of color. Out of that work came a call for conducting a campus-specific needs assessment to develop actionable and measurable goals to improve support for the mental health and emotional well-being of students of color. The outcome of that assessment is presented in this report.

As a participant in the Equity in Mental Health on Campus (EMHC) initiative, a partnership with the Steve Fund, SJCC seeks to establish the mental health of students of color as a campus-wide priority. This is done by first gaining knowledge about the mental health concerns of students of color through an objective third-party assessment of campus climate.

The Steve Fund conducted a mixed methods needs assessment, drawing from the experiences of SJCC's faculty, staff, and students. From the qualitative and quantitative data, four evidence-based recommendations were identified to support the institution's efforts moving forward.

Equity In Mental Health on Campus

The mental health of students of color has recently emerged to be of particular importance among colleges and universities. Through the EMHC initiative, institutions intentionally address their campus racial climate, policies, programs, and services to better support the mental health and emotional well-being of students of color.



The term “mental health” is used to discuss how membership in the campus community influences individual and group well-being. Student mental health encompasses campus dynamics both inside and outside of the classroom, nested in socio-historical contexts of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, and other social identities combined with broader societal politics, social systems, and environments. Students of color in particular have racialized experiences when navigating campus contexts, and colleges and universities can adapt to promote their mental health and well-being.

Community college students are more likely to come from underserved populations and navigate distinctive barriers to academic success, both on and off campus. In academic settings, students need to know they attend an institution with administration, faculty, and staff who care and are there to support them, and that they are part of a learning community that is responsive to their needs. When it comes to supporting student mental health, we recommend institutions mindfully cultivate a campus culture that prioritizes mental health in all aspects of student interactions with the college. These interactions foster a relationship based on trust, which is the foundation of a successful learning community.

Conceptual Framework

Key approaches to improving the mental health of young people of color have been identified. The Steve Fund, in collaboration with the Jed Foundation, developed the Equity in Mental Health Framework (EMHF), which guides the assessment of formal and informal support sources for students of color on campus, and provides recommendations for addressing existing gaps. This needs assessment uses this framework as a lens to understand campus needs and areas of growth to promote a widespread culture of well-being.



The EMHF was designed to guide colleges and universities in the creation and implementation of efforts that support students' of color mental health needs. There exist unique racialized barriers to optimal student mental health, and the EMHF foregrounds multimodality in the long-term efforts to create an institution-wide infrastructure for addressing these. The EMHF consists of ten key recommendations with subsequent strategies for implementation.

Equity In Mental Health Framework Recommendations

1. Identify and promote the mental health and well-being of students of color as a campus-wide priority.
2. Engage students to provide guidance and feedback on matters of student mental health and emotional well-being.
3. Actively recruit, train, and retain a diverse and culturally competent faculty and professional staff.
4. Create opportunities to engage around national and international issues/events.
5. Create dedicated roles to support the well-being and success of students of color.
6. Support and promote accessible, safe communication with campus administration and an effective response system.
7. Offer a range of supportive programs and services in varied formats.
8. Help students learn about programs and services by advertising and promoting through multiple channels.
9. Identify and utilize culturally relevant and promising programs and practices, and collect data on effectiveness.
10. Participate in resource and information sharing (within and between institutions).

Methodology

The current report describes findings from a needs assessment, the initial stage of the EMHF. This needs assessment was a multi-method examination of students' of color



mental health and well-being concerns, as well as institutional progress and gaps in addressing them. Researchers from each of the institutions worked with The Steve Fund team to develop a data toolkit and have access to various data reports. Data for the needs assessment include quantitative surveys and reports, qualitative listening sessions with students, staff, and faculty, and archival data, media, and oral histories that capture the racial history of the institution. This needs assessment was conducted by a research team, including two research consultants, both Black women with relevant research expertise in identifying predictors of mental health outcomes within multiple contexts, including education. The EMHF guided the analysis for these data, which allowed for a deductive approach to thematic analysis of the qualitative data. However, we also acknowledge that not all student experiences or institutional needs are captured in the EMHF, particularly as we captured the experiences of the campus community during the COVID-19 pandemic. To that end, we also allowed for an inductive approach to data analysis by allowing for themes to emerge from the data (Braun & Clark, 2006). In what follows, we present a campus profile, racial narrative, data from the listening sessions, quantitative reports, and key recommendations for addressing the evolving needs of students of color at SJCC.

Campus Data Summary

SJCC's history begins in 1921, when it was founded as one of the oldest public community colleges in the California Community College (CCC) system serving San José, Milpitas, and greater South Bay Area students. SJCC's mission is to provide a student-centered and culturally responsive curriculum for career pathways, university transfer, and lifelong learning guided by core values of diversity, equity, and social justice. There is no public record of when students of color were first welcomed on SJCC's campus, but the state of California officially amended the California constitution to prohibit public institutions from discriminating on the basis of race, sex, or ethnicity in 1996. Since its founding, SJCC has gained a reputation as a top Hispanic-serving institution with a growing transfer rate



to historically Black colleges and universities. According to fall 2020 data from the National Center for Education Statistics, there are roughly 8,300 students enrolled at SJCC, who are 80% part-time and 61% female. Over two-thirds of their students are students of color, with 47% Hispanic/Latino, 25% Asian, and 5% Black.

Campus Racial Narrative in the Context of Mental Health

Data Summary

Campus racial narratives serve as an institutional “story” that implicitly or explicitly speaks to campus values, beliefs, and commitments to racial equity and justice over time. Developing a campus racial narrative includes various sources of information; for example, archival data on institutional “firsts” and oral histories and campus activism. For SJCC, this includes an anti-racist action plan, commitments from the board of trustees, contributions from campus committees, and campus resources for advancing equity on campus.

SJCC’s racial narrative data highlights many diversity, equity, and social justice efforts at the institutional level. For example, the college has a documented track record of dedicating resources to maintain accessibility and affordability for their students. For instance, SJCC covers tuition and fees for first-time, full-time California college students, offers free loaner laptops, free loaner e-textbooks, and free tutoring. In addition, SJCC offers financial aid and scholarships, does not require standardized placement tests (SAT, ACT, etc.), and has student support programs for low-income, educationally disadvantaged community members, as well as those in need of instructional and support services.

Racial narrative data highlight SJCC's board of trustees’ position on improving equity on campus. The first is dated in June of 2020 and calls for justice for George Floyd and other Black citizens who were victims of violence at the hand of police officers. In addition, the



board openly condemns historic and ongoing police brutality, racial profiling, and excessive militarized use of force. The statement ends with a call for action both on and off campus to address anti-Black bigotry and racism by contributing to grassroots organizations, supporting petitions, protecting local protesters, and providing safe, healing places on campus for staff, faculty, and students, among other actions. The second resolution is dated for July of 2020, and calls for solidarity against structural racism in response to recent murders of Black Americans as a result of systemic and institutional violence. The statement identifies racism as a co-occurring pandemic, and makes explicit the SJCC position on its eradication. The SJCC board of trustees also demonstrates support for their Black staff, students, faculty, and community members. The statement was issued in direct response to the CCC letter calling for campus mobilization around their June 2020 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Integration Plan. In response, the SJCC resolution lists six methods of action for campus-wide mobilization. The final resolution in the SJCC racial narrative was written in collaboration with the Evergreen Community College District and reaffirms the institutional commitment to Black students' success in response to nationwide instances of police violence against young Black victims.

SJCC is also in the process of developing a data tool to help staff and faculty explore equity outcomes in course success in response to persistent racial inequities within the CCC system. The San José City College Success Equity Dashboard will be used to address an equity gap in course success rates (grade C or better), retention barriers, and student support. The system is designed to identify where gaps exist in real time and thresholds for achieving equity. Using an interactive interface, the dashboard will be able to explore various disaggregation options and delve into intersectionality. Data can also be explored by division/subject area and specific course sections unique to each faculty member. The dashboard also has sample size considerations and impact calculations that provide additional details. To guide pedagogical adjustments that may decrease equity gaps, the dashboard is paired with resources to help with interpreting inequities, action planning,



and improving classroom inclusivity. The San José City College Success Equity Dashboard represents an innovative investment in equity that is sensitive to intersectionality and many relevant contributing factors to student success.

The SJCC racial narrative data also highlights campus efforts to address inequitable structures and promote campus diversity and allyship. The Student Equity and Achievement Program (SEAP) Committee utilizes a framework based on a culturally responsive curriculum, humanizing pedagogy, education, and cultural humility to guide its work. The SEAP provides equity-minded professional development application opportunities that invite broad participation and deep engagement. Main equity areas of focus include awareness (capacity building), action (transformational change), achievement (sustaining student success), access (addressing equity barriers), advocacy (addressing social inequities), and assessment (culturally responsive data-driven solutions).

In partnership with the SEAP, the Diversity Advisory Committee (DAC), works to improve campus climate by addressing matters pertaining to equity, inclusiveness, and anti-racism through campus-wide events and participatory governance. Together, they host annual events related to implementing campus-wide diversity in celebration of Pride, Latinx heritage month, Filipinx history month, and accessibility awareness month, for example. In addition, the DAC facilitates diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) plan implementation and anti-racism activities on campus. To this end, the DAC developed a timeline for the campus anti-racism plan that includes collecting campus feedback and hosting work groups in partnership with key campus officers, such as the executive cabinet, president, and academic senate.

SJCC's racial narrative data includes an anti-racist action plan focused on professional development events on structural racism and anti-racism. The plan includes keynote speakers on topics such as humanizing education and mental health. The anti-racism



plan also has workshops on a number of topics including critical race theory, anti-racist teaching, rebuilding democracy, transgender inclusivity, and ableism on campus. In addition, SJCC faculty have divisional meetings where they discuss ways an instructor can ensure that their course design includes a diverse array of content, images, and media that accurately represent all students, particularly those students traditionally marginalized in higher education.

Critical Reflections and Implications for Mental Health

San José City College appears to take an active interest in promoting campus equity in ways that likely have a positive impact on student mental health. Through their dashboard and anti-racism plan activities, SJCC has invested in novel approaches to improving student outcomes on campus. There is some space for increased intentionality around mental health and data collection on students' of color racialized experiences. As SJCC looks to improve on retention and course grades, direct mental health support will be integral to this work. SJCC makes a commendable effort towards incorporating well-known risk factors for student mental well-being, such as classroom equity, financial stress related to school, and nationwide diversity flashpoints in their work. It also appears the institution communicates the priority of students' of color well-being on and off campus in their board of trustees' statements, and their words are meaningfully translated into action using multiple methods of culturally responsive training and awareness raising. On the other hand, it is unclear what tensions (if any) exist on SJCC's campus. It would be helpful to have a better understanding of the impact diversity flashpoints have on campus interactions, dialogue on campus, and mental health correlates, such as sense of belonging.

Campus Data Toolkit

Data Summary

As part of the needs assessment process, a data toolkit was developed to gather reports summarizing multiple aspects of campus climate around mental health. These reports include the campus profile, information on student enrollment and employee demographics (2016–2017), student success scorecard (2015), the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) executive summary, and benchmark and impact of COVID-19 reports (2021). Student enrollment reports indicate the largest ethnic group on campus is Hispanic, with almost half of students in the district receiving financial aid (49.3%). Most students are enrolled in math, English, history, psychology, and physical education courses taught by a faculty body that is representative of the surrounding community with over 50% being minorities. On average, SJCC students who complete their Career Technical Education (CTE) coursework tend to see a 25% increase in income, but it is unclear how or if this varies by racial/ethnic group.

Based on the SJCC campus profile, there are campus mental health resources available through the counseling department which has 27 therapists on staff. SJCC offers counseling specific to students who are athletes, Black students, DACA students, students who are guardians, and career education students. In addition, there are counseling resources for certain programs such as METAS (serving Hispanic and low-income students), UMOJA (serving African American and other students' cultural and educational experiences), and veteran student services. SJCC also has a partnership with a mental health urgent care in the surrounding community in San José and the greater Santa Clara County.

The data toolkit also includes a student success scorecard showing completion, persistence, and remediation data on a cohort of students tracked over six years through the 2013–2014 academic year. When disaggregated by race, the report shows at least half



of all student groups were prepared for completion, with the lowest overall completion among Filipino students (27.5%). Student persistence was lowest among Pacific Islander students (42.9%) and highest among American Indian/Alaskan Native students (80%). Remedial math enrollment was highest among Filipino students (36.2%) and lowest among African American students (17.1%). Finally, completion of CTE coursework was lowest among American Indian and Alaskan Native (AIAN) students (33.3%) as well as Pacific Islander students (38.5%) and highest among Filipino students (57.1%).

SJCC students responded to the CCSSE in 2021, a survey of five key areas of student engagement. Three related data reports were presented as part of the campus data toolkit. First, the CCSSE executive summary compares key areas of student engagement based on the 50th percentile and the average top 10% of the cohort. SJCC data falls below the 50th percentile and the average top 10% of the cohort for all areas with the exception of support for learners, where SJCC scores above the top 10% of the cohort.

The CCSSE Benchmark Means report shows additional comparisons of SJCC data to the large colleges that responded to the survey and all 21 colleges in the three-year cohort of survey responses. Overall, SJCC is on par with large colleges and the 2021 CCSSE cohort on several indices of student engagement. For instance, mean SJCC scores on survey items related to active and collaborative learning, student effort, academic challenge, and student-faculty interaction were within 3.3 points of large colleges and all colleges in the cohort. Survey results suggest SJCC excels in terms of support for learners, with mean scores 5.4 points higher than large colleges and all colleges (55.4 vs. 49.6 and 50.0, on a 100-point scale, respectively).

SJCC also participated in a survey on COVID-19's continued impact on community college students using a special focus module of the CCSSE survey. The report specifically highlights the pandemic's impact on entering students during fall 2020 and spring 2021, based on over 120,000 responses from a cohort of 273 community colleges. In



comparisons between fall 2020 and spring 2021 data, over one-third (34%) of spring 2021 respondents described their personal financial situation as worse than it was before the pandemic, up 4% from the fall 2020 semester. When stratified by race/ethnicity, 25–30% of AIAN, Asian, Black, and Hispanic students were struggling to pay for college as a result of the pandemic, compared to 18% of white students. When asked about support services to help cope with pandemic-related stress, 57% of fall 2020 respondents said that they didn't know compared to 49% of spring 2021 respondents, suggesting more students have become aware of COVID-19 support services. Responses were similar between racial/ethnic groups, with percentages ranging from 43% for white students to 49% for Black students.

Critical Reflections and Implications for Mental Health

Overall, SJCC has a diverse student body served by a diverse faculty and staff who are representative of the surrounding community. SJCC has a history of tracking student success data on campus that is represented in their data toolkit. Based on student engagement data, SJCC appears to excel in comparison to their counterparts in terms of student support. There is less data on the specific experiences of students of color and what their mental health challenges are. General community college data indicate most students are feeling financial strain from the COVID -19 pandemic but are mainly aware of where to get help. However, data on COVID's impact aggregated at the national level does little to zoom in on SJCC as an institution and their students' challenges. Additional insights using data specific to SJCC's campus would help further glean whether their financial strain mirrors that of their community college counterparts.

Listening Session Data Summary

Introduction and Methods

The Steve Fund collaborated with each campus team to facilitate listening sessions. The purpose of each listening session was to supplement quantitative data with additional



perspectives towards improving the mental health of students of color on campus. Participants in the listening sessions were asked about perceptions of campus resources and prioritization of students' mental health, with a focus on students of color. Students were asked to describe how they experience the campus racial climate, and where they find social support. Faculty were asked about their perceptions of campus racial climate and their interactions with students of color. This report includes qualitative data from student and faculty listening sessions conducted by the Steve Fund. Each listening session was conducted virtually.

Data Summary (Emerging Themes)

Several themes emerged from the qualitative listening session data. With regard to a welcoming campus climate, students expressed feeling welcomed based on the **high proportion of students of color, speaking events, and student support programs**, but not feeling welcomed in terms of **day-to-day interactions**:

"I believe that this school welcomes a lot of communities and especially students of color well."

"...even though we have clubs and other events involving students of color. I feel this college can, or should, find ways in order to connect with that community. Especially a lot of our minority students and students of color."

"I would say one thing we do well is having a lot of vocal people come to campus and speak out, and have different events."

"There's always helping here, it's just a matter of the students to come and actually ask for the help. Because I mean, the

help is here, I believe. Again, it's just about a matter of the student, so yeah.”

Faculty were less sure of how welcomed students felt, but mentioned campus programs that extend resources to meet basic needs as fundamental to creating and sustaining a welcoming campus climate:

“But I think it's once a month they just supply students who are in need of groceries, and so they're supplied with those basic necessities. So I think that's one thing. That's a huge, huge, huge thing, right, for students?... And so that makes it welcoming. That shows that people care, right?”

When asked about today's students' mental health concerns, five major concerns emerged from students, including **COVID-19**, **social anxiety**, **depression**, **social injustices**, and **mental health stigma**:

“I guess, the pressing mental health concerns that face students today, I believe is the fear of COVID.”

“I feel due to COVID, a lot of the students never really had that interaction, so I felt a lot of them stayed in their own pocket and are just afraid to give presentations or speak in front of the class. So it's like social anxiety.”

“...a lot of young adults in general have been dealing with, I guess, depression, because they haven't seen, or haven't heard or talked to somebody personal or close with them, or

they probably lost someone from COVID, or it's just being alone..."

"I think one of the big things that we really need to recognize is equality versus equity. I think that's sort of a big thing and that we need to recognize that some ethnicities have it a lot harder than other ethnicities."

"And I think one of the big stigmas that we need to debunk is to normalize, to getting help is okay. Normalize the fact that it's really 2022 and post COVID, that most of us really do need services regarding that."

Many of the concerns were related back to the pandemic's socio-economic impacts. When faculty were asked about mental health concerns for students of color, many of their responses coincided with students' (**anxiety/depression, mental health stigma, social injustices**); however, SJCC faculty mentioned additional mental health concerns they've noticed among students such as **financial stress, navigating discussions about social injustices, and accessibility of resources**:

"I guess for our students, I mean, for the ones that we've been seeing, I work primarily international, but of course, a lot of stress like dealing, trying to balance their, just their schoolwork with just outside life, how to make ends meet, a lot of anxiety, a little bit of depression as well. And this time, especially during the Pandemic kind of a little bit, well, a lot of loneliness as well and not knowing kind of who to reach out to for support."

Students and faculty were also asked about ways SJCC communicates mental health as a campus priority. Overall, students' responses did not indicate mental health was a campus-wide priority, but did mention **mental health counselors, mental health workshops, and support groups/organizations** as the main aspects of campus that prioritize student mental health:

“So, I mean, I wouldn't say our college makes it a priority. I think they're trying to make it a priority...I've been here for three years and I just found out this year that we had a mental health counselor on campus. So it's like they try to do their best, but then it's not being acknowledged as much as you would expect.”

“Aside from outside resources that are offered, I know that the school sort of offers mental health workshops.”

“I know that our student governments, like our ASG president had mentioned, one of our initiatives was the mental health initiatives.”

Faculty responses coincided with student responses about mental health as a priority on campus as they mentioned pockets of help available from different campus offices, **mental health support programs**, and the **prioritization of racial/ethnic diversity**. Faculty also commented on SJCC's limited capacity to provide mental health support to all students, and how campus-community partnerships could be used to fill existing resource gaps. There were also some discussions about the need for inclusive messaging on campus:

“But let's face it, our campus is not equipped to deal with the full scope of this issue. It's a big thing. But we're just one entity to kind of help serve as a bridge to other services that students can use.”

“So I think one of the things that we need to work on at our campus to make this right is to start with self, start with collectively in making sure that we're not being divisive in services that we're providing for students, not being divisive in how we interact with one another, not being divisive when we disagree with one another.”

“I think just hearing some of the initiatives that I think the campus is trying to push forward is good, providing students with their basic needs with food and whatnot.”

There were also discussions during listening sessions about how faculty show care to students in terms of mental health. Students did not mention many instances of faculty showing care, but one student did appreciate the rare occasion where a faculty member offered support:

“I would say there was only really one time that I felt a faculty member cared about me, or actually the students, out of maybe... I don't know how many teachers I had, probably over the course of three years, I had almost 15 college professors. But there was only one that actually cared because she was the one that actually listened and wanted to help students directly, versus other professors, they just want to get the work.”

Faculty responses to questions about showing care to students indicated they have **direct check-ins** with students and **collaborate with mental health counselors to support students**:

"I think, in terms of one specific example, I mean there has been students in our program that have suffered from depression and it's really sad sometimes. What I've done is contact the outreach, the community resources to see how we can help them."

"And then I always tell them, 'Hey, can you check back with me, let's say four weeks from now? Let me know how you're doing.'"

"I always tell them 'If you need anything, email me or let me know what's going on after I help you, email me back, let me know what's going on. Or if you have any more questions, if you need anything else.' I always tell them, 'Make sure you email me.' So that way they know they can keep the dialogue going. It's not going to just stop there."

Finally, faculty and students were asked to give one aspect of campus they'd like to see improvements on, and most answers fall under an umbrella of improving the **institutional commitment to action**. When asked about ways SJCC can strengthen their commitment to action around mental health, students mentioned disseminating information about existing resources, improving mental health awareness marketing, increasing student involvement and perspective in campus anti-racism work, and soliciting more feedback on student support programs. Faculty members suggested investing trust and capacity building, training on supporting student mental health, and

improving mental health partnerships both on and off campus to improve accessibility and capacity.

Critical Reflections and Implications for Mental Health

Many student and faculty perspectives reflect similar experiences and feeling around various aspects of campus context that impact mental health. While both groups appear to be very aware of mental health concerns, students seem less aware of resources while faculty more so acknowledge the support gaps and limited campus capacity to fill them. The support gaps may result in students navigating campus with less support and declining mental health, which may contribute to some of the course success inequities (from quantitative data), especially considering the stigma that may serve as a barrier to resources. Also, students appear to want to have more of a say in resources designed to support them. Oftentimes diverse institutions rest on their faculty and staff's diversity and forget to consider student body's uniqueness, even if they share identities. Overall, there is a readiness to engage among students and faculty that leaves SJCC well-positioned to address student mental health needs.

Campus Recommendations

#1: Utilize community data to supplement campus data

Students at community colleges like SJCC are different from larger, four-year colleges and universities in that they are more intimately connected to the surrounding communities. While some information supports SJCC's success in providing tailored mental health resources and student support, data on student success outcomes indicate persistent racial/ethnic inequities. The student dashboard is able to track inequities based on internal campus factors, but it is unclear if any campus data exists in relation to monitoring student mental health risks, such as adverse community experiences and overall socioeconomic context. To track SJCC's students' of color mental health concerns,



we recommend including community-based data to further glean students' experiences. Some examples include: ongoing public health surveillance on community socioeconomic trends, primary data collection on collective trauma experiences, neighborhood social conditions, and access to mental health support services in terms of availability and cost.

#2: Strengthen community partnerships to expand campus service offerings

Like most institutions, there is limited capacity for campus to provide support. Faculty listening session data indicate gaps in mental health support. Their feedback indicates a need for improving mental health partnerships on and off campus to improve student accessibility and capacity. To supplement campus resources, community colleges like SJCC could more intentionally use the community as an extension of the campus by building infrastructure to create strong partnerships with community service providers. This could include providing vouchers for purchasing food to reduce the resources needed to operate a campus pantry, providing incentives for SJCC students at local therapy offices, and using community child care centers to provide more support for students. This recommendation coincides with EMHF recommendation #10. Enhanced communication with community partners and the use of an accessible resource sharing repository would enable collaboration and extensions of support within the San Jose community.

#3: Help students learn about programs and services by advertising and promoting through multiple channels

Many valuable programs and resources are underutilized simply because students are not aware of their existence. In the SJCC listening sessions, student responses indicate a need for more campus-wide messaging on mental health as a priority and raising awareness of services. Students also reported not utilizing counseling services as a result

of mental health stigma and expressed needing more supportive messaging around mental health issues.

An active and engaging web presence is imperative to connecting with today's college students. Include updated information and centralized, easy-to-locate listings of resources and upcoming programs and events. We recommend advertising as early as the students' orientation process with frequent follow-up, using multiple modalities and locations on campus, on the internet, and via social media. While traditional means, like flyers in common spaces, alert students to upcoming events, they can also communicate the school's commitment to mental health and well-being as it relates to the ongoing pandemic. To design innovative web-based communication strategies, SJCC could collaborate with student leaders and campus groups to co-lead the selection, advertising, and implementation of culturally-relevant mental health outreach. See EMHC recommendation #8 for additional implementation strategies.

#4: Incorporate mental health in campus strategic plans, institutional goals, and markers of success for COVID recovery

The pandemic has introduced new challenges and exacerbated pre-existing issues. As we move towards re-adjusting and re-emerging, it will be important to incorporate COVID's lasting effect in our response and in all recommendations for improving students' of color mental health. Over the past year, students experienced a number of challenges related to mental health, including, but not limited to: increased isolation, difficulty balancing family expectations, loss of loved ones, increased caregiving responsibilities, and increased financial strain. As campus communities move towards repair and recovery after the pandemic, it will be important to be mindful of COVID's disparate impact on communities of color and how this impact could have led to achievement and productivity gaps from which students will be recovering. As a campus priority, we



recommend intentional strategizing around students' mental health recovery and repair as means to support their success and recovery from the pandemic. Additionally, as campuses and communities begin to lift mask and vaccine directives, we recommend continuing to reimagine what reintegrating programming and resource access looks like (e.g. hybrid models for courses and campus programming, etc.). The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic also add urgency to all previous recommendations and call for a necessary lens of care and empathy for students of color.

Conclusion

This report outlines multiple data-based insights to better position SJCC to advance issues of equity in mental health for students of color and reap the campus-wide benefits of doing so. Within this report, we developed insights about supporting SJCC's students' mental health by analyzing existing campus data and historical trends, as well as conducting listening sessions with faculty, staff, and students. We made recommendations for expanding campus-community data tools and partnerships, strengthening mental health awareness communication, building a clear framework of action, and strategizing around post-pandemic recovery and repair to reach both short and long-term goals.

While we offer this report to SJCC's leadership as a way of expanding their current work, we do so in full acknowledgment that many campus, community, and state stakeholders must become involved if SJCC is going to build the capacity to invest in additional equitable programming and resource offerings as an institution of learning. As this report and other research have shown, if their mental health infrastructure is to succeed, higher education institutions need a clear plan and funding support. This formal approach is critical not only for supporting students of color in times of calm, but for guiding leadership to respond well in times of crisis, both on- and off-campus. While the college has made meaningful investments in their mental health infrastructure to date,



these recommendations can be leveraged to further their efforts and accelerate them towards their goals. The students, faculty and staff of SJCC are committed to its excellence and invested in improving the mental health and wellness support of student, and they are looking towards the college to take this stance.

