

Emma Holmes Fellowship Final Report

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I appreciate the opportunity to work with Los Angeles City College's (LACC) senior leadership team as part of the Emma Holmes Fellowship. The purpose of the project was to assist the Institutional Advancement office at LACC with its campus climate assessments. With a leadership change in the last year, LACC placed a strong emphasis on developing a culture of respect. I worked with the president, vice president for academic affairs, and dean of institutional effectiveness to develop, administer, and analyze three surveys about campus climate at LACC.

Impact on my practice

My work with the leadership team helped me to understand the practical issues facing a community college. I will not list those all the issue here, as this document will be made public, but I appreciate that some of the issues facing LACC in were not the issues that come up in large national surveys.

My research is about campus climate, particularly the climate related to the ways student experience faculty. I consistently find that faculty availability is a strong predictor of student learning. At LACC, I found that students report faculty are very available, but students interact with them infrequently. That shifted my thinking to consider focusing on barriers to student-faculty interaction that come from the student side. Prior to this work, I assumed that if faculty made themselves available, students would interact with them more often. At LACC, I saw that students felt faculty were available and respectful, but students interacted with them relatively infrequently.

Impact on the College of Education

In my Community College Leadership Ed.D. courses, I've noticed that students sometimes eschew empirical studies as out of touch with the day to day experience on a community college campus. In my classes, I will raise this question when we read research. We will regularly ask, "What's missing here?" and value the voice of the practitioner to come up with the answer. This will be especially helpful to students at the dissertation stage, as they sometimes feel like they must shift into a scholarly mode that feels less valuable than the change they make on a daily basis. My experience at LACC gives me a better understanding of that shift and I hope it will help me to validate and support their voice regarding the things they know as practitioners. That voice, coupled with research tools, is sorely missing in academic circles. Likewise, a scholarly approach to a practical problem is often not possible for busy practitioners. Our Ed.D. students occupy a unique role as scholar practitioners, and they can make a powerful contributions to their institutions through that role. My experience at LACC

helps me to listen more thoughtfully to their practitioner side and consider how they best bring their scholarly tools to inquiry regarding practice.

Renewal of my Engagement in the Field

I have been away from the day-to-day operation of an institution for over 20 years. The LACC project reminded me of the energy, issues, and excitement in leading an institution. Even getting to LACC was exciting as I rode the train to the center of Los Angeles, sought a place to access the wifi in the library, and searched for a place serving lunch on campus. I felt a bit like a new student. When I participated in identifying issues and measurement possibilities with the leadership team, I appreciated their dedication, ability, and work ethic. Our Ed.D. students are in similar roles, and my interactions with the LACC administrators helped me to better understand the issues, workstyles, and problems that occupy their days.

Another source of renewal for me was my interactions with the leadership team as they strategized methods for improving student completions and degree attainment. It was fun to brainstorm about issues we could address through our assessment and to see the ways they tracked progress toward several measures of student success. I was reminded that my Ed.D. students are often in similar meetings; the skills they learn in my courses can add to their ability to contribute effectively toward improving outcomes for community college students.

How I Met Project Goals

My project goals were two-fold. I had a set of goals related to products for LACC and a set of goals related to my teaching at CSUF. I describe how I met those goals below.

Goals for LACC

1. Assess prior campus climate survey and administer a new survey.
I wrote a report of the prior campus survey and worked with the dean of institutional effectiveness to develop three campus climate surveys.
2. Assess campus climate for students, faculty, and staff, focusing on participants' sense of respect.
I wrote three reports on campus climate, focusing on each of the surveys, including executive summaries, tables and charts, suggestions for practice, and further assessment.

Goals for Teaching at CSUF

1. Revise the EDD 611 lab assignments to include practical application of quantitative tools in community college leadership.
I am still in the process of revising the EDD 611 lab assignments, which will begin Feb. 18, 2020. In addition to the LACC study, I have a new dataset from the National Survey of Community College Engagement.

2. Update some lectures to have more current examples of how data are used in community college leadership and decisions.

I have updated lectures and invited two part-time faculty with community college experience to teach with me. We've added course content regarding Guided Pathways and Student Equity and Achievement Program

3. Revise EDAD 510, Educational Research, to include more examples from the community college.

This course involves a major assessment project. I will include my work at LACC in lectures and encourage students to pursue similar (but smaller) projects at the community college level. My co-instructor, Dr. Edwin Romero, has experience at Mt. San Antonio College and currently serves in an administrative role at Norco College. Dr. Romero has agreed to supervise the community college assessment projects. In the other course, my co-instructor is Dr. Leo Barrera, who has seven years of experience at the community college level. He will supervise community college assessments. In both courses, I will contribute my perspectives from LACC and I will also learn from my teaching partners who have more community college experience than I do.