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Erika R. Carlson

CUNY Borough of Manhattan Community College

Leslie Craig

CUNY Borough of Manhattan Community College

Peter P. Hoontis

CUNY Borough of Manhattan Community College

Elisabeth Jaffe

CUNY Borough of Manhattan Community College

Lynn McGee

CUNY Borough of Manhattan Community College

See next page for additional authors

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Contact: AcademicWorks@cuny.edu

Authors

Erika R. Carlson, Leslie Craigo, Peter P. Hoontis, Elisabeth Jaffe, Lynn McGee, and James Sayegh

Abstract

The gaps in graduation and retention rates between ethnic and gender groups continue to be a foremost area of focus at Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC), The City University of New York (CUNY). Equity and inclusion is also a critical concern as it relates to faculty and staff. At BMCC, a college-wide initiative, Designing for Success, is seeking to improve declining retention and graduation rates. At its core is the question, ‘Have we designed our operations to produce these results?’ The answer is, ‘Yes’. BMCC’s Designing for Success strategic planning process seeks to re-design administrative processes and teaching in an effort to eradicate these gaps through efforts which include a community-wide discussion and action planning on equity and inclusion inspired by the charrette process. The charrette creates small groups that meet on more than one occasion to identify critical barriers to addressing equity and inclusion and develops action plans for addressing these barriers from stakeholders at all levels of an organization. This paper proposes that public scholarship is at the core of the charrette process, that it is uniquely appropriate for the higher education environment and moves the community from a “discussion” of the barriers to fully engaging the entire college community in meaningful action-oriented strategic planning.

Creating a Charrette Process to Ignite the Conversation on Equity and Inclusion

Can open community-wide conversations on equity and inclusion help close the equity and inclusion gaps experienced by students, faculty and staff? To answer this question and address the equity and inclusion gaps identified by our college community — and to ultimately see improvements in student retention and graduation rates, staff retention and satisfaction, faculty promotions, retention and satisfaction — the Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC), The City University of New York (CUNY) Equity and Inclusion Task Force Listening Tours subcommittee — part of BMCC’s college-wide Designing for Success strategic planning process — is employing a unique approach inspired by the charrette process. The purpose of the charrettes is to collect opinions, gain insight from varying perspectives related to equity and inclusion at the college, and allow our stakeholders to provide action plans for the institution’s strategic plan.

This is a particularly ambitious goal in an institution as robust and diverse as BMCC. Now the largest institution in CUNY system, BMCC serves more than 26,000 students, 68 percent of whom attend full time. Student success is the priority of more than 500 full-time and nearly 1,000 part-time faculty members, as well as over 400 staff. Students choose from academic programs granting Associate of Art, Associate of Science, and Associate of Applied Science degrees preparing them for entering careers or transferring to a four-year college.

Throughout the country, higher education institutions are making efforts to promote more equitable outcomes among students. This is becoming the driving force of strategic planning in the field of education and requires systemic reform. There must be changes in the learning environment to create inclusive pedagogies (Tuitt, Haynes, & Stewart, 2016). Also, in order for entire institutions to be both equitable and inclusive, all stakeholders must have a voice (Holt,

1974). Participants at all levels of the institution must consider their environment, evaluate their resources and create long term goals (Kotler & Murphy, 1981).

The Listening Tour subcommittee of the Equity and Inclusion Task Force implemented the charrette process of gathering input and action plans from all stakeholders. The charrette model originated in the field of architecture and has been applied since then to other fields, including education.

The Charrette Process: A Tool Used to Advance Higher Education Goals

The word “charrette” comes from the French *en charrette* (wagon/cart) and refers to early 19th-century l'École des Beaux-Arts architectural students who continued working on their drawings even as that work was being taken away on a cart (Karowski-Magee & Ruben, 2010; Smith, 2012). Over time, “charrette” became known as a process for designing a new building while taking into account all the stakeholders’ voices, and has been widely employed by architects and designers in the United States and Europe.

While a charrette can serve many purposes, there are characteristics that all charrettes have in common. It is an intensive workshop that allows for open dialogue and a sharing of ideas. It is inclusive of all stakeholders, and the goal is to create a tangible plan. All participants are expected to have a voice and they are not to be judgmental of or confrontational with others (Miranda & Herr, 2018). They are generally led by facilitators outside the community who can act as arbitrators and help participants remain focused on the goal (Miranda & Herr, 2018; Puyear, 1991).

Developing any type of design affecting many people can be extremely challenging regardless of the discipline. The charrette allows people who would normally have no way of contributing to the project to share their ideas, discuss controversial aspects of the design, and

provide feedback (Hou & Rios, 2003; Miranda & Herr, 2018; Smith, 2012). It unites a community, breaking down barriers that exist between participants, and everyone becomes invested in the success of the project (Holt, 1974). It gives stakeholders the opportunity to act instead of just listen (Eitzen, 1975). The uniqueness of the charrette process is that it includes all stakeholders and creates an environment in which their voices not only can be heard but their remedies for the design limitations are solicited. That said, the charrette process may seem to be just another catchphrase for focus groups, however, it is quite different in intent, design, and implementation.

A successful charrette is dependent on inclusivity and diversity. As many members of the community as possible should be involved as participants. No stakeholder participating in the charrette process is required to have expertise in the administrative aspects of running a college in order to help develop an action plan for making improvements (Puyear, 1991). Goals should be pre-defined, understood and addressed with an agreement among all participants that by the end of the charrette process they will have a consensus about how to reach these goals (Puyear, 1991). Participants should also be allowed to continue their involvement past the charrette session (Holt, 1974), and should receive feedback on the charrette session soon after the process ends (Puyear, 1991; Wishkoski, Lundstrom & Davis, 2019).

While the traditional charrette is anchored in protocol designed to expedite the move from design to construction, the charrette process created at BMCC presents a more long-term model; one that includes two cycles of charrettes which ultimately will yield action-oriented recommendations directly from the stakeholders of the college. The other major modification in the charrette model is that instead of using outside facilitators the institution's faculty and staff were utilized as a resource for facilitating the sessions. The charrette process employed at

BMCC, attempts to collect perspectives and experiences as related to equity and inclusion. This collaborative, respectful design process reflects the needs of everyone in the community and develops an outcome that can realistically be implemented (Miranda & Herr, 2018; Parsons, 1987).

Charrettes have also frequently been used in educational settings including curriculum planning, policy development, school construction, and mission statements. In 1986, Hagerstown Junior College used charrettes to help them redefine their mission. They developed a list of recommendations that would then be integrated into the school's strategic plan (Parsons, 1987). The Virginia Community College System also used charrettes to determine its direction for the future (Puyear, 1991). At the University of California Berkeley, students and 60 teenagers joined in a design charrette to contribute their vision to the planning of a park (Hou & Rios, 2003). After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, students at Cornell University participated in a collaborative design charrette which included students, faculty and community partners. Students helped investigate alternate stormwater management systems, expand affordable housing, and play, overall, a crucial role in the reconstruction of areas affected by the hurricane (Reardon, Ionescu-Heroiu & Rumbach, 2008). The University of Minnesota and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill worked with 20 other universities to help them develop a plan to sustain community engaged scholarship through a faculty development program. They walked away with a detailed action plan and a way to assess the success of its implementation (Gelmon, et al., 2012). In 2013, New York City used charrettes to guide discussions on developing an education agenda (Weinberg, Sweet, Israel, & Sullivan-Yuknis, 2014).

The highly inclusive charrettes process is particularly appropriate at BMCC. Located in lower Manhattan, it is home to over 26,000 students from over 150 countries, as well as those

who grew up in New York City. At BMCC, students' median family income is just over \$28,000, and 34 percent are in the \$20,000-or-less family income range. BMCC is dedicated to the success of all students, and has earned a number one rating, nationwide, in producing associate degrees for minority students, according to a 2018 report, “Top 100 Degree Producers,” in *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*. Equity and inclusion are essential elements in creating an environment that supports high levels of student achievement, as well as an environment in which faculty and staff can thrive (Martinez-Acosta and Favero 2018). Additionally, equity and inclusion cannot be addressed without deep, primary-source understanding of the experience of students, faculty and staff.

This article describes the evolution of the charrette process, which provides an opportunity for all stakeholders in the institution not only to have their voices heard but become designers – co-creators of a community in which they can thrive. In fact, the development of the process itself has been inclusive, as it has involved a wide range of staff and faculty from departments and offices throughout the college. This paper will describe the successes and challenges faced in facilitating the first phase of charrette sessions at BMCC, as well as the goals moving forward with the process.

Charrettes can also be used to create policy. Community colleges have used charrettes to solve problems within their community such as creating a new guidance program to help women with multiple roles in society – mother, wife, student, worker – develop independence and make important decisions regarding their intellectual, emotional, and financial futures (Eitzen, 1975).

The feedback from all these various charrette sessions was primarily positive. Action plans were typically implemented and even when they were not, the suggestions received were valuable. It was an effective method of sharing ideas (Eitzen, 1975; Gelmon et al., 2012;

Parsons, 1987; Smith, 2012). There was a lot of networking, mobilizing people across the community and allowing them to meet and share their expertise (Gelmon et al., 2012; Hou & Rios, 2003; Wishkowski et al., 2019). The diversity of a charrette also yielded more awareness of and greater respect for people of different backgrounds (Karwoski-Magee & Ruben, 2010). Charrettes can also help solve problems before they occur and anticipate resistance to a plan (Smith, 2012). People develop a sense of ownership of their ideas (Puyear, 1991; Weinberg et al., 2014). It gets people to become active in the planning who normally would not without requiring a long commitment because a charrette is meant to be a very quick process (Weinberg et al., 2014).

Charrettes are an effective means of designing a plan, but they can also have disadvantages. In some cases, the diversity can be a hindrance. Participants may feel the other stakeholders cannot understand their perspective and with so many voices, some opinions may not get shared (Karwoski-Magee & Ruben, 2010; Weinberg et al., 2014; Wishkoski et al., 2019). Without skilled facilitators, it might be difficult to keep biases out of the discussion (Sanoff & Barbour, 1974). Because the process is meant to yield results quickly, some people feel pressured if they do not have enough preparation (Eitzen, 1975). An effective charrette is one which is supplemented by other means of collecting recommendations from stakeholders (Puyear, 1991).

Method

Participants

The BMCC charrette process included a total of 128 individuals (118 faculty/staff, 10 students) from the college community that registered to participate. Although we scheduled the

registrants, we did not collect demographic information during the session itself so we do not have the final count on who participated.

Design and Procedure

College-wide collaboration. To facilitate the charrette process, the BMCC Information Resources and Technology (IRT) department created an online registration form accessible by the college-wide community (students, faculty, staff). All 40 charrettes were listed and participants were able to register through the BMCC online portal. IRT also developed an email account specifically for inquiries to be answered quickly by members of the Listening Tour subcommittee.

The BMCC Media Center provided all recording devices used during the sessions. Staff from the Media Center hand-delivered the recording devices to all facilitators that held charrettes outside of the IRT department, prior to the start of the session. Instructions on how to use the device were included. All sessions that took place in the IRT department had recording devices made available through the department's front desk staff.

The Office of Public Affairs developed promotion on campus for the charrettes, and managed the marketing for registration. Members of the BMCC community were invited to sign up for a session, primarily through online resources. The information was included on multiple issues of the weekly college e-newsletter and was included in a presidential e-message, both of which were dispersed to the entire BMCC community of students, faculty and staff. The invitation to participate in a charrette was also placed on electronic monitors on the BMCC main campus, and in additional campus buildings.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics (OIEA), in collaboration with the Listening Tour subcommittee, offered two 2-hour focus group orientation and training sessions. Individual follow-up sessions were also offered at the request of facilitators.

Training sessions. Training sessions were voluntarily attended by facilitators and were not a requirement for conducting a session. Training sessions reviewed the essentials for overseeing successful charrette-inspired focus groups. This included the presentation of questions, how to use probes, managing conflicting opinions as well as sensitive questions/experiences/perceptions discussed in a focus group setting. All facilitators received the training materials for review after the orientation and training sessions were conducted, and OIEA staff were available to facilitators throughout the charrette process. OIEA staff scheduled rooms for all 40 charrette sessions. Additionally, OIEA staff consulted with the Listening Tour subcommittee on the methodology for the charrettes and will be conducting the thematic analysis of the data gathered.

Charrette Facilitators. Faculty and staff were contacted to act as facilitators for the charrette sessions. A total of 36 individuals (18 faculty, 18 staff) volunteered. Facilitators included full-time and adjunct faculty; and staff including college cabinet members. As facilitator participation was voluntary, charrettes were scheduled entirely around facilitators' availability. All facilitators were provided with the protocol the week prior to the session (see Appendix A).

The BMCC Charrettes Implementation. There were a total of 40 charrette sessions offered, and 26 completed over the course of five weeks during the Fall semester. Reduction in sessions was due to participant no-shows, as well as sessions that had only one participant in attendance.

The most well attended sessions were held in the last two weeks that the sessions were offered. Sessions were 45 minutes in length and were carried out on weekdays and evenings, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. to include our night and weekend students, faculty and staff. Although

weekends were offered, registration was low and participants did not attend those scheduled sessions. All charrette-inspired focus groups were conducted in classrooms or conference rooms on the main BMCC campus.

As stated in the protocol provided to all facilitators, during the 45-minute charrette-inspired focus group session, facilitators welcomed all attendees and provided an introduction on the process. Facilitators read the approved definitions of equity and inclusion and emphasized that the session was taking place in a safe space. Confidentiality and respect were discussed, an opportunity to ask questions on the aforementioned was provided, then the facilitator read the informed consent aloud to participants.

There were four questions developed (See Appendix B for questions including probes used) by the Listening Tour subcommittee asked during the session. The questions were designed to encompass the context of equity and inclusion at the college (provided below).

- 1) To what extent do you agree with the following statement: BMCC is a welcoming, inclusive, environment inside and outside of the classroom? Please elaborate.
- 2) What does equity mean in the context of your role here at BMCC?
- 3) How are you promoting equity and inclusion in your daily interactions with the college-wide community?
- 4) If you were president of the college for one day and there were no political or budgetary restraints, what is the one thing you would change to promote an equitable and inclusive college community? First, we would like to hear from the students.

A review of transcriptions from all the charrette sessions confirmed that each group covered all four questions during their allotted time. If participants had additional experiences they

wanted to share they were provided with the charrette email account managed by members of the Listening Tour subcommittee.

Results

Thematic Analysis

The audio recordings from the 26 charrette focus groups were transcribed using a software to ensure anonymity of the participants. The final transcripts were analyzed using a three-stage grounded theory coding process (Strauss & Corbin, 2015). The transcripts provided 763 initial codes (open codes), 72 secondary codes (axial codes), and four overarching themes (selective codes). The four selective codes are presented below.

Theme 1. The College must intentionally design its infrastructure and initiatives to demonstrate that equity and inclusion are cultural values.

Theme 2. The institution must empower and purposefully engage the college community in attracting, retaining, and developing the human and financial resources required to promote equity and inclusion.

Theme 3. Faculty and staff commitment to student-centered practices and dedication to fostering a culture of care inside and outside the classroom is essential to enhancing equity and inclusion.

Theme 4. To advance a climate of equity and inclusion, the college must address policies and practices that impede the development of community, encourage perceptions of inequitable treatment and diminish feelings of inclusion and connectedness.

Facilitators Weigh in on Charrette Process

In keeping with the inclusiveness and transparency of the charrette process, the many diverse individuals who participated in planning and facilitation were invited to report and

debrief about their experiences. After all of the charrette sessions had been conducted, organizers of the sessions set up a meeting, inviting all the facilitators and support staff who had been involved in scheduling or providing technical support for the sessions to provide feedback on the process and suggestions for future charrettes.

Twenty people attended that meeting. This included six committee members, 11 facilitators, two representatives from the BMCC Media Center, and the interim president of the college. All of the Listening Tour committee members and one member of the Media Center had served dual roles as both facilitators and support staff, so the total number of facilitators attending the meeting was 18. Additionally, staff who provided technical, logistical or scheduling support for the charrette sessions included staff from the BMCC Office of Public Affairs, the BMCC Media Center and Instructional Technology Services, as well as administrative staff in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analysis, and others. At least one member from each of these departments provided feedback.

During the meeting, facilitators and support staff provided verbal feedback on their experience of the charrette-inspired focus group cycle and members of the Listening Tours Committee took copious field notes. Referencing the protocol used by Eddy and VanDerLinden (2006) these notes were reviewed three times by one member of the committee; emergent coding was used to uncover common themes in the responses. The themes were discussed with other members of the committee and there was confirmation that the themes that emerged were representative of the responses. The following are themes that emerged and will be discussed in more detail below.

- 1) The charrette process is a powerful, transparent tool that allows for many voices to be heard, generating rich conversations concerning equity, inclusion and diversity; the process itself is a practice in equity and inclusion;
- 2) This process worked well because many people with different roles were deeply involved in planning;
- 3) More time is needed for planning, training of facilitators and promotion of the process;
- 4) Affinity groups may increase participation and
- 5) The process needs to continue.

The power of the charrette process was noted in comments by facilitators including one who stated, “I am dedicated to BMCC as an institution ... I feel welcomed and appreciate the culture of change.” Facilitators also noted that participants were appreciative of the opportunity to be included in discussions about equity, inclusion and diversity. For some facilitators, it was an educational experience wherein they learned about resources at the college such as the BMCC Safe Zone. At times during the sessions, there were deep conversations but as one facilitator said, “It got really heated but they were all respectful.”

Several of those who assisted in the facilitating and planning of the sessions, and who serve as support staff at BMCC noted that when institutions are engaged in strategic planning, a few people in positions of traditional leadership often control the direction of the planning. The following comment from a media specialist highlights the nature of the charrette process at BMCC: “The transparency of this process is novel, and useful in higher education. It is good to see the college willing to listen, valuing participation of all members as we plan, and willing to take part in the hard conversations.” Several facilitators noted that staff from the Media Center were very helpful in providing the recording equipment. Much feedback centered on the

collaborative nature of the process and how so many people gave freely and generously of their time. In addition to collecting feedback from facilitators, the Listening Tour committee solicited feedback from individuals in many different departments of the college who assisted in scheduling the sessions. According to one staff member, “To set up classrooms, I worked with staff in the registrar’s office. She never complained but I went to her one by one with the room requests instead of with a group of requests which would have been better.”

Discussion

We are now in the process of planning a phase two cycle of charrette processes, having gathered the feedback from facilitators, and analyzed transcripts from phase one. Our plan is to execute action-oriented questions derived from the four selective codes, intended to elicit recommendations that can be presented as important contributions in the formation of the institution’s strategic planning outcomes for the 2020-2025 strategic plan cycle.

Moving forward with the next cycle of sessions, we have the luxury of hindsight and time. The Listening Tour subcommittee carried out phase one of the charrette process in an expedited fashion. Within two weeks, the committee developed four pointed questions on equity and inclusion for facilitators to ask; established a protocol; coordinated the creation of an online sign-up platform for stakeholders to join a charrette-inspired focus group session; guided the development of a marketing plan; provided training to facilitators for running a successful focus group; and scheduled the sessions around faculty and staff facilitators’ schedules.

Perhaps because the process happened so quickly, there is much room for improvement. Some rooms identified for a charrette-inspired focus group session were locked or not set up, and sometimes facilitators had to visit the BMCC Media Center themselves to obtain the recorders. It was noted that future sessions would “need designated rooms for sessions with the equipment

already set up.” Additionally, while facilitators were eager to participate, they had questions about protocol. One facilitator was “afraid that people would stay quiet.” Other facilitators had to use the prompts and repeat the questions. Generally, facilitators wanted more training.

One support staff member, whose comment echoes those of many other staff and facilitators noted: “This was rapid deployment, the process happened very quickly. The second time around, we need more time for advertising, promotion and planning.” In regard to promotion, several people at the feedback meeting felt that “charrette” is a term that is “not familiar to many people and may have been off putting ... need to clarify what charrettes are, pair the term with focus groups, and have more lead time for promotion.”

Continuing the Conversation on Equity and Inclusion

The Listening Tour subcommittee convened a Charrette Facilitator Feedback session, attended by the BMCC interim president and open to all facilitators who participated in the process. Several facilitators suggested training students as co-facilitators, scheduling charrettes during club hours when students are available, and locating charrettes in spaces where students feel most comfortable. While this was the first round of charrettes, all facilitators and support staff were eager for this process to continue. The comment of one facilitator sums up this sentiment: “I am glad this [charrette session] is happening; let’s keep it going and be responsive to the needs of the students.” There was consensus among all facilitators and support staff that organizing the next cycle of charrette sessions around affinity groups—all students, all staff or all faculty—would encourage more participation and provide a safer space for targeted groups, especially students. In particular, one facilitator noted that there were “ten participants, a nice mix [of students and faculty], some students felt intimidated.” Several facilitators and support staff suggested training students as co-facilitators, having charrette focus group sessions during

BMCC club hours when students are available, and having charrette sessions in places where students feel most comfortable. On the other hand, some facilitators noted that groups comprised of a combination of junior, senior and adjunct faculty; as well as administrators and both administrative and support staff might benefit members of each of the groups, allowing them to hear each other's points of views in a context that is not their usually work setting. Additionally, the definitions of equity and inclusion will be clarified by means including the use of graphics (see Appendix C), during the charrette sessions. The process will continue in line with the BMCC's overall commitment to equity by design—a design that welcomes the voice of all stakeholders.

Limitations

Limitations include the lack of collecting demographic data during the sessions. Although we were aware of who registered for a session we were unable to determine how many faculty, staff, and students were actually present and responding to questions. During the next phase of this process we plan on collecting demographics that include the stakeholders' role as well as gender and ethnicity data. Collecting these data should better help us with understanding the responses gathered.

The mixed groups were designed to solicit multiple perspectives but may have also inhibited a participant's desire to speak freely. The second phase will consist of affinity groups so each stakeholder is asked questions that pertain more specifically to them. The questions in the second phase will be formed after looking at the results of the first round and ideally the questions will be action-oriented and produce a plan of action before the end of the session, more in line with a traditional charrette.

In the spirit of inclusion we wanted to offer the role of facilitator to any faculty or staff member who was interested and at the time made the determination that the facilitator training would be optional and the protocol would serve as a substitute. After receiving feedback from facilitators it is clear that some of them felt ill-prepared or lacked confidence during their scheduled session. Those who did not attend the optional training reported feeling that they were unsure of how to respond to conflict during a session, and how to remain unbiased while facilitating given they are also a stakeholder. During the second phase of charrettes, facilitators will attend mandatory training. Additionally, limiting the number of facilitators will also allow for more consistency in the protocol for the sessions.

Charrette sessions were scheduled around facilitators' schedules with the hopes of maximizing the number of facilitators. This made it more difficult to schedule appropriate rooms where it would be easy to have proper media equipment ready. In the second round, sessions will be scheduled at times that would allow faculty, staff and students more flexibility in attending in an attempt to increase the number of participants.

The limited time to implement the charrettes was a complicating factor. The need to start as soon as possible was in response to the need for the Strategic Plan to be developed by September 2020. In this first round, there were only three weeks to promote, schedule and allow members of the BMCC community to register. The most attended charrettes were the last ones, indicating that people needed more time to adjust their schedules in order to participate.

Overall, the response from the college-wide community was positive – there is excitement that this process has started and will continue through the next academic year. Voices will continue to be heard from the college-wide community in an effort to continue the conversation on equity and inclusion and make real changes to enhance equity and inclusion with

the plan of action built directly from the voices of our stakeholders. BMCC is optimistic that the collaborative discussions as a college-wide community on equity and inclusion through charrettes has the potential to be the model in future strategic planning processes at the institution.

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Appendix A

Charrette Protocol

1. Welcome and thank you for being here,
 - a. purpose of this Charrette – to have the voice of stakeholders be included in designing for equity and inclusion
 - b. introductions – name and role (student, staff, faculty)
2. This is a safe space, emphasize:
 - a. Respect for one another
 - b. Anonymity - While the session will be audio recorded there will be no identifying information,
 - c. Informed Consent will be read to participants. All participants must verbally give consent prior to participating in the session.
 - d. If at any time you (participant) do not feel safe, if you wish to leave at any time, you are free to do so and, if you would like, we are happy to schedule a different Charrette for you to attend
3. Session length – 45 minutes

The following definitions for Equity and Inclusion should be read prior to asking the charrette questions.

4. **Definition of Equity** – BMCC has an unwavering commitment to combat bigotry and continuously develop strategies in support of its mission to excel as a vibrant, pluralistic learning community that holds as its highest priority, the growth and success of every student, faculty member and staff person at the college. That growth and success is enabled first and foremost, by an across-the-board priority of equity at every level of the

college. To strengthen equity at BMCC, the college has protocols, policies and programs in place, as well as conduits for feedback that drive the assessment, revision and expansion of opportunities for historically underrepresented students, faculty and staff to advance and grow. A commitment to equity at BMCC includes an unequivocal respect for individuals, while acknowledging their differences—which could include but are not limited to race, national origin, ethnicity, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability status and socioeconomic background—and resides at the heart of every initiative and program at BMCC.

5. **Definition of Inclusion** - BMCC strives to ensure that every student, as well as every faculty and staff member perceives through their physical, social, intellectual and professional experience at the college, an institutional commitment to inclusion that supports their efforts, goals and professional or academic fulfillment. Inclusion is maintained at BMCC through ongoing and open discourse, as well as an innovative range of strategies that increase, assess, evolve and support *not just representation* of every BMCC community member in all aspects of the college community, but *meaningful participation*. This is achieved with awareness of and respect for factors including but not limited to a person's race, national origin, ethnicity, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability status and socioeconomic background. It is the college's steadfast priority that all members of the community have opportunities to participate, and enjoy access to the benefits of attending or being employed at BMCC. Cultivating inclusion is foundational to the college's core mission to create an environment where all students, faculty and staff can do their best work, take advantage

of opportunities for advancement and feel themselves to be an authentic member of a pluralistic community that is accessible, evolving and engaged.

Appendix B

Charrette Focus Group Questions

The questions are numbered and should be presented in order. Possible probes for each question are lettered. You are not required to present probes unless the discussion needs to be stimulated.

Manage the Charrette time in order to cover all the questions (if possible):

- 1. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: BMCC is a welcoming, inclusive, environment inside and outside of the classroom. Please elaborate.**

Probes (use only as needed):

- a) Do you feel like a valued member of the college community? Why or why not.
- b) What barriers do you feel exist in regards to maintaining an inclusive environment?
- c) Please share a story about a time where you felt like you were welcomed as a part of the college community, and/or please share a time where you felt like you were not welcomed as a part of the college community.
- d) Please describe your sense of belonging within the college.

- 2. What does equity mean in the context of your role here at BMCC?**

Probes (use only as needed):

- a) Think about your experiences as you enter and move through BMCC buildings and outdoor environments. Please describe your experiences as you move through the physical spaces of BMCC (i.e. bathrooms, classrooms, sound level)
- b) What would you identify as inequitable at the College?
- c) What would you identify as equitable at the College?

- d) What barriers do you feel exist in regards to maintaining equitable environments

3. How are you promoting equity and inclusion in your daily interactions with the college-wide community?

Probes (use only as needed):

- a) Do you feel supported by the college community in regards to promoting equity and inclusion? Please describe this support, or lack of support.
- b) What steps can the College take to assist you in promoting equity within the college community?

4. If you were president of the College for one day and there were no political or budgetary restraints, what is the one thing you would change to promote an equitable and inclusive college community? First, we would like to hear from the students.

Appendix C

Charrette Project Phase II Definitions and Graphic

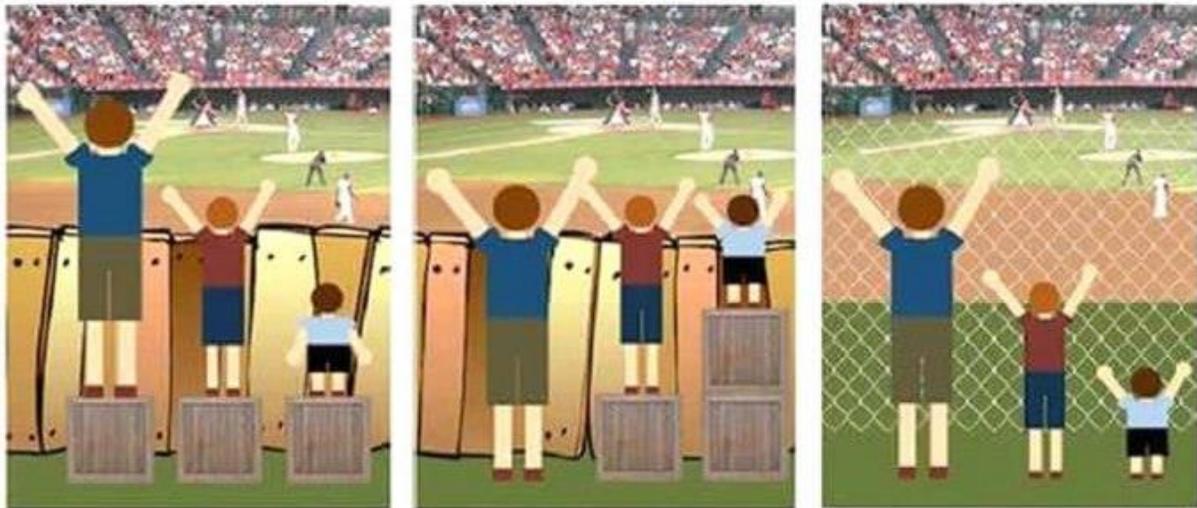
Definition of Equity:

- The quality of being fair and impartial

Note: Equity does not mean equality. Each person may need different resources to reach the same goal. Equity provides these different resources in a fair and impartial way.

Definition of Inclusion:

- The action or state of including or of being included within a group or structure.



*<http://directcourseonline.com/equity-equality-inclusion/>