

CH AN GE MAKERS



PHI THETA KAPPA
HONOR SOCIETY

Journal of Student
Leadership

2021 Edition

About Phi Theta Kappa

Phi Theta Kappa is the premier honor society recognizing the academic achievement of students at associate degree-granting colleges and helping them grow as scholars and leaders. The Society is made up of more than 3.5 million members and nearly 1,300 chapters in 10 nations.

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A Letter from the Editor

Phi Theta Kappa is pleased to present the inaugural edition of *Change Makers: Phi Theta Kappa Journal of Student Leadership*. Our mission is to recognize academic achievement of college students and to provide opportunities for them to grow as scholars and leaders. The articles printed in *Change Makers* highlight our commitment to cultivating and acknowledging student excellence and scholastic success. We are proud to publish the work of community college students who, under the direction of their college administrators, planned and implemented leadership- and service-based projects that support the mission of their colleges and generate positive changes on their campuses.

Each of the articles published in *Change Makers* demonstrates exceptional planning, leadership, and service activities carefully designed to improve the college community and campus environment. These College Projects begin with carefully planned meetings between the students and the college administration. Here, students explore the college's mission and offer voluntary service to complete projects that the administration deem both crucial and necessary to support the college and its overall mission.

We received 429 submissions for possible inclusion in this journal. We are honored to publish 15 of those submissions. The selected articles represent an intentional and direct response to the diverse needs of community colleges across the nation. They also represent students' commitment to projects focused on leadership, service, and providing practical solutions for presented problems. The articles presented here not only demonstrate the ability of community college students to enact positive change through leadership and service, but also their capacity to persevere in the face of challenges, uncertainty, and hardship. Although these projects were completed amid a global pandemic, they are no less impressive in content and scope than projects students have completed under less dire circumstances.

We are proud of the students admirably representing their Phi Theta Kappa chapters who accepted the challenge to develop, implement, and write about their College Projects this year. They are indeed engaging in leadership and service that will positively impact their campus communities and benefit the faculty, staff, and students at their colleges. We offer a special congratulations to the chapters whose works are published in this year's journal. Your published projects underscore the fact that community college students are strong and committed leaders, dedicated servants, and active and engaged scholars. We are honored to include your work in the inaugural edition of *Change Makers*.

With sincere pride,



Johannah B. Williams, Ph.D.

Associate Vice President of STEM & Workforce Programs
Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

Transformational Leadership: Developing Equity-Minded Change Agents

Omicron Beta Chapter
Mesa Community College
Tempe, Arizona

Abstract

In alignment with the college's value initiative toward Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), Transformational Leadership: Developing Equity-Minded Change Agents was chosen as the College Project. A student-facilitated 21-Day Race and Equity Challenge was the action-oriented activity of the College Project.

The College Project Team (the Team) led and facilitated the 21-Day Race and Equity challenge that included daily activities for participants to learn about diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Team researched and provided resources to promote and support our college's vision statement on equity (creating systems, environments, and interactions that welcome, engage, and keep all learners). The challenge extended over four weeks, with each week exploring a different topic: Civil Discourse and Self-Reflection, Racism and Race, Whiteness, and Self-Care and Support. At the end of each week, the Team conducted deliberative dialogue sessions with participants to discuss what they learned from this experience and how they might use this new knowledge in their everyday lives. The Team was composed of chapter members, officers, and advisors from the college's two campuses.

Participants were provided resources to engage with for 15-30 minutes a day, during their own time, such as reading articles, listening to podcasts, or engaging in thought-provoking activities. Members and participants in the challenge included administrators, faculty, staff, students from multiple colleges with the

Maricopa Community College District, and community members.

The Team collaborated closely with the college administration to ensure the project conformed with the college's priorities and mission. With guidance from the college interim president, senior associate vice presidents, the DEI Council leadership, and Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) members, the team implemented the 21-Day Race and Equity Challenge project. This project contributed to the college's new mission and DEI values by engaging participants in dialogue on the specific topics.

Planning

Over the initial few weeks, the Team reviewed the college's mission statement: To create an inclusive and vibrant learning community where everyone is supported to achieve success. To learn about the college environment and initiatives, input was sought from various college administrators and faculty – senior associate vice presidents, college interim president, dean of institutional effectiveness, interim associate dean, library faculty, Guided Pathways to Success Initiative leadership, and DEI Council leadership.

Based on the input received, the Team generated possible ideas for the College Project and voted on those ideas to choose the top three possible proposals. Similar ideas were combined as a part of this process. All the possible ideas, including the top three, were noted. The college interim president and senior associate vice presidents engaged in discussion with the team to choose the project based on the college's value statement of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The team involved in the planning process were the officers of Phi Theta Kappa's (PTK) Omicron Beta Chapter. Weekly College Project meetings were held with the team, including chapter officers with the college administration attending periodically. For the College Project, the decision was led by the assigned advisor and officer. The college and district DEI council representatives assisted the team with determining the 21-Day Race and Equity Challenge for the project (Figure 1).

For the challenge, the team engaged in reviewing and vetting identified resources, a combination



Figure 1

of readings and videos, to determine those that could be used as learning tools. This process of curating the resources helped the team members improve their research skills. A website was created for the challenge. The website demonstrated organization and professionalism as a team.

Leadership Development

The team embarked on a multi-stage study of leadership guided by the book *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* written by Patrick Lencioni. Team members shared their reflections on their leadership strengths and challenges at each study stage, thus bonding as a cohesive team. Equipped with the new knowledge, the team incorporated these new skills toward implementing the project. The team gained knowledge for the project through extensive research regarding the inequities faced at the college. Statistics regarding the resources available to students of color guided the endeavor. The team found that students of color need access to more resources on campus to remove entry barriers. Previous College Projects were used as an example to determine the focus of the current project on improving students' lives on campus.

During the process of selecting the College Project, the team individually prepared and analyzed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (S.W.O.T.) of their analysis and proposals. These analyses helped the team openly share their ideas with others, promote team collaboration, and identify improvement areas for the project.

The team maintained a shared Google Drive folder and improved organizational skills by frequently referring to shared resources: the college mission statement, team meeting notes, progress reports, shared writing documents, rubrics, insight from faculty and district administrators, and regional project workshops. Large tasks were divided into strategic portions to accomplish individual tasks more effectively. In preparation to lead reflection meetings with project participants, the team strengthened their group moderation skills by creating a script with questions to inspire discussion. A list of responses was generated in the script to create a safe atmosphere. This encouraged participants to interact and reflect on their thoughts and learning.

Collaboration

It was a challenging year for everyone. However, the team collaborated and created the project to be implemented and facilitated virtually using WebEx breakout rooms. One of the significant challenges the team encountered was implementing the College Project online instead of in person. Despite being unable to have in-person meetings due to COVID-19 restrictions, the team successfully held weekly meetings and created a cohesive team in an online environment.

Change in leadership of the Omicron Beta Chapter became an obstacle. The team faced emotional distress and discomfort among the chapter officers, which led to a few officer resignations. As a result, the team grew smaller in size. Committed members continued the project planning and implementation with the project advisor's support and strengthened their bonds with each other.

The team held weekly virtual College Project meetings open to students from both campuses led by the assigned officer and advisor to plan,

coordinate, and implement the project. These weekly meetings were promoted to those interested in joining and getting involved with PTK to serve as student leaders and ambassadors.

Members were assigned roles throughout the project to ensure their unique skills were used to carry out the project's vision and mission. Skills such as public speaking, interpersonal, project management, leadership, and most importantly communicating and networking with the project's 113 participants were utilized to advance the project. Chapter members used soft skills learned through PTK's Competitive and Research Edge™ to help educate their peers about diversity, equity, and inclusion at a time when social injustice persists. The team also maintained partnerships with community leaders/partners and local college faculty to ensure a diverse population of participants could benefit from the project.

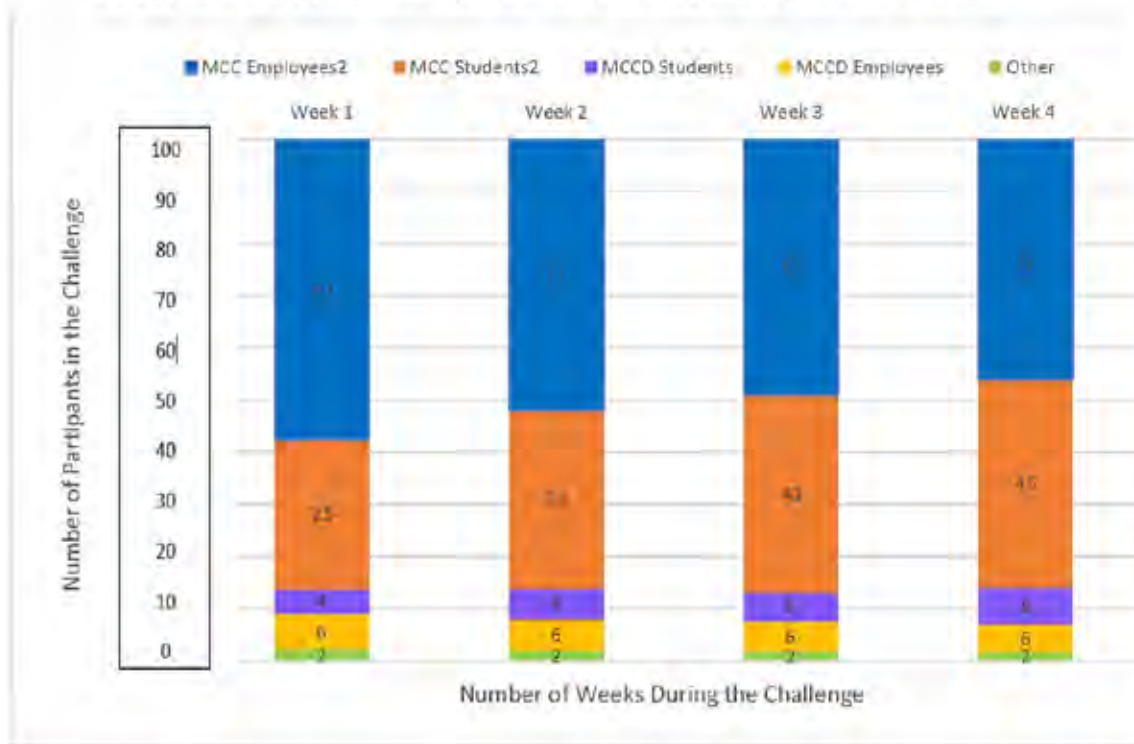
The team created and shared flyers on the college social media accounts and distribution lists to invite participation in the project. A shared spreadsheet was used to track and communicate the involvement of the project participants. The team provided timely communication and updates to the project participants via email. Each week, the college project advisor updated the project website with the weekly topical resources, while the team communicated with project participants. The team reviewed these data and made adjustments with implementation plans. As a resource, the team communicated with participants to acknowledge their participation and linked the project website.

Impact

The number of participants registered for this College Project totaled 113 individuals; 45 participants were MCC students, 52 were MCC employees, eight were students from other colleges, six were employees from other colleges, and two were miscellaneous participants.

During the four-week challenge, participants were invited to complete two short surveys each week: a pre-survey (before starting the challenge) and a post-survey (after completion of the challenge). The pre-survey focused on the participants' knowledge of the topic before engaging with

21-Day Race and Equity Challenge: Number of Participants Vs. Number of Weeks



Participant Categories	Number of Participants Each Week of the Challenge			
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Mesa Community College (MCC) Employees	50	52	52	52
Mesa Community College (MCC) Students	25	34	40	45
Maricopa Community College District (M CCD) Students	4	6	6	8
Maricopa Community College District (M CCD) Employees	6	6	6	6
Other	2	2	2	2

Figure 2

the topic-centered resources. The post-survey focused on the participants learning from their involvement with the resources and how they might use new knowledge in everyday life.

The total number of surveys submitted over these four weeks totaled 113 pre-surveys and 49 post-surveys. A recurring theme that emerged

from the pre-surveys was open-mindedness and willingness to learn more about the topic issues. Participants shared bold and powerful responses expressing the desire for justice to be done in our communities regarding these topic issues. For the most part, the post-survey responses were very elaborate, and participants reflected on things that they learned throughout

this challenge. They noted what they enjoyed about the process and commented on how the information learned could enhance both personal and collegiate growth.

A total of 80 individuals participated in the moderated deliberative dialogues over the four-week challenge (Figure 2). Two PTK members jointly served as facilitators, one as the lead and the other as the support facilitator. These conversations were open dialogs where participants exchanged their thoughts and ideas about a specific topic.

The team developed skills as facilitators by learning to lead discussions, asking open-ended questions, acknowledging thoughts shared by participants in discussions, and guiding the conversation flow. The team used prior learned research skills to identify and curate the resources for the challenge's specific topics. The project website, created by the team, is linked as a resource on the college DEI council webpage.

Involvement in this project helped the Team and the participants discover how racial and social injustices impact our community and identify ways to dismantle racism and other forms of discrimination.