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MAPPING ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AND COLLECTIVE ACTION: Towards a Model for Advancing Racial Equity in Community College

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**MAPPING ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AND COLLECTIVE ACTION:  
Towards a Model for Advancing Racial Equity in Community College**

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**ABSTRACT**

In this paper we present the Advancing Racial Equity in Community College Model which maps out the organizational conditions shaping institutional transformation. Focused on two dimensions, the level of *organizational support* and *shared responsibility* to enact equity, we describe four quadrants with distinct organizational conditions that shape how equity advocates design, build, and sustain equity efforts. With well-documented racial inequities and renewed calls for racial justice across higher education, it demands new ways of exploring and understanding how institutional actors leading equity efforts are nested within differing organizational contexts that can enable as well as restrict the enactment and success of racial equity efforts. Our model helps equity advocates gain an *awareness* of known barriers to implementation in higher education, *assess* the readiness of their campus for racialized change, and take *action* to build the necessary institutional support and capacity to move the work forward.

**Keywords:** Community College, Racial Equity, Racialized Organizational Change, Policy Implementation

**INTRODUCTION**

Over the last decade, researchers have increasingly explored how community college leaders in California understand racial equity, identify mechanisms of inequity embedded within the institution, the types of strategies proposed to disrupt these harmful mechanisms, and ultimately the process of enacting change strategies into actions that influence institutional transformation and improve student outcomes (Bensimon, 2018; Ching et al., 2020; Dowd & Bensimon, 2015; Felix & Castro, 2018; Gonzalez et al., 2021). This undertaking by equity advocates is part of an unapologetic commitment to improving racial equity in conditions, experiences, and outcomes faced by minoritized students, especially in the community college context.

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One of the critical elements our research identifies is acknowledging and mapping the organizational terrain (levels of support, areas of resistance) that equity advocates (leaders charged with equity efforts) must navigate through or around to enact change strategies seeking more just and equitable policies, structures, and practices (Bensimon & Neumann, 1992; Felix, 2021; Garcia, 2017; Kezar, 2018; McCambly et al., 2023). While there have been ample proposed models to study organizational culture and institutional mechanisms, Kezar & Eckel (2002) remind us that only a few empirical studies have examined “how institutional culture affects change processes and strategies” (p. 436).

Drawing from empirical data collected over a five-year period, we offer the Advancing Racial Equity (ARE) model in community colleges. This model focuses on two dimensions: the level of *organizational support* (Bensimon & Neumann, 1992; Kezar, 2018) and *shared responsibility* to enact equity (Holcombe et al., 2023; Kezar et al., 2023). From these two dimensions, we describe four organizational archetypes with distinct conditions that shape how equity advocates can design, build, and sustain racial equity efforts.

Foundational scholarly contributions from higher education organizational theorists explore and examine the organizational mechanisms and behaviors that promote or hinder change (Bergquist, 1992; Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008; Kezar, 2018; Kezar & Eckel, 2002). However, most recently McCambly and Colyvas (2023) argue that “We lack frameworks for designing and evaluating change projects—as inroads toward more just administrative practice—toward a more equitable future” (p. 203). With the documented realities of racial inequity and renewed calls for racial justice across higher education, it demands new ways of exploring and understanding how institutional actors carrying the weight of change are nested with community colleges with differing organizational contexts that can enable or restrict the enactment of racial equity efforts (Felix, 2021; Felix et al., 2021).

Our work is situated in the California context, where lauded student success reforms are routinely passed, with limited evidence that these policy efforts are able to fulfill their intents and aspirations of equitable change (Ching et al., 2020; Felix et al., 2018). In past work, we have noted how policy implementation can be a tool to advance racial equity at community colleges. While we believe this to be true, we also recognize that without a race-conscious critical analysis of the formulation, implementation, and impact of educational reforms (Felix, 2021; Garcia, 2017), education policy then becomes what Gillborn (2005) suggests is an “act of White supremacy” that reproduces technocratic ‘solutions’ to deeply rooted systemic inequities (Young & Diem, 2017). “It is dangerous to believe that cure for racism/White supremacy is contained in law and policy alone” (Patton, 2016, p. 332). Therefore, we argue that successful implementation of racialized organizational change can only occur when people, place, and policy intent converge to create the necessary conditions to successfully enact the promises of educational reforms.

Our Advancing Racial Equity (ARE) in Community College model then helps to map the organizational terrain in which implementation unfolds and identifies four unique archetypes (Bergquist, 1992; Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008) that highlight tensions between the actions that community college leaders envision and the underlying conditions within the organization that push against these efforts or can lend themselves for transformation. We use the concept of organizational archetypes as a way to contextualize institutional behaviors, meaning how mission, vision, and practices govern or influence priorities, and thus how these institutional contexts shape the conditions that are created from these behaviors that either promote or impede the possibilities for racial equity change.

## **THEORIZING AROUND RACIALIZED ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE**

As a way to frame the dynamic process of how levels of *organizational support* and *shared responsibility* enable or constrict conditions to advance racial equity, we draw from the *Trenza* Policy Implementation (PI) framework (Felix, 2021) and Ray's (2019) theory of racialized organizations. The combination of these perspectives allows us to examine how the community college as a racialized space both shapes the process and possibility of how the individual implementer can advance racial equity efforts. For example, the conceptual underpinnings from *Trenza* PI and racialized organizations can push us to consider how contextual place shapes people, how implementation of responsibilities in their roles shape practices, and how these practices shape organizational operations. The *Trenza* PI framework braids together rational, critical, and interpretative strands of policy implementation to center the epistemic contributions of Latinx/a/o community college leaders toward advancing equity in their praxis. What is missing however is specificity in how organizational contexts function as mechanisms of racialized hierarchies that curate conditions that either support and advocate for equity or diminish and derail equity efforts.

Thus, understanding that equity advocates are always situated within racialized conditions of an organizational ecosystem that is riddled with historicized contexts of coloniality, genocide, and marginalization, is critical to ensuring a successful navigation of “white organizational types” to advance racial equity (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008; McCambly et al., 2023; Ray, 2019, p. 38). Therefore, by connecting a *Trenza* PI framework that focuses on self in relation to understandings of racialized organizations and their sociopolitical contexts that are historicized, we can locate the contemporary mechanisms in place that temporalize the policy implementation process of racial equity efforts at community colleges.

## **BUILDING ON EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

Our paper and model build on a five-year, multi-sited case study examining the development and implementation of Student Equity Plans (Plans) within the California Community Colleges (CCC) (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). These Plans are recurring three-year institutional documents that require all 116 community colleges in the system to outline existing inequities in key academic areas (i.e., retention, completion, and transfer) and then propose strategies and solutions to tackle identified disparities. In our broader work that examines how community colleges address inequities for minoritized students (Felix & González, 2022), we have identified community colleges that leveraged this planning process as an opportunity for racialized organizational change (McCambly & Colyvas, 2022).

In Fall 2019, we began our research project with four community colleges and focused on documenting how these sites implemented their proposed racial equity efforts. A few months into the project, COVID-19 altered society, higher education, and our ability to conduct this work. Amid the pandemic, we recognized the need to sustain the visions of racial justice articulated in these Plans as equity advocates shared concerns about the disruption of on-the-ground initiatives meant to serve historically marginalized students and the ways these efforts were being canceled, temporarily paused, or scaled-down for virtual spaces.

Soon after, we expanded our research project to 16 community colleges and worked to maintain and advance their racial equity efforts. Given the shift to virtual fieldwork, this allowed us to engage and participate in critical spaces across the 16 community colleges in an intense and sustained way. Our Advancing Racial Equity model was developed based on the research insights from our initial four sites. Then we were able to revise and refine the model with the additional data collected examining the implementation of racial equity efforts across all 16 community colleges (Appendix A). Data used to conceptualize our model includes 60 interviews, 40 observations (in-person and via Zoom), and hundreds of documents across the 16 sites.

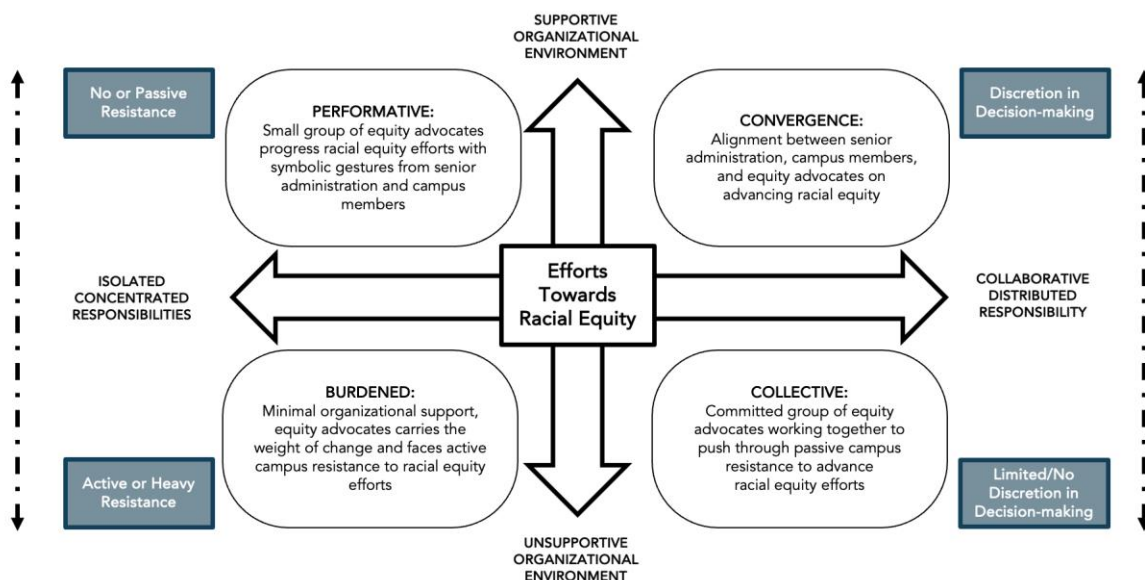
Interviews represent the primary means through which we gathered participants' understanding, involvement, and experiences with enacting their institutional Plans as a means for racial justice. Observations supplemented interviews, allowing us to perceive how practitioners in various meetings, individually and collectively, discuss, negotiate, and implement Plan activities (i.e., Racial Equity Faculty Training, Men of Color Summer Bridge), in situ. Lastly, institutional documents were collected to provide important background information for each institution and artifacts of implementation. Within these documents are an organizational mapping exercise where each campus described their institutional conditions and placed themselves within the emerging ARE model. These organizational maps draw from mapping qualitative methodologies where participants are able to “socially and spatially study the injustice” that occurs in their contexts (Annamma, 2017). Analysis started with systematic sorting and reviewing of the rich data sources collected across the sites. From there we wrote analytic memos and held team debriefing sessions. From there we conducted open and theoretical coding on the data collected and closed by collapsing emerging codes into four core categories that turned into the model archetypes.

### ADVANCING RACIAL EQUITY IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE MODEL

Prevalent across the sites observed in our research project were differing levels of institutional support received equity advocates during implementation and specific campus dynamics that either enabled or restricted their ability to carry out racial equity efforts. As visualized in Figure 1, our model builds on these observations and maps out four organizational archetypes across two axes --the level of organizational support and shared responsibility for racial equity. While we note Bergquist’s (1992) work on institutional archetypes where he theorized ways higher education institutions, primarily universities, might be categorized and described, we problematize the original conceptualization of archetypes which grouped organizational contexts through a race-evasive lens that absolve institutions of responsibility and accountability. Guiding our theorization, design, and application of the Model is the question: How do we account for and address the organizational barriers faced by equity advocates that tend to dilute, derail, or delay proposed efforts to root out problems of practice that perpetuate racial inequity?

Figure 1. Advancing Racial Equity Model

## Advancing Racial Equity in Community College Model



The ARE model helps equity advocates gain an *awareness* of known barriers to implementation in higher education, *assess* the readiness of their campus for racialized change, and take *action* to build the necessary institutional support and capacity to move the work forward. Specifically, we illustrate how varying organizational conditions and leadership capacity shape what equity advocates can do within their community college to implement proposed plan efforts to address racial disparities. By creating a model with two dimensions plotted as horizontal and vertical axes, we identified and proposed four distinct organizational archetypes that shape how implementation unfolds: Convergence, Performative, Collective, and Burdened. In our model, varying combinations of *Organizational Support* and *Shared Responsibility* result in a particular organizational context that can help equity leaders<sup>1</sup> understand how to navigate such a landscape and ensure their energy, time, and resources are mobilized in an effective way to achieve desired racial equity outcomes.

Therefore, the model is intended for equity leaders (any of those seeking to advance racial equity efforts at their campus) to utilize these axes to map out their current organizational context and identify which quadrant they fall under. Understanding their organizational conditions will allow them to strategize efforts towards racial equity accordingly. It is not meant to be prescriptive Model but rather a descriptive process of naming where they are as organization and where do they need to go, what is needed to go there, and how will this result in advancing racial equity initiatives.

Additionally, we note that this model is not linear or fixed, meaning if equity leaders placed their organizational conditions within a certain quadrant, it's not necessarily assumed they will move in a linear progression to the next. In this vein, if they map out their organization to be a convergence archetype, these 'prime' conditions of *High-Organizational Support and High-Shared Responsibility* are not indefinite and can change based on a variety of factors. Organizations are always changing as different externalities (federal and state legislature) influence their priorities and resources and leadership shifts as leaders join and leave the institution.

For example, a change in senior-level leadership could shift conditions to a performative archetype depending on new leaders' investment and commitment to equity efforts. Before describing the four archetypes, we share how we operationalize our axes and the elements that comprise Organizational Support and Shared Responsibility. Then, we showcase how these combinations create the four organizational archetypes reflected in the ARE model's quadrants.

### *Organizational Support*

The vertical axis highlights the organizational environment that equity advocates navigate during the implementation process. This dimension illustrates how varying levels of support from senior leaders, shared governance, and the broader campus community shape the implementation of race-conscious equity efforts. Within institutions, organizational hierarchy situated certain types of leaders, senior, mid-level, and ground-level, at varying vantage points that can inform how such leaders engage their agency for change. (Holcombe et al., 2023; Kezar, 2018). Supportive organizational environments, at the top of the model, include vocal support from the president, minimal or passive resistance from shared governance, and a level of discretion and autonomy in making decisions. Unsupportive environments, at

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<sup>1</sup> In the context of this study, an equity leader is any community college practitioner who formally oversees or supports the development and implementation of a policy-mandated student equity plan that a) documents the extent of inequity for specific student populations such as racial/ethnic groups, b) establishes goals and metrics to address identified equity gaps over multiple years, and c) allocates policy-specific funds to create or scale-up institutional initiatives to achieve equity goal (§54220, 2017). (See Felix et al., 2024).

the bottom of the vertical axis, are sites with little support from senior administrators, pushback from the academic senate, and possess less influence in decision-making.

### *Shared Responsibility*

Along the horizontal axis is the level of shared responsibility for equity. This dimension captures equity advocates who might find themselves in isolated roles with concentrated equity responsibilities on the left side of the axis while the opposite side lends itself to carrying out implementation efforts in more collaborative and distributed ways (Kezar et al., 2023). For example, equity advocates experiencing isolated and concentrated responsibilities may be seen and taxed as the “one equity person on campus” who is viewed as the single individual tasked with DEI-related efforts. At other sites, equity is seen as collective action, where large groups across campus share the responsibility for equity through committee work, an ad-hoc task force, or a broader campus coalition.

## **THE FOUR ORGANIZATIONAL ARCHETYPES**

Below we describe four organizational archetypes with examples from our data that provide on-the-ground examples of each type.

### *Convergence Archetype*

The Convergence archetype serves as the optimal organizational environment where equity advocates have both *High-Organizational Support and High-Shared Responsibility*. Five of our participating institutions were mapped within this organizational archetype. A key similarity among these community colleges was the active engagement and participation of senior leaders and decision-making groups. Equity advocates described how their president, vice presidents, and campus leaders shared a steadfast commitment to the racial equity efforts being carried out. Coyote Hills College shared that they had clear “support from campus leadership, which included VPs who are invested in student equity work. Key players in discussions like VPs have buy-in.” This buy-in resulted in equity advocates at Coyote Hills College feeling empowered to lead efforts and have autonomy over how racial equity projects advanced.

Related to having senior leaders on board, Alameda College reported that key decision-making groups like “academic senate, classified senate, and associated student government” were supportive and engaged in the work to be an “anti-racist” institution. Claridad College reported having senior leaders who invested new resources to hire additional full-time personnel to staff an Office of Student Equity and be able to mobilize their efforts to close racial equity gaps in persistence and completion. These added individuals were then able to share the institution’s vision for equity through hosted town halls with the campus community resulting in an expanded coalition aware of the equity priorities that could be mobilized into action.

The second element of Convergence is the collective effort shown to design and implement racial equity efforts. This means that the work of equity is seen as the responsibility of every campus stakeholder and that individuals across campus have a role to play whether they are custodians, counselors, or C-level administrators.

At Stallion College, there was a robust coalition of community members, which included students, staff, and faculty, aimed at working towards addressing issues of racial injustice and anti-Blackness. One equity advocate said, “Over the first several months of our collaboration, we recognized the robust involvement and participation from campus members, following the pattern that their senior leaders exemplified by being committed and engaged in this work as well.” They described having several “change workgroups”

that were filled with campus members seeking to “interrogate and improve the institutional commitment, campus culture, and classroom experience for Black students.” These campuses experienced a convergence of organizational support and equity responsibility which fostered a space on campus where racial equity was carried out as a collective effort with minimal resistance to the implementation of these deeper visions of equity.

### *Performative Archetype*

While they might have similar attributes to a convergence archetype, performative organizational archetypes are distinct as they might have *High-Organizational Support* but *Low-Shared Responsibility*. We had two distinct campuses, Juniper College and Views College, where equity leaders mapped out their organizational conditions exclusively in this quadrant while others also contributed characteristics to this archetype. For example, one of the leaders shared how racial equity efforts were mostly wrapped around “feel-good messaging about equity” with no substantial action to do actual racial equity work on campus. In this archetype, a lot of symbolism and words that aim to communicate the importance and commitment to equity are often “weaponized” to share how the institution is doing good work while those on the ground level see a lack of *Individual Responsibility* shared across facets of the organization.

For instance, equity leaders at Waterway College shared that there was “support for trainings (UndocuAlly, LGBTQ), but lack of support for more holistic services for undocumented, LGBTQ, system-impacted students, and former foster youth” embedded in the institution beyond this one-off program. This symbolism was also a common display of performativity at Claridad College where equity leaders shared how in a very specific part of campus there was messaging around being a change agent that was inaugurated during the 2020 BLM movement with no further action happening to address anti-blackness since. Equity leaders noted how the *High-Organizational Support* mostly manifests in naming the things (resources, programs, or artifacts) the campus has done or has and fails to recognize the ongoing passive “resistance from individuals questioning the validity of equity work” on why they were race-conscious which impacted overall progress of racial equity efforts on campus. Rocky College added that “equity efforts are generalized and do not center on race” where much of the work is framed in an “all students” race-evasive way that dilutes racial equity efforts. Some leaders shared how this race-evasive lens impacted how resources could be used or where they were used, telling us how “SEA [student equity achievement] funds” were “seen as a budget stream while decisions about the funds [were] disconnected from the [SEA] plan” itself.

What is shared by Juniper, Views, Waterway, and Rocky College are the ways in which equity language, symbols, and one-off initiatives are weaponized as a way to excuse institutions of ongoing active racial equity work. These passive strategies and symbolic gestures distract from focusing energy, time, and resources to ongoing racial equity concerns and diffuse the urgency to enact change.

### *Collective Archetype*

Next, we have a collective organizational archetype. In this archetype, there is *Low-Organizational Support* and *High-Shared Responsibility*. Meaning there is a mass of individuals, often grassroots leaders, wanting to mobilize and advance work on campus but might not have the organizational support from resource allocation (fiscal, human, and technology). We only had one campus map themselves within this quadrant, Hidden Hills College. Therefore, some of the data we were able to identify in this quadrant is contextualized to an individual campus.



This posits us to think through potential future considerations around timeframe spent within each quadrant. Equity leaders noted having “silos of excellence” where collective groups of leaders were advancing racial equity work but were not communicating with other collective groups to maximize efforts. There are “committed groups of advocates” who want to champion the work but feel the lack of organizational support in leadership tampers the energy in wanting to mobilize their efforts. For example, one group shared:

There is encouragement from the executive level to meet, discuss, plan, and implement [equity efforts] but it seems decisions are made without transparency, very top-down. [The Student Equity Committee] and several other committees or programs on campus do a lot of work but what level of decision-making do they/we have?

As demonstrated by what was shared from our equity leaders above, the key characteristic of this organization archetype is that the shared responsibility and commitment to doing racial equity work across campus lacks the structural support to carry out what needs to be done. These pockets of equity leaders across campus might or might not have formal spaces to discuss strategies of implementation and might or might not hold formal power and influence that allows them access to advance efforts (Kezar, 2018). If they do have space to convene as a collective group of grassroots leaders advancing the work, their recommendations might be dismissed from senior-level leaders (Kezar, 2010).

### *Burdened Archetype*

Lastly, we have identified a burdened organizational archetype. From our participating institutions, eight of them were identified as burdened organizations. Burdened organizational archetypes have *Low-Organizational Support and Low-Shared Responsibility*. Many of our participants shared that there were “unorganized” and “hierarchical” leadership structures that impacted how efforts were prioritized and implemented. For example, Inland College leaders spoke to this resistance from the top:

There are hierarchies in place, specifically on student services and student admin that delay progress. Decision-making and participation are limited to a few individuals. These individuals often do not have the capacity for such efforts thus the progress is delayed.

The responsibility to carry out racial equity work in this archetype is not scaled at an institutional level and sometimes feels like a “one-person show” where “lack of clear direction from upper management and effective delegation of responsibilities” creates hostile implementation terrains. This is evident too by the tokenism that equity leaders experienced when leading these efforts and had to take on the burden to speak out, who we found to primarily be people of color and women of color. In this organizational archetype, “positional leadership [senior level leaders] is not always well versed in the basic principles/theories of student equity yet have disproportionate power over equity efforts.”

The work in this organizational archetype happens on the ground level with resistance or disengagement from those in senior-level roles that hold positional power to embed initiatives and efforts into the fabric of the organizational culture. Equity leaders at Waterway College shared they were burdened with “lots of responsibility with no authority” especially from the budgetary aspect. For instance, Valle College shared how senior-level leadership would only show up to meetings to tell them [equity leaders] everything they do is wrong or needs to change. This misalignment in efforts, lack of interest, and investment from senior-level leadership impacts morale in advancing racial equity efforts and also manifests into a lack of resource allocation (fiscal, human, and technology). At Waterway College, equity leaders mentioned feeling like they were stuck in an “incomprehensible tug of war” where the efforts

they were trying to implement and carry out were not deemed imperative or urgent to those in leadership. For instance, one of the equity leaders at Claridad College shared:

There is no equitable staffing in critical areas and the district has a new trend of combining positions (research/outreach/student activities). DSPS has 500+students and no dedicated FT [full-time] counselors. The Equity office was just [omitted] for a long time. Equity programs like MESA, Puente, etc. have historically not had admin support!

This clearly demonstrates low-organizational support which is a key characteristic of a burned organization. With what some of our participating institutions such as Orange Tree College called, “missing institutional agents” (i.e., academic senate support/ representation, senate, president, BOT, and faculty engagement), racial equity efforts were not prioritized, leaders' tasked to carry this work were not supported, and designated equity leaders were overburdened with many non-equity related responsibilities.

The lack of key institutional agents creates structural barriers where a lack of focused processes allows scapegoating to occur from these organizations. It creates confusion among those leaders who want to do good work. Some leaders in our participating institutions shared how they often had to pause and think to themselves, "Why are we doing things the way that we do? Is it because of a rule or policy or is there a tradition?" As we know from Ray's (2019) framework, when there is no intentional cementing of processes that are race-conscious, the default process will always be historicized into the organizations' memory and replicates mechanisms of racialized hierarchies.

As one considers the burdened organizational archetypes, our findings suggest that these institutions lack top-down support and have silo and decoupled processes to organize efforts that discourage carrying out racial equity work. Leaders who might have been doing this work are disappointed with the lack of support and resources available and therefore disengage to protect their wellbeing and survive as they navigate this terrain.

### *Summary*

Our ARE model aids people in knowing where they start and what they face in the road ahead to equip them with the knowledge to progress in this racial equity marathon and get closer to crossing the finish line. Given our narratives within the four archetypes, it is clear that not every equity advocate runs the same race, but they all have the same destination. In Table 1 below, we summarize essential elements across the four archetypes for equity advocates to be aware of and consider within their institution.

Table 1. The Conditions Found Across the Advancing Racial Equity Model

<p><b>High Organizational Support</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Engaged president and senior leaders.</li> <li>● Expanded infrastructure and support for equity efforts.</li> <li>● Professional development focused on racial equity.</li> <li>● Provided a high level of discretion, autonomy, and decision-making.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Low Organizational Support</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lack of engagement from senior leaders.</li> <li>● Misalignment between institutional priorities and racial equity.</li> <li>● Inadequate resources, supports, and materials.</li> <li>● Limited decision-making power to advance implementation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>High Shared Responsibility</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Shared understanding of racial equity priorities</li> <li>● Critical mass of equity advocates to share in the work.</li> <li>● Racial equity is seen as a campus-wide effort, not an individual.</li> <li>● Inclusion of student voice in collective efforts.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Low Shared Responsibility</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Limited group of equity advocates shouldering the work.</li> <li>● Developed sense of isolation.</li> <li>● Increased cultural taxation and exertion of emotional labor.</li> <li>● Overburdened equity advocates, especially those holding minoritized identities.</li> </ul>

As equity advocates move forward, it is necessary to be aware of the conditions that shape the train being traversed and know the type of organizational support and campus coalition available to be successful in the long journey ahead to achieve racial equity. Our final section shares implications for community college equity advocates and prompts ways to utilize the model for action to explicitly change or sustain the conditions faced as they continue their racial equity work.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR ARE MODEL APPLICATION**

To achieve racial equity, the weight and responsibility of change must shift to a shared commitment that is actively supported by senior leadership, trustees, and campus constituents; where equity permeates across the organization and is institutionalized. Without such organizational support and shared responsibility, racial equity will continue to be relegated to the periphery of what the institution does. As California Community Colleges enter a new era given the appointment of a new Chancellor, 2022-2025 Student Equity Achievement Plan cycle, and Guided Pathways ongoing implementation, leaders in various roles tasked with and positioned to advance these efforts can use the ARE model to gauge their capacity for change. Table 2 provides pathways for mobilizing the ARE model.

Table 2. Mobilizing the ARE Model into Action

Organizational Archetype	Organizational Conditions	Action Needed	Who To Involve	How and What
Convergence	High Organizational Support + High Shared Responsibility	Get Going	Everyone	<i>What efforts will be made to ensure that a change in leadership or capacity does not destabilize ongoing racial equity efforts?</i>  <i>What strategies have you built to evaluate the success of this work to maintain momentum for future challenges and barriers?</i>
Performative	High Organizational Support + Low Shared Responsibility	Get Serious	Senior Leaders	<i>How can you ensure organizational support matches the needs from grassroots-level leaders?</i>  <i>What avenues are created for a feedback loop in communication to gauge ongoing racial equity efforts?</i>
Collective	Low Organizational Support + High Shared Responsibility	Get Organized	Senior Leaders	<i>How can resources be re-distributed to support on-the-ground efforts to scale impact?</i>  <i>Listen to your team who lead racial equity efforts, what are they saying and how can you build trust and transparency?</i>
Burdened	Low Organizational Support + Low Shared Responsibility	Get Building	Everyone	<i>How can you engage in campus-based inquiry that provides information on potential priority areas for racial equity?</i>  <i>What key leaders do you need to gain buy-in from to shift your leadership responsibilities from isolated to shared efforts?</i>

The model can help equity leaders identify the scope, level, and focus of racial equity change their organizations have the capacity for given which organizational archetype they find themselves navigating (Kezar, 2018). While not an inventory for racial equity capacity building, the ARE model allows leaders a way to pinpoint the organizational conditions that create barriers or provide opportunities that should inform leaders’ strategies of implementation for racial equity goals.

Kezar and Eckel (2002) suggest that when leaders are more attuned to their organizational contexts, they can more intentionally strategize efforts of change to maximize potential success. Leaders’ ability to be cognizant of organizational conditions for change is critical as 70% of change efforts fail at the implementation face (Kezar, 2018). The purpose of the ARE model is for leaders seeking to advance racial equity to locate the organizational archetype they must navigate to develop their implementation strategies. This strategy provides equity leaders a way to not just understand factors in silos across the

planning and implementation phases of racial equity efforts but as interconnected facets and mechanisms in an organizational archetype.

We want to note that although empirically informed by equity leaders and campuses in California, we believe our ARE model can serve as a tool to map out equity advocates' organizational terrain to find the best path forward to advance racial equity efforts in their respective contexts. To aid in this, we provide the table below listing the conditions of each organizational archetype and pairing them with suggested actions to take to address and improve the foundation on which equity advocates build their racial justice efforts.

## CONCLUSION

Organizations are not static; they are living entities that depend on various factors to function. Especially community colleges, where factors such as externalities highly regulate institutional priorities and funding (McCambly & Colyvas, 2022). There is a need to understand the levels of organizational support that exists, or not, and who is carrying the weight of the laborious yet needed racial equity work (Felix, 2021; Felix et al., 2024). Mapping out organizational conditions is a key process to advance any type of change and in particular racialized organizational change.

The ability to identify organizational conditions that either cultivate or abate equity efforts is critical, our model is one way for equity advocates to decipher their own organizational archetype (Convergence, Performative, Collective, and Burdened) and leverage that information to mobilize their racial equity efforts.

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**APPENDIX A**

<b>Campus Name</b>	<b>Identified Archetype</b>
1 Almendra College	Convergence
2 Arit College	Convergence
3 Claridad College	Burdened
4 Coyote College	Convergence
5 Hidden Hills College	Collective
6 Hill College	Convergence
7 Inland College	Burdened
8 Juniper College	Performative
9 Orange Tree College	Burdened
10 Rocky College	Burdened
11 Roots College	Burdened
12 Stallion College	Burdened
13 Sunset College	Convergence
14 Valle College	Burdened
15 Views College	Performative
16 Waterway College	Burdened