Interest: My interest in a HEAL faculty fellowship at Montclair State University (MSU) emanates from my longstanding commitment to equity in education – a commitment borne of personal experiences. Reflective of national trends, the five-year persistence rates at MSU reveal disparities by race and ethnicity and first-generation status. The Boyer 2030 Commission emphasizes five tenets to inform undergraduate education standards to achieve the equity/excellence imperative. Hispanic enrollment at research universities has increased from eleven (11) to nineteen (19) percent between 2010 and 2020 while African American enrollment fell slightly from thirteen (13) to twelve (12) percent. More telling is the six-year graduation trends at R2 institutions: forty-nine (49) percent African Americans, fifty-three (53) percent for Hispanic Americans, and sixty-three (63) percent for whites.[1] Sixty (60) percent of Hispanic American college graduates and fifty-nine (59) percent of African-American college graduates were first-generation college students.[2] I propose a tripartite student success initiative that incorporates four of those tenets (Access, Teaching, Learning, and Success)[3] aimed at first-generation and historically marginalized communities, especially Hispanic Americans and African Americans.

My commitment to equity in education began at an early age and has only strengthened over time. I was born into poverty and my mother died of cancer when I was six years old. I was adopted by my uncle and raised in a working-class household in a mill town near Pittsburgh. Similar to many of our students, I worked to put myself through college. I was able to earn an undergraduate degree at the University of Pittsburgh thanks to federal and state aid as well as affordable tuition. Upon graduation, I began teaching at a low-income high school in the Broward County (FL) Public School District. It was my time at Stranahan High School there that shaped my core beliefs about student success and the educability of all students. I taught ESL history courses to Haitian and Cuban students, as well as regular history courses to a majority African American student population. Following three years of teaching high school, I was afforded the opportunity to earn a Ph.D. in history at Florida State University (FSU), focusing on the history of race and ethnicity in the United States. I taught a semesterly course on the history of race and ethnicity at FSU as well as history courses to a diverse student body at Tallahassee Community College. As a graduate student, I attended as many teaching workshops as possible. I honed my pedagogical skills while training supplemental instructors at the University of Texas at Austin. I began my first tenure-track professorship at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, a Hispanic Serving Institution with a majority Hispanic student population. Next, I taught a diverse student population at Hunter College in the City University of New York (CUNY) system.

Project Description: In consideration of the statistics on retention, completion in certain groups, and students spend lots of time in courses, this project takes a multi-pronged, multi-level approach to understanding and utilizing an equity minded lens to teaching focusing on improving curriculum, course design, and assessment. I have taught at Montclair State University for seventeen years and witnessed the student population become a majority minority institution. At the same time, faculty diversity on campus has not kept pace with that of the student population. Moreover, there is not enough talk about equity minded curricular practices on campus. That likely has had negative consequences for student success and retention. I am committed to working with faculty and students to communicate curricular reimagination as well as high impact, equity minded instructional practices.

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[1] The Boyer Commission, *The Equity Excellence Imperative: A 2030 Blueprint for Undergraduate Education at U.S. Research Universities* (UERU, 2020): 6-7.
[2] Center for First-Generation Student Success, First-generation College Graduates' Transition to Graduate School and Employment
[3] Boyer 2030 Commission https://ueru.org/boyer-2030. The five tenets are: Access. Enrollment management must offer fair selection and viable pathways to completion. Teaching. Instruction must be founded on evidence-based, inclusive pedagogies. No exceptions. Learning. Required curricula must be enriched by plentiful opportunities for in-depth learning. Advising. Academic guidance must contribute to the education of the whole student. Success. Timely degree completion must empower self-directed lifelong learners and leaders.

Aim 1: To better understand faculty knowledge, attitudes, beliefs about curriculum design and review and the role of an equity lens for curriculum and course reimagination and examine what current practices are being utilized.[4]

In the history department, I have persuaded a conventional faculty to consider racial and ethnic diversity and first-generation status in teaching current courses in the history curriculum. I have also convinced the faculty to add courses aimed at our diverse students (e.g. LGBTQ History, U.S. Latino History, and Race and Ethnicity in United States History). In addition, I enlisted the support of History Department faculty in creating a minor and a major concentration in Public and Digital History, something the department had resisted since the 1970s. A collective effort is needed. I will rely on pre-suasion as an implementation strategy. Pioneered by Robert Cialdini, pre-suasion "is the process of arranging for participants to be receptive to a message before they encounter it. To persuade optimally…it's necessary to pre-suade optimally."[5] I intend to meet with faculty individually, survey faculty and chairs about curriculum development, and possibly talk at college meetings. How often do departments and individuals review their curriculum? What does that process entail? Do individuals and departments consider Montclair State University's racially and ethnically diverse student population in making decisions about curriculum? What are their views on student preparedness? In developing practice-based evidence, I will identify faculty on an individual level that already implement equity-minded practices in updating and reconceptualizing curriculum. Then I want to create a forum where the faculty can share their best practices with anyone interested in making similar improvements. The faculty might film short videos to share via the OFE website. A variety of strategies for curriculum dissemination exists.[6] In assessing the outcome of this particular effort, I will survey faculty and students about student performance in those courses, particularly among first-generation and traditionally disadvantaged students. I will also compare DFW rates in courses with equity-minded practices with regular courses.

Aim 2: To determine how and what structural impediments in curriculum exist and how improvements can be made for effectiveness and efficiencies, using an innovative public domain tool Curricular Analytics, in different majors.

I propose to survey faculty and department chairs about how they contemporize their degree programs. I want to identify departments with large enrollments willing to gauge the effectiveness of their degree programs using Curricular Analytics. Is a more complicated program structure associated with longer time to agre? I will share effective models from universities with similar student populations and ask MSU faculty and department chairs in the identified departments how they feel about those more effective models. What do they like about them? What do they object to? Are they willing to update their curriculum to become more efficient and assist with student success?[7] Once I have identified departments that want to evaluate their degree program requirements, I would invite Greg Heileman or Chaouki Abdallah, the founders of Curricular Analytics, to campus to talk about ways to interpret their data and make suggestions. I will also survey students and request their attitudes about degree requirements. The outcomes for this effort will be difficult to evaluate in the short run. It will have been successful if several departments participated in the evaluation. It will have been more successful if departments who can improve agreed to revise their degree requirements.

Aim 3: To a.) delineate current course assessment practices from faculty perspectives and to understand students' perceptions of course assessments, and b.) use the data to test new assessments in a broader range of courses, utilizing evidence-informed approaches, as well as Montclair's own practice-informed evidence from faculty. In the main, I want to encourage alternative assessments that encourage student creativity to traditional assessments such as multiple-choice

[4] Tia Brown McNair, Estela Mara Bensimon, Lindsey E Malcom-Piqueux, *From Equity Talk to Equity Walk : Expanding Practitioner Knowledge for Racial Justice in Higher Education* Hoboken NJ: Jossey-Bass a Wiley Brand, 2020).

[5] Robert B. Cialdini, *Pre-Suasion : A Revolutionary Way to Influence and Persuade* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016), 4.

[6] Karen Smith, "Lessons learnt from literature on the diffusion of innovative learning and teaching practices in higher education." *Innovations in Education and Teaching International* 49, no. 2 (2012): 173-182.

[7] You can read more about Curricular Analytics here: https://curricularanalytics.org/ and https://ueru.org/curricular-analytics.

midterms and final exams based on didactic recall. In answering questions on the National Survey of Student Engagement (2021) about "Effective Teaching Practices," MSU seniors' responses were more than five percentage points lower than the NSSE top 50%. First-year students' answers were more than three percentage points lower than the NSSE top 50%. Both seniors' and first-year students' replies were lower in the four engagement indicators under "Academic Challenge."[8] I plan to survey chairs and faculty about what kinds of assessments they implement.[9] Which ones are most successful? How do they explain low student performance on certain assessments, including traditional ones? I will form student focus groups in order to develop meaningful survey questions to send to a larger group of students, across different majors, about assessments. I will request assistance from the Student Government Association (and SDCL) in forming the focus groups and creating the survey. Certainly, *Ungrading* has received plenty of attention recently.[10] I will assemble a panel of experts to talk with faculty about the importance of equity-minded assessment in promoting student success. I will survey faculty about student performance in those courses where alternative assessments were implemented, including grades. I will also survey students about their experiences in those same courses.

Aims	Method(s)	Study groups	Desired data	Timeline
Aim 1 To better understand faculty knowledge, attitudes, beliefs about curriculum design and review and the role of an equity lens for curriculum and course reimagination and examine what current practices are being utilized.	1. Survey 2. FGs 3. Individual interviews	1. Faculty 2. Chairs 3. IS 4. Students	Knowledge Attitudes Beliefs Current self-reported practices	FGs in Su 23 Interviews Su 23 Survey Fall 2023 Report Dec 23
Aim 2 To determine how and what structural impediments in curriculum exist and how improvements can be made for effectiveness and efficiencies, using an innovative public domain tool Curricular Analytics, in different majors	1. Survey 2. FGs 3. Individual interviews 4. Curricular Analytics	1. Faculty 2. Chairs 3. IS 4. Students	Knowledge Attitudes Beliefs Efficiency Scores	FGs in Su 23 Interviews Su 23 Survey Fall 2023 CA Fall 2023 Report Dec 23
Aim 3 To determine what alternative assessments have evidence behind them and what are the assessments doing and recommend some to be employed in classrooms.	1. Survey 2. FGs 3. Expert panel	1. Faculty 2. Chairs 3. IS 4. Students	Knowledge Attitudes Beliefs Current self-reported practices	FGs in Sp 24 Survey Sp 24 Experts Apr 24 Report June 24

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[8] National Survey of Student Engagement 2021, Engagement Indicators, 15.

[9] Austin U. Gehret,Lea V. Michel,Jessica W. Trussell, Experiential education of deaf and hard of hearing students in the lab with non-signing advisors, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, (1-22), (2021); M.E.Bathgate, Aragón, O.R., Cavanagh, A.J. *et al.* Perceived supports and evidence-based teaching in college STEM. *IJ STEM Ed* **6**, 11 (2019); Huimin Chen,Cheng Yang,Xuanming Zhang,Zhiyuan Liu,Maosong Sun,Jianbin Jin,From Symbols to Embeddings: A Tale of Two Representations in Computational Social Science, *Journal of Social Computing*, 2, 2, (103-156), (2021).

[10] Susan Blum, *Ungrading: Why Rating Students Undermines Learning (and What to Do Instead)* (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2020). Many research universities have begun promoting these practices on their websites, including Indiana University, UC Berkeley, and UC Davis.