

Innovation and Change Paradigm at Los Rios

Presented by

Dr. Edward Bush, President, Cosumnes River College

Dr. Brian King, Chancellor, Los Rios Community College District

Susanna Cooper, Managing Director, Wheelhouse



COSUMNES
RIVER COLLEGE

The CRC Organizational Change Paradigm

Dr. Edward Bush, President,
Cosumnes River College

- Inequity informed Equity work
- Fix the College not the Student
- Kill the Pilot
- We have or can creatively create the bandwidth to handle radical change
- Iteration! It doesn't have to be perfect. It just has to be better. Failing Forward.
- Embrace Ambiguity & Discomfort
- Interrogate ALL Practices & Policies
- Willingness to be first
- Ongoing case making
- Sustained sense of urgency
- People Centered
- A strong belief that the needle can move
- Operate out of Courage and not the fear of.....

- Innovation at Los Rios

Dr. Brian King

Chancellor, Los Rios Community
College District



CRC and Wheelhouse

A Partnership for Innovation, Research and Leadership
Development

Susanna Cooper, Executive Director





In This Presentation

- Quick Introduction to Wheelhouse
- CCC Leadership and Innovation Context
- How CRC Rose on Our Radar
- Research and Innovation Partnership
- Conversation

Introduction to Wheelhouse



2017 Wheelhouse Institute on Leadership

- Established in 2016 out of concern about short CEO tenure
- Need for independent research to inform policy and practice
- Twofold, interconnected mission:
Leadership Development: CEOs develop essential capacities/networks
Research: Policy, trends, issues that impact colleges/student success

Who Supports our Work?

Advisory Board

- Manuel Baca
- Thomas Bailey
- Helen Benjamin
- Thomas Brock
- Edward Bush
- Larry Galizio
- Brice Harris
- Doug Houston
- Harold Levine
- Lauren Lindstrom

Public Resources

- Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative (CCCCO)
- University of California, Davis
- U.S. Department of Education, Institute for Education Sciences

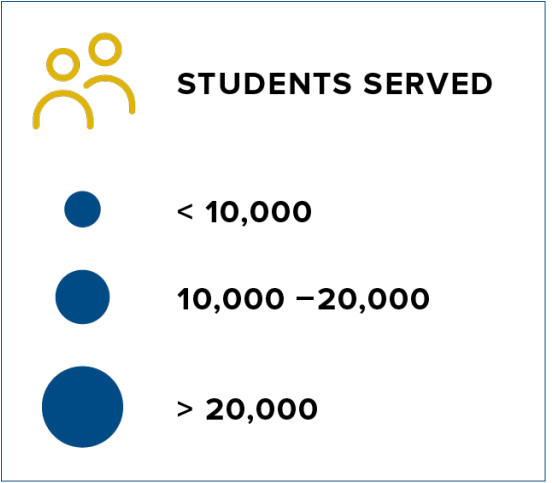
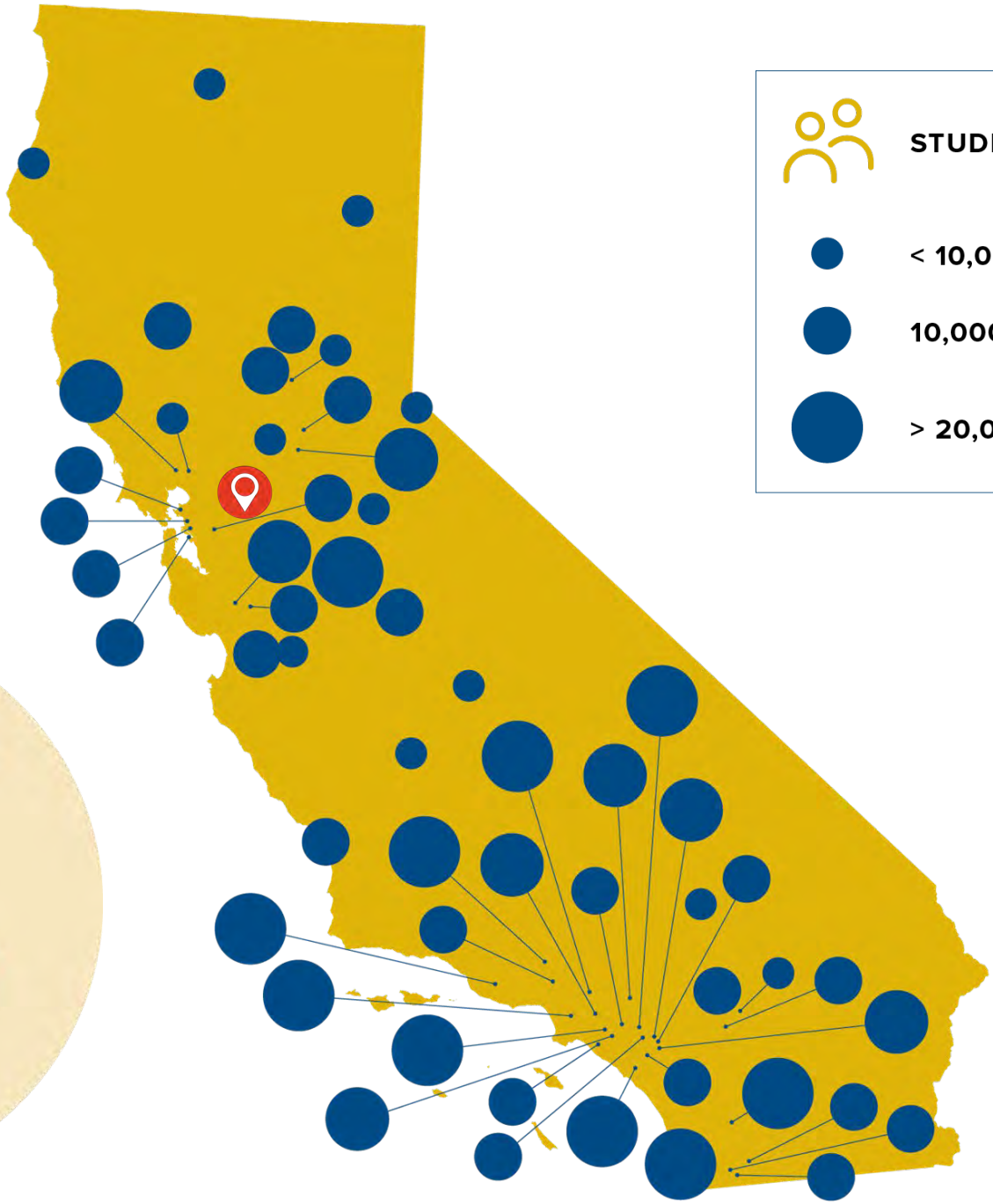
Private Investment

- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- College Futures Foundation

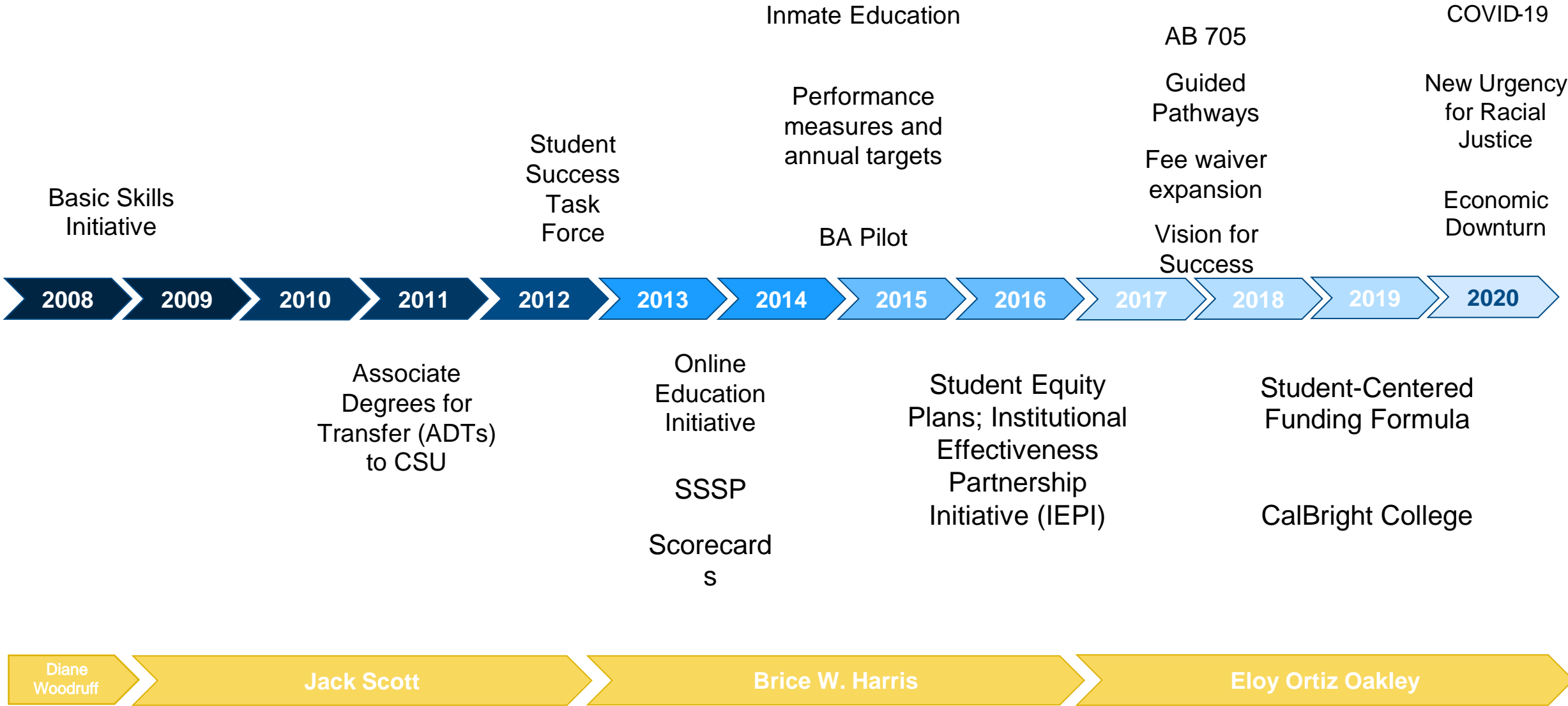
Reach of the Institute on Leadership

57
FELLOWS
SERVED
SINCE 2017

INSTITUTIONS
SERVING
1.2
MILLION
STUDENTS



CCC Leadership and Innovation -- Important Context





How CRC Rose on our Radar

A Proclivity for Positive Disruption



Wheelhouse

The Center for Community College
Leadership and Research

Choices at Cosumnes River College

In the four years since Edward Bush took the helm of Cosumnes River College (CRC) in 2015, he had become ever more convinced that what was needed to improve student outcomes was a wholesale remaking of the ways the institution interacted with its students. Not tweaks and fiddles, not pilots. Big changes.

The broad embrace of Guided Pathways in California state policy circles, accompanied by strong state fiscal incentives to follow its tenets, had put some wind at Bush's back, providing impetus and opportunity to re-engineer a number of ways of doing business on campus. But this campus transformation would not be easy. It would require the CRC community to rethink how they worked in fundamental ways, including the long-held practice of giving students lots of freedom in what they choose to study and when. In particular, he was eager to innovate to get more students to do what research suggests would increase their rate of completion — enroll full-time, take English and mathematics in their first semester, and take more courses within their likely majors. He also wanted to get scheduling done much earlier, when CRC's future first-year students were still seniors in high school.

A little over one-quarter of CRC's students were the first in their families to attend college. Even for those students whose parents had experience navigating college, the 1,184 courses and 75 programs of study in the 425-page CRC course catalogue created confusion for many first-year college students whose high school choices had mostly been prescribed for them. "This system wasn't built for the students we serve now," Bush said. "Up to this point, students have been making mostly uninformed choices about their courses. Every step in the process matters — every click, every piece of instruction creates the opportunity for a gap. We lose thousands of students between the point of application and registration for classes." Among many processes and practices that Bush wanted to tackle, course scheduling was a top priority.

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A Case Study in Significant Redesign of the Student Experience

- Default or "opt-out" scheduling
- Borrowing from the economics playbook
- "Next level" innovation

President Bush:

"This system wasn't built for the students we serve now. Up to this point, students have been making mostly uninformed choices about their courses. Every step in the process matters— every click, every piece of instruction creates the opportunity for a gap. We lose thousands of student between the point of application and registration for classes."

A Deepening Partnership for Research and Leadership Development

- Post George Floyd: Survey of California college leaders to capture actions and capacity
- Leadership sessions for college leaders; researchers and the public

From the brief:

“Testimonials reveal an understanding that, as difficult as it may be, they carry an individual and collective responsibility to both serve their institutions and, at the same time, to challenge them. If they are successful, the CA Community Colleges have perhaps the best opportunity to eradicate educational inequities and overcome social and racial injustice. They are the institutions best positioned to empower Californians, at scale, in pursuit of education and the economic security that comes with it.”

Toward a More Perfect Institution

Reflections from California Community College Leaders on Racism, Anti-Blackness and Implicit Bias

By Edward Bush, Susanna Cooper, Michal Kurlaender and Francisco C. Rodriguez with Anna Marie Ramos

IN THE WAKE of the most recent spate of police killings of Black Americans, the California Community Colleges are grappling with a racial reckoning as urgent as the one playing out in society at large. In June 2020, Wheelhouse sought to understand how community college leaders experienced and led their institutions through the pain and calls to action engendered by racist acts.

Specifically, we administered a short survey of current and former Wheelhouse Fellows—California Community College presidents, chancellors and superintendent/presidents (CEOs) who have participated in Wheelhouse leadership development programs and networks over the past four years. We asked them about their personal and institutional experiences with racism and bias; about barriers to creating more equitable campus environments; and about their own capacity to lead on these issues.

CEOs' responses were in equal parts illuminating, sobering and inspiring, reflecting the complexity and urgency of confronting racism and anti-Blackness. These candid testimonials and reflections provide a clear view to deep personal and institutional experiences with racism and bias in the context of one of the nation's most diverse, accessible and equity-aspiring systems of higher education. Our hope is that the themes extracted from the survey responses will inform and contribute to the conversations and actions necessary to improve student success, equity and the racial climate across the California Community Colleges, and thus the state and nation at large.

TOPLINES

- > Community College CEOs express hope about recent momentum for conversations and actions on race and equity, but are realistic about challenges they face—both personal and institutional—in leading for change.
- > Racism, bias and anti-Blackness, in particular, show up on college campuses in many forms and venues. They are felt personally by many CEO respondents and manifest across their campuses and districts, from classroom interactions and hiring processes to language, tone and microaggressions that damage student, staff, faculty and administrators' sense of efficacy and belonging.
- > CEOs of color bring lived experiences that are of particular value in understanding and navigating conversations about race, and that may have been undervalued in the past.
- > While most CEOs feel generally well-positioned in their capacity to facilitate conversations on race and equity at their institutions, some expressed uncertainty or discomfort. Many revealed significant frustration over structural barriers they described as impeding progress toward more welcoming, equitable institutions.
- > CEOs are both answering and issuing calls to action to transform their institutions to tackle racism and anti-Blackness.



Wheelhouse supports student success and equity in the California Community Colleges by developing effective, diverse college leaders and by supporting research that promotes evidence-based practices and policies that address the colleges' most pressing needs.

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Questions?