Speaker 1: I am just looking at universal art types among teachers. So there's like this spiritual yoga flowy teacher with sort of the angled hair cut, the gay dude with the sensible shoes and the cool leather bag.

Speaker 1: Oh my God I want to hug all of them because these are the unsung heroes.

Liesel: Welcome to the magic Mountie podcast. This is a podcast that's dedicated to helping faculty and other college employees as they try and navigate the challenging fabric of serving students.

Liesel: Especially at Mount San Antonio College, but everyone's welcome.

Christina: So today we have a special episode where we're actually offsite, we're at a conference, an educational community college statewide conference, I believe. Liesel will tell you more about that in a second.

Christina: And I got to come along, we're at the Hyatt in Anaheim, do you want to tell us a little bit more about it Liesel?

Liesel: Well it's a beautiful hotel, oh you mean the conference. Sorry that was a bad joke. Yes you're going to hear all about this exciting conference put on by the RP group. There are a thousand people here, over 230 presenters including 31 people from Mount Sac. I found out we have the most people of any campus here.

Liesel: And two of those presenters are with you right now. That's me and Christina. So we're going to talk to you about this conference in case you weren't able to attend. And also we're going to record an episode of the podcast in our presentation.

Liesel: We're wearing mics, we're making the people who are attending, be in the podcast. So we're going to see how that goes. It's going to be a journey, it's going to be a wild ride. You're going to hopefully learn a lot in case you couldn't attend.

Liesel: And we're going to see what happens with this experimentation too, so good luck Christina, you get to edit this one. All right, enjoy.

Olivia Loy: I'm Oliva Loy, I'm the Director of Communications for the RP group. We are one of the partners that puts on this conference, the Strengthening Student Success Conference. Right now we are in Garden Grove, California which is in Orange County and things are abuzz.

Olivia Loy: We've got a lot of people coming in and out of sessions and coming to our booth and everything is very exciting right.

Liesel: What does RP stand for, is this a trick question?

Olivia Loy: No, it's not a trick question it stands for research and planning, so we are the Research and Planning group for California Community colleges. It's a little bit of a mouthful, but we also just go by the RP group.

Liesel: And you do two conferences, so there's one that's really for data professionals, but then this one which has just really exploded in popularity has a focus on ...

Olivia Loy: It actually cuts across a very wide swath of our California Community College, educators, practitioners, researchers, administration so we really have a lot of different folks coming together to really help to try to improve student success, equitable outcomes and of course the hot topics of the day and at this conference our AB 705 and guided pathways.

Olivia Loy: So got a lot of interest going on in those two areas as well.

Liesel: Do you know any of the basic stats, like how many people are here and how many colleges they represent?

Olivia Loy: I believe we have about 900 participants this year, which is our highest ever. And we have 231 presenters. Again I think that's the biggest number that we've had ever.

Liesel: And you have pretty much representation from, I mean it's got to be a majority of the community colleges in the state.

Olivia Loy: We have 91 colleges and districts here that are represented. So that's a pretty good chunk.

Liesel: And will you have time to eat lunch?

Olivia Loy: Probably not. But I hope you do.

Liesel: I am in the banquet hall, which has 900 hungry participants. I see someone from Mount Sac, can you tell me who you are?

Leza Beckers: I'm Leza Beckers Associate Dean School of Continuing Ed.

Liesel: And you're out in big numbers here, I see a lot of continuing ed.

Leza Beckers: I see a lot of people from Mount Sac too, it's really exciting, yes.

Liesel: What did you go to for the first session?

Leza Beckers: I went to the Guided Pathways, with our Chancellor Laura Hope.

Liesel: And are we doing it right?

Leza Beckers: I think so, we are a model program as usual, yes.

Liesel: As usual.

Leza Beckers: We're leading the pack hopefully, I think anyway, yes.

Liesel: Well we'll go and eat some lunch, thank you.

Naomi Obula: My name is Naomi Obula, I'm a counselor for Mount Sac, Mount San Antonio College in Walnut.

Liesel: And how long have you been a counselor at Mount Sac?

Naomi Obula: I've served one year as an adjunct in general and then I did two years in adult basic education and I'm currently in my third year, tenure also in the school continuing eduction.

Liesel: Congrats on that by the way. So where are we and what made you come down here? What's this conference?

Naomi Obula: I'm at the strengthening students success conference, making our college student ready and one of my colleagues had informed me that it was a really great conference and it's very high level.

Naomi Obula: A lot of initiatives in place and just to learn more about the whole process, what it means for my students, how I can help them as a counselor, my role in this who process, just to help my students understand what Guided Pathways is about.

Naomi Obula: That's really the key thing to help them with their completion, whether to get a certificate, associated degree or transfer or just professional development within their own industries.

Liesel: Something cool about the conference this year is that they've got students here, they're presenting, Mount Sac brought some students and we just saw a student speaker, I think that's a really special thing to have at a conference.

Liesel: As a counselor how do you feel about including students in this kind of work?

Naomi Obula: We're all about students, but as counselors I will say one thing I went to a session having to do with effective learning and teaching. And I just thought gosh that's what I have been feeling really with students.

Naomi Obula: Yes, we can teach them the content, but there's so many things going on within their lives and it was really neat to see a presenter with an instructional faculty showing how they could integrate the fact that with their content, without learning their content of what they need to teach.

Naomi Obula: Because at the end of the day, students have - they come from so many rough places and they need that support. It's not just about coming to class, they need that.

Liesel: And effective for anybody whose listening who doesn't know, has to do with their emotional state right? Do they feel what they're learning?

Naomi Obula: Do they have hope, do they believe in themselves, do they think it's possible that they can accomplish a goal they set out to? Like one presenter said it's the non-cognitive. And that's something that in college it's all about cognition, we learn.

Naomi Obula: But they're just seeing that when you have this build in, it's students are more successful. I'm really grateful I came and I would definitely recommend it to other people. Especially when you're - if you're new in the college, it helps give you a framework of how the whole process is besides just your discipline.

Christina: Hi there, it's Christina here and I'm interrupting to introduce our special co-hosts you're about to hear from. During Liesel's and my session we created an exercise in our presentation that put attendees in to different groups based on the themes of the sessions they most enjoyed while at the RP Conference.

Christina: And we had them record their takeaways and experiences. So here are a few voices from some of those tables and discussions.

Liesel: So think of the sessions you have attended and we're going to be recording a podcast together in mere moments. So you are invited to be a part of it. If you've never been on a podcast, here's your chance let's get started recording, hosts you're on.

Speaker 9: Hello we are at the student success conference 2018, we are in a podcasting session with a whole host of people discussing equity. We are capturing fabulous things that we have encountered so far in the conference.

Speaker 9: Describe a session that you attended that made a great impact on you and can you give us two or three takeaways?

Dallas: Sure, well I want to talk about one that we just attended, just before this one that was called Starting Faculty Rights, Bringing in Equity Lends to New Faculty Seminar. And I was really interested in that because I facilitate our new full-time faculty seminar that's a year long experience.

Dallas: And I think of myself as being very equity minded and I bring in speakers and activities around culturally responsive teaching, this took it to a whole new level. The idea of a lens through which everything else is passed.

Dallas: I think the biggest takeaways were probably the activity that they did that was a think aloud metacognitive activity in pairs with reading an article that was about culturally relevant teaching.

Dallas: I was also struck by the idea of having my faculty bring in their syllabi and look at their syllabus from an equity lens and I think that would be wonderful to do.

Speaker 9: Thank you so much to Dallas, for those of you that don't know Dallas is joining us from Baltimore and we're very happy to have her join us in California. Nicole, I'm coming to you and talk to us a little bit about a session that you attended that had a great impact on you and let us know your top two or three takeaways.

Nicole: Well I'm actually noticing that there's definitely a running theme through all of the sessions I've attended, that kind of stand out that go a long with what Dr. Rios had talked about in the very beginning in his key note speech, The Importance of Emotional Support for Students.

Nicole: And I'm really hearing that in all of the sessions that I've attended. And the last session I just attended talked about Growth Mindset and how we need to look at it from a broader scope, not just on as students, but also as faculty members how we can support students more through connecting with them.

Nicole: So what he referred to as connection I also see as being emotional support for the students and really hearing where they're at.

Speaker 9: Great, thank you. Now I'm going to jump over here to Becky. How are you today?

Becky: I'm good.

Speaker 9: Great, can you tell me about a session that you attended that made a major impact on you and maybe two or three takeaways?

Becky: Sure I went to one on contract grading, which on the surface maybe doesn't sound like it's an equity issue, but when you think about allowing students to have more control over what the work they're doing in the class and how it empowers them and it takes away the paradigm that they're often used to of who has the power in the classroom.

Becky: So to me that's definitely tied up in equity and so it was really interesting conversation about how you can use that to help students have more variety and versatility in the work that they do and also feel like they're empowered.

Speaker 9: Great, thank you for your input. Now I'm coming over to Erik with K, how are you today?

Erik: I'm doing well, I attended the Enacting Educational Equity, discussing the importance of bridging the Pedagogy Gap. And it was a very interactive session. We started first by doing what he called cultural introductions, which I thought was a very interesting exercise.

Erik: We couldn't talk about where we work or what we do. We had to talk about who we are. And the conversations people were having were authentic and refreshing and learning about who we are as people and we're more diverse than we think we are.

Erik: They did a wonderful activity where you had to build a paper airplane, who's ever airplane flew the furthest won, but each of the tables had different limitations. So on one table they got flat paper and they could build their airplane however they wanted.

Erik: But the next table they crumpled the paper and put it in the center and then told them their right hand had to stay in their pocket or on their lap and it really had to tactiley give a sense of how students can be limited by things that are beyond their control, that are beyond our control that are often in society and structural in equities.

Erik: The presenter drew a very good point, he said it's not about ableism, it's not a point about making a comment on ableism, this is about I was the one who told you what you couldn't do and that's a symmetrical power and that's how an equity works, right?

Erik: That you're limited by somebody else's power.

Speaker 9: Wow, that's amazing, so I have to know who's plane went the furthest?

Erik: The one that had no restrictions and flat, clear paper.

Mary: Hi, this is Mary from Santa Anna College and the very first session I attended was Advancing Equity Mindedness in the Classroom Using Practitioner Level Data to Close Equity Gaps and Improve Student Achievement.

Mary: This presentation really made the point that we all need to look at our own data. Not just the general data from the college, but what is happening to students in my classes. And they showed us data from one instructor and it was 400 students the instructor had. So this wasn't talking about one or two students that were not successful in her class.

Mary: A couple of my takeaways: it was important to keep that data confidential, only the researcher and the faculty member actually knew what the data was. And then they provided different opportunities for faculty to be engaged.

Mary: They could just come to meetings, they could have a project and one last thing I'd like to share is they did emphasize that they should have started emphasizing whiteness in understanding about whiteness.

Mary: Growth mindset was a great way to introduce things, but it kind of let people hide a little bit from what maybe they needed to particularly consider.

Lianne Greenlee: So this is Lianne Greenlee from Mount San Antonio College and the takeaway that I had from this really was from the key note, there was a welcoming keynote address by Dr. Victor Rios and in listening to him speak and we've been so focused on pathways in our colleges and the first thing that he said was the takeaway we should get from that keynote is that we should have pathways of emotional support.

Lianne Greenlee: And that really resonated with me throughout the conference in several of the different sessions that I have gone to, but what he talked about in his keynote was how each of us has the ability in every interaction that we have with students on the campus to really be a micro mentor.

Lianne Greenlee: And he talked a lot about micro interactions and how they're really a key to student success and how we're missing that personal interaction component as we are talking about pathways. And so it's really been something on my mind as I go to each session to think about how would we train people and how important they each are regardless of their role at the college.

Lianne Greenlee: And how they impact students in every single interaction and how those are really opportunities, every single moment of every day who we interact with, students regardless of our roles at the college whether we're in the grounds or student services, a manager walking across campus that every single time we connect with a student we can be a resource to them, we can be positive emotional support.

Lianne Greenlee: We can acknowledge them being there and for some students that is a success for them to get to the campus every single day. I've really been thinking about that concept of being mindful in the moment with students and how do we create a cultural environment where students sense that and feel that emotional support on campus in those micro interactions.

Jason Robinson: This is Jason Robinson from Pasadena City College. And I think the one session that really stood out to me was yesterday and it was Building Structures and Supports to Engage adjunct faculty in the student success movement.

Jason Robinson: There were definitely a couple of ideas that surfaced in that conversation that I thought were useful. One was instead of thinking about using your funding to support adjuncts in a short term way where you would stipend them to participate in one workshop, maybe create a series of workshops and it would be at the completion of the series that they would then be qualified for an increase perhaps in their pay, their hourly pay for teaching a class.

Jason Robinson: So I thought that was interesting, but probably the more significant takeaway for me from the session was just how complex this issue is, there were several adjunct faculty in the room who shared that sending emails, having online professional development, all of those pieces when you multiply them by the number of colleges that they're potentially teaching at, it's essentially not possible for them to participate in that way.

Jason Robinson: And so I kind of left with more questions than answers about how do you really bring adjunct faculty and make them a true part of the institutional life of your college? And so that's what I'm contemplating as I walk away from the conference.

Mary Angelino: Hi, this is Mary Angelino from a college in the Canyon's. I was also at that Adjunct seminar and some takeaways for me were some of the research that they presented that impacted me was that adjunct faculty could be compensated for their time in doing these training sessions.

Mary Angelino: Whether it's online or in person and when colleges offer training sessions maybe offering them on the weekend or during nights when they wouldn't be working at other colleges. Just compensation for their time impacted me and then also one of the strategies was to guarantee that if they completed a certain amount of training sessions, that the next time that a full-time position was open in their field that they would be guaranteed an interview.

Mary Angelino: And so that seems like a really good incentive to engage adjunct faculty. But yes I also left with more questions than I had when I came in. I forget there was a vice president of a community who brought up the fact that part of the workforce is exploited because of what they're paid.

Mary Angelino: And it's a flooded job market right now for full-time positions, just the ethical concerns around how adjuncts are trained and treated at the institutions they work, it was troubling to me maybe want to have conversations and find solutions.

Mary Angelino: I was an adjunct for a couple years myself and was lucky enough to have a full-time non-renewable contract that had me making a living wage in Fayetteville, Arkansas where I lived for 10 years.

Mary Angelino: So I've seen both sides of it and I'm just interested in having conversations, important conversations like this around adjuncts.

Speaker 16: One of the sessions that I attended was on new faculty orientation and using an equity lens to help new faculty just become engaged in the process of creating an environment where all students feel welcomed and comfortable.

Speaker 16: And I think two of the things that I found really interesting from were that the faculty themselves felt a sense of community, which I think is something that our students, especially students of color from marginalized communities really struggle with on community college campuses, is feeling that sense of community.

Speaker 16: So with new faculty feeling that and feeling how important that is, then they can pass that on to their students. And also that it sets the expectation and the tone for our faculty that this is what we expect our classrooms to look like and feel like is an equitable environment where we attend to peoples emotional well-being before we can teach them our content.

Speaker 16: Because when I'm working with students I always say I care about you more than I care about your educational goal. Because what use is an education plan if you can't even be here and focus.

Speaker 16: So attending to the student first, before we attend to content.

Speaker 17: Yesterday I attended the Doing Right by Our Men of Color how the minority male initiative is fostering encouragement, engagement and success at Mount Sac. Two or three of the takeaways that I have from that session is how they made space, they realized through the data that the black, Latino population was really the lowest served population.

Speaker 17: So they created this space where they could come together and target them. One of the things that they shared was that the Latino females were like what about us? And they were like through the data you guys are doing okay, so we're doing this for this population.

Speaker 17: So they got together, they created a safe space where the students could share their experience, what their barriers are, what issues they have had. So they didn't come to it with an agenda.

Speaker 17: They left it open for the students to bring forward this and because they created this safe space, students were very much able to share and be vulnerable and from that they got student ambassadors which are here and when they read in the workshop The Student Voice, they had the student ambassadors read that.

Speaker 17: And the workshop itself is really powerful because you could hear the students speaking and then they have students present their experience and what the barriers were. So I just thought it was a really good workshop.

Speaker 17: And it kind of highlighted how students who come into the college might have an imposter syndrome situation where they feel like they don't belong and how important it is for us to create spaces so that they know that they belong and they're part of the community.

Speaker 17: That they have a lot of agency that might not be familiar with and just kind of using those strengths and putting it in a positive spin in the college communities.

Liesel : Congratulations on your first podcast. Yes.

Liesel: This is someone I've been wanting to get on the podcast for a long time everyone. All right tell me who you are and what you do.

Audrey Y.: Audrey Yamagatinogi Vice President Student Services.

Liesel: And you were here to do three presentations at the conference, what was the succession that you just helped facilitate?

Audrey Y.: Doing right by our men of color. How the minority male initiative is fostering encouragement, engagement and success. But not only did we highlight the work we're doing as we have student voices that are absolutely powerful.

Audrey Y.: And one of the voices said I grew up in a very violent, crime ridden neighborhood. Very dangerous situation. But that didn't scare me as much as it did walking onto a college campus. Which says that when our students come to college, they come with all of those fears.

Audrey Y.: And they may not look like it, but we have to know that that's what their experiences are with how we reach out to them. Another student talked about the day DACA was rescinded that they all piled into the Dream Center.

Audrey Y.: And they were all so scared and he said it felt like somebody punched me in the heart and stole my future.

Speaker 19: That's Javi, I actually talked to him after the session.

Javi: All right, I'm talking to two students from Mount Sac, tell me your name.

Hector Compose: Hector Compose Student Ambassador Mount Sac.

Javi: Javi Azuna Student Ambassador.

Liesel : And Javi's been on the podcast before, he was on the Why We Drop episode and so you're here at the conference and you helped present and you presented on the Minority Male Initiative, how'd that go?

Javi: It went quite swell, it was really good, we got input from four different students who have actually been part of the Male Minority Initiative. And we presented on what the Male Minority Initiative was and how it helps certain male minority's and why we put it into place.

Liesel: And so have you done any other sessions what do think is the role of this for teachers and other people who work at the college, why do we come to conferences based on your experience?

Javi: Based on my experience at this conference I feel like educators, faculty and staff come to these conferences because they want to know how to better manage the community colleges and definitely put the community college more in a path to serve the student, rather than the student serve the community college.

Audrey: Javi was really - he's become very articulate in his ability to express himself, he also was actually recorded by the RP group here. And talked about talking vernacular, in fact during the workshop he talked about code switching and how when you're in class and you talk like where you're from that you don't get taken seriously often by faculty.

Audrey: It was good for him to speak up as a student to teach others. One of our new faculty that was here, white male said he didn't think he should get engaged with the minority male initiative because he's a white male.

Audrey: And one of our African American males students said no, because we face you in the classroom anyways, if you come and mentor and be with us, you become real to us. And it convinced him that he needs to engage more.

Audrey: So if that's what we got out of this coming together here, then it was all worth it.

Liesel : I know you're the expert who presents, what did you take away?

Audrey: I sat in the session for Pasadena College and since [inaudible 00:25:21] Vice President of Students did a fabulous job of articulating what they came face-to-face with. They went to a conference that they were invited to and they needed to crunch their numbers.

Audrey: So looking at the numbers of students that come in, the number of students that transfer and essentially looking at Pasadena City College and Cal State LA since they're neighbors. So the numbers that they were transferring didn't' look bad.

Audrey: Then they looked at African Americans over that timeframe which I think was about four to six years. One African American male no African American females. One person, one student. And then she said you know what, I knew him, I had worked with him.

Audrey: And so that was so compelling that it compelled her to, as she said take out my earrings and get into the fight. We need to do the same thing, bottom-line, how many are we talking about here?

Audrey: You know if that's what we got out of this coming together here, then it was all worth it.

Liesel : I think you are the reason I'm here is that you told me about this conference a couple of years ago and this is my second time presenting. It is a really cool conference, what do you like about this particular conference?

Audrey: For some reason, they're really able to embrace key issues. The bottom-line is the group of researchers. But this conference, they don't act like researchers because they really broaden the scope and they really stepped up to embrace the notion of students that says long before the state said you need to do so.

Audrey: So who they invite, who they attract the topics, the speakers is one of the best conferences I think in the state.

Liesel : Hey, thank so much for joining us for the Magic Mountie Podcast, we love your likes, we love your shares and we love your comments so please engage with our community download from where you love to get your podcasts, iTunes, Google, rate my professor we're there and we want you to be back with us next week.

Liesel : Remember any opinions that are expressed in this podcast do not necessarily represent Mount San Antonio College or any of it's agents. We'll see you next time.