



Redding University Community Pod Program

PRESENTATION TO DEAN MAX CASEY

Meet the Team



Donald Allen Sarra
he/his/him
Dean of Student Equity &
Inclusion



Dustin Liu
he/his/him
Dean of Living, Learning, &
Leadership



Chandler Houldin
he/his/him
Dean of Health, Wellness, &
Safety



Leah Moriah Robinson
she/her/hers
Dean of First-Year Students

Problem Statement

The current virtual environment unfairly challenges students in their search for quality social engagement. In reviewing this problem, the committee has decided on the following program goals to guide their proposal and recommendations:



Student Development

Target the development of key competencies that have been found to contribute to student thriving.



Leadership Pipeline

Develop a leadership pipeline through upper-class student mentorship to ensure continued participation and deep engagement in students-led activities, activism, community engagement, and campus traditions.



Equity Considerations

Close gaps in social and cultural capital that impact student success.



Community Building

Promote belonging, personal identity development, and the cultivation of students' authentic selves.



Solution

The Community Pod Program represents the answer to students' search for quality social engagement in the virtual college environment. Pods are curated, closed communities; all students can opt in as participants or facilitators, and first-years are highly encouraged to apply. Community Pods afford a communal setting in which to cultivate competencies in five targeted domains:

✓ Social Connectedness

Cultivate a deep sense of community and belonging both inside and outside of the classroom.

✓ Academic Skills

Leverage the myriad of intellectual, professional, and academic resources available on campus to pursue their authentic interests.

✓ Intrapersonal Identity Development

Offer the opportunity to explore personal identity in a scaffolded and supported environment.

✓ Diverse Citizenship

Develop into well-rounded citizens, activists, and scholars.

✓ Health and Wellness

Build strategies to prioritize wellness despite academic and social stressors and take charge of personal well-being.



Redding University

a regional public university in the Southwest founded in 1865

Mission Statement

Redding University develops future leaders who are equipped with an ethical foundation and diverse perspectives to empathetically discover and tackle the pressing societal problems of today and tomorrow.



Redding University

Demographics

27,371

STUDENTS

77%

IN-STATE

22,058

UNDERGRADUATES

5,313

GRADUATE STUDENTS

RACIAL-ETHNIC IDENTITY

70%

WHITE

15%

HISPANIC/LATINX

8%

BLACK

3%

ASIAN AMERICAN

3%

INTERNATIONAL

1%

NATIVE & INDIGENOUS



Redding University

Student Needs Assessment

28%

TRANSFER OUT
DURING THEIR FIRST
YEAR



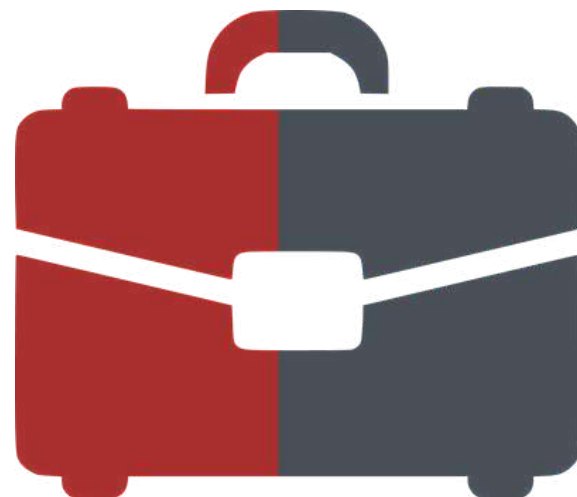
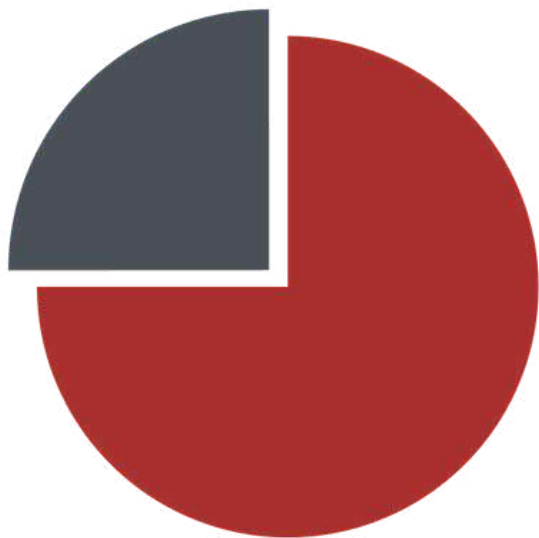
70%

LIVE OFF CAMPUS



25%

REPORT BEING FOOD
INSECURE



45%

WORK MORE THAN
15 HRS/WEEK

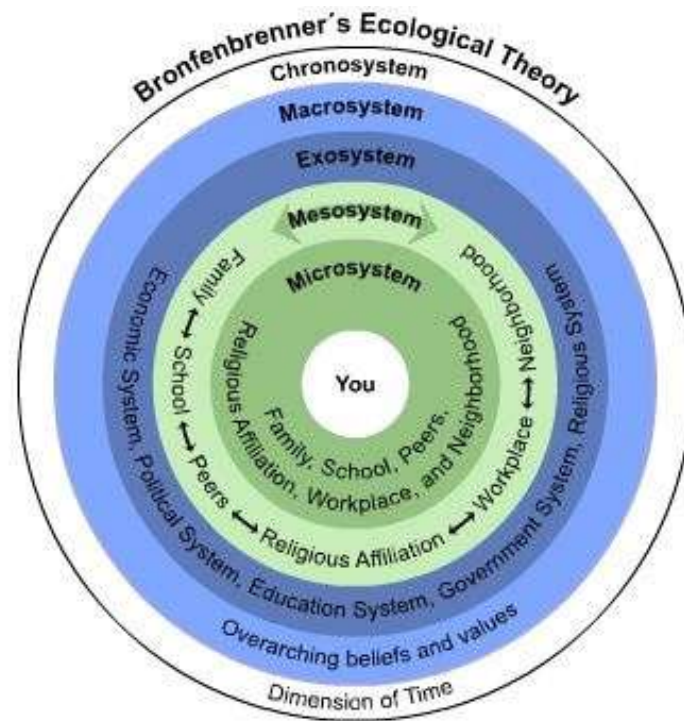


32%

ARE PELL-ELIGIBLE



Theoretical Framing

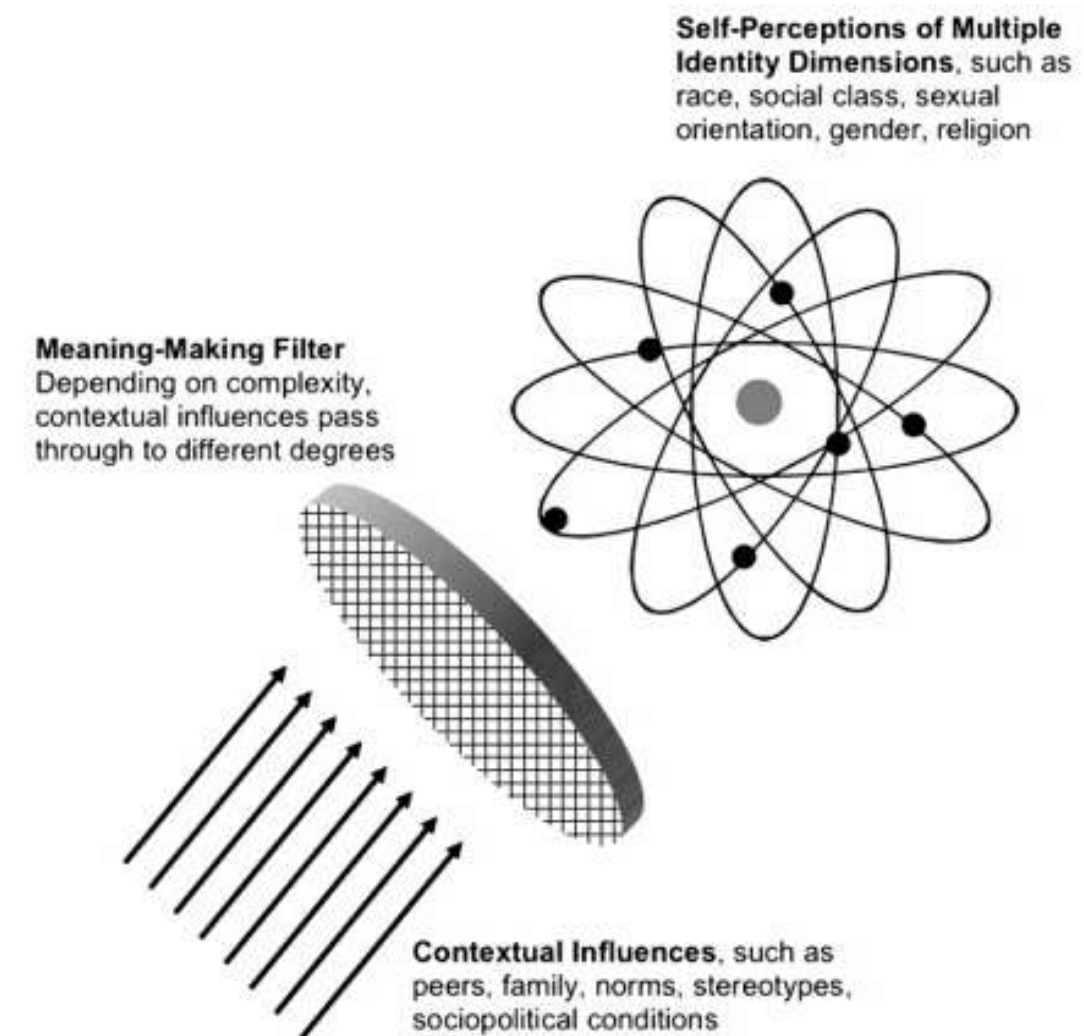


◆ Reconceptualized Model of Multiple Dimension of Identity (RMMDI)

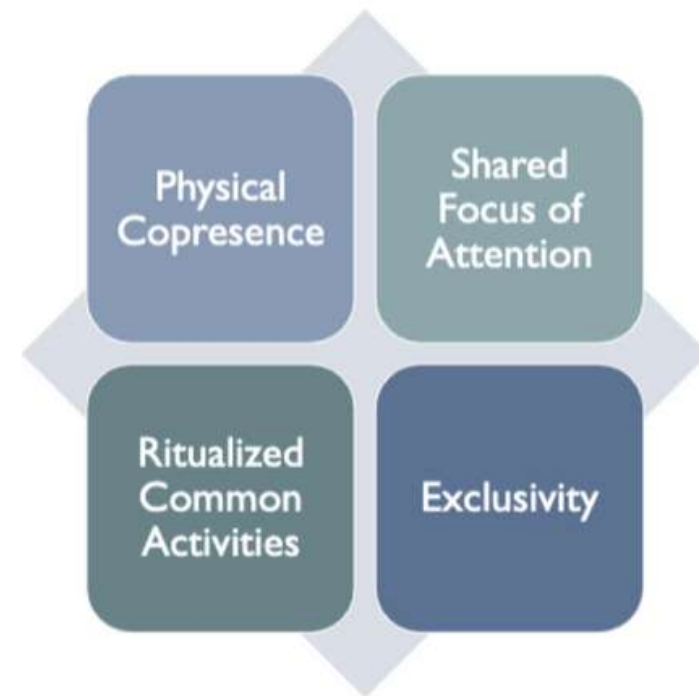
The RMMDI Model builds on Jones and McEwen's MMDI model, taking into account the meaning-making filter that influences contextual identity. As students are experiencing Redding University virtually, pod programming accounts for students undergoing frequent changes in self-perception and presentation based on the dual environments they are navigating. This theoretical underpinning informs pod activities that enable students to consider intersections and fluctuations of their identities.

◆ Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

In this virtual setting, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory is heavily utilized to highlight the different contexts that affect student experience. In this unique time of COVID-19, Redding University students are experiencing converging microsystems as they attend Redding University from home. The Community Pod Program recognizes that, this year, students will be influenced by the mesosystem and exosystem of their home environment more so than during a typical year and builds scaffolding for them to reflect and engage with both environments simultaneously.

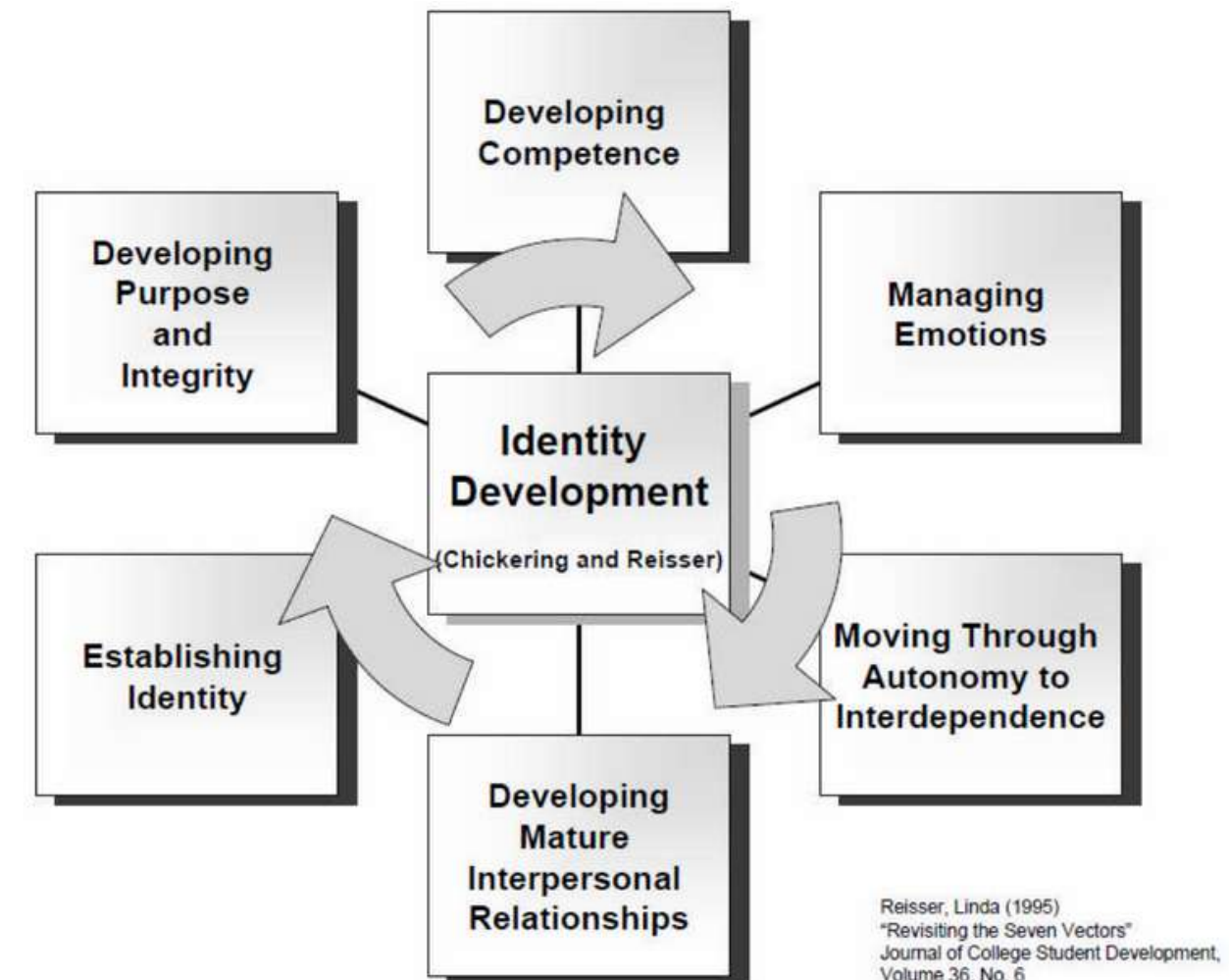


Theoretical Framing



◆ Collins Model for Emotional Solidarity

The virtual setting poses a challenge in enacting emotional solidarity. Acknowledging that emotional solidarity is key to increasing students' sense of belonging, pod programming has been built to include the factors that contribute to this state, despite the virtual format. Programming engages students in meaningful communities that build norms and unique traditions (ritualized common activities), are closed (exclusivity), require shared virtual space (co-presence), and engage all members in communal activities and discourse (shared focus of attention).



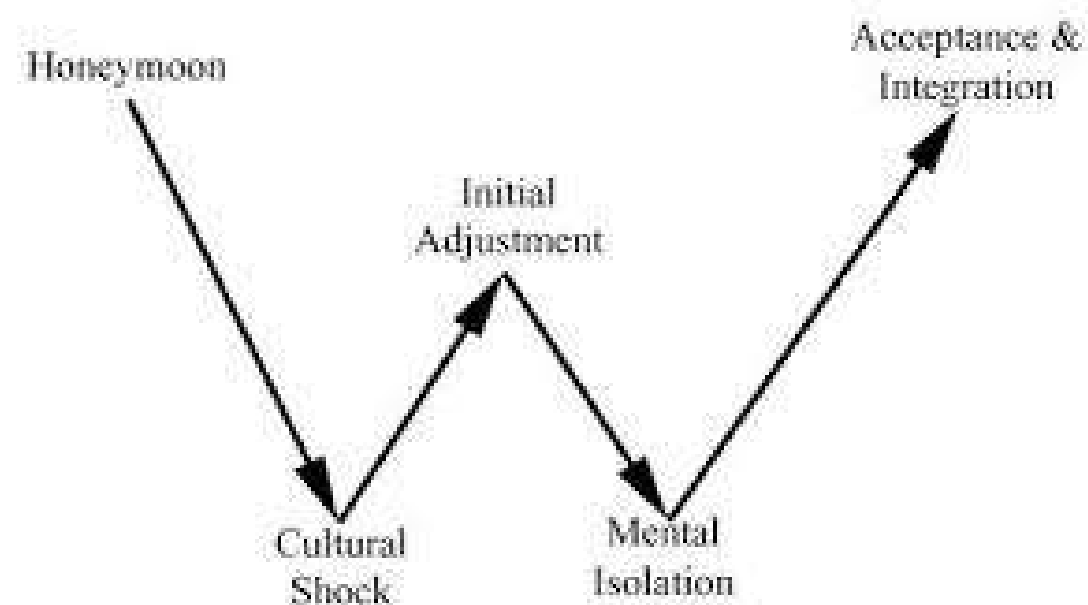
◆ Chickering's Seven Vectors of Identity Development

In each community pod, Chickering's vectors form a pathway towards identity development that utilizes group membership and the creation of durable relationships as its building blocks. Programming empowers the identification of students' authentic selves through modules on interpersonal identity development and students as changemakers. Throughout, students connect with peers authentically to bridge differences between them and feel empowered to bring their full selves to their new virtual environment.

Theoretical Framing

◆ The W-Curve

Redding University recognizes that many first-year students experience transitional ups and downs. The Community Pod Program is designed in a way that identifies common challenges, opportunities for growth, and moments of celebration in students' fall semester. It also provides underclass students with impactful and timely experiences, sets of knowledge, tools, and campus connections that will help them thrive through those moments of disequilibrium—represented by the W-Curve—that are so common in college.



◆ Kuh's Engagement Theory

The Community Pod Program is designed to meet students where they are. The program engages underclass students looking to build community and learn how to navigate college and draws upperclass students interested in giving back and continuing traditions of service and leadership with newer students. The Community Pod Program is premised on Kuh's Engagement Theory which identifies student growth as a shared responsibility between students and their institution. Redding University will provide meaningful opportunities and resources to students, and students are expected to actively engage with the content and environment they are provided.



Theoretical Framing

◆ Marcia's Matrix

Throughout Redding University's Community Pod Program, students will attend modules that challenge their initial preconceptions of themselves and their peers. Identities are complex and require students to experiment in order to achieve self-authorship and authenticity. Marcia's Matrix displays the four potential outcomes of students who work through crisis, or identity development. Notably, identity achievement is not a default outcome but requires a crisis that facilitates change in the student, who ultimately makes a commitment to identity. Upperclass students who lead each pod are well-versed in these outcomes and can identify and scaffold the work of underclass students to engage in this growth process. Programming also provides opportunity for students to role play and engage in the exploration necessary for eventual identity achievement.

Has a crisis been experienced?		
	Yes	No
Has a commitment been made?	Identity achievement	Foreclosure
	Moratorium	Identity diffusion



Program Overview

Redding University's Community Pods are structured, closed circles of 8-10 students that meet bi-monthly for the fall semester of each academic year. The program, being piloted this year on Zoom, will occur in person in future iterations.

Beginning after the formal conclusion of first-year orientation, pods are non-mandatory but highly encouraged for first-years and sophomores as well as for the seniors and juniors who act as trained facilitators and mentors to first-year and sophomore participants.

The program is split into five modules, and each module focuses on cultivating competencies in one of five targeted domains. Each module lasts three weeks, and two synchronous meetings occur during that time. Bi-monthly meetings include activities that target relevant capacities, skills, and learning goals for each module's domain. Asynchronous activities, communication, and reflection are also built into each module.

5 Modules / 5 Domains
3 weeks each

Meeting 1

Meeting 2

Activities

Activities

Activities

Activities



Design Principles

◆ Enrollment and Application Process

The program is open to all students; a short questionnaire is used to obtain three types of information utilized in strategic group creation:

- Myers Briggs personality test
- Geographic and time zone location
- Self-disclosed identity markers

◆ Meeting Times

Bi-monthly meetings are two hours long (with a 15-minute break), and pod meeting dates and times will be decided upon democratically by group members.

◆ Asynchronous Connection

Asynchronous connection: participants will connect with their group members via social media, snail mail, distance walks, and phone calls, among other strategies to ensure that relationships feel multifaceted and do not rely too heavily on Zoom and screens, more generally.

◆ Offices on Call

Each pod will have a faculty or staff member “on call” during meeting times in case emergency intervention is needed.

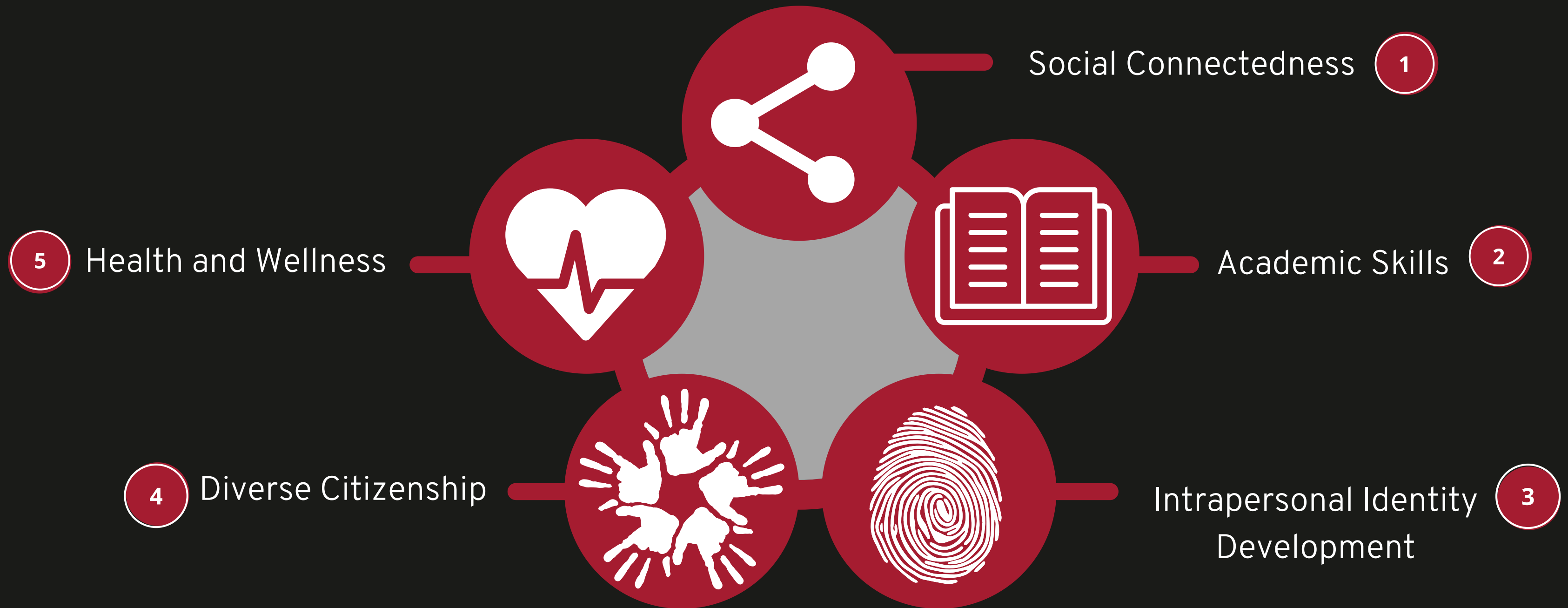
◆ Peer Facilitation

Seniors and juniors have the opportunity to apply as pod facilitators; their application requires the same information as participants' as well as a written application regarding their interest in facilitating and mentoring underclass students, relevant experience, and a letter of recommendation from a Redding University faculty or staff member.

A variety of trained faculty and staff will lead relevant workshops and trainings throughout August to prepare upperclass students for their role. These include trainings on: bystander intervention, internal bias, at-risk students, understanding sexual assault, and Zoom 101. Facilitators will run through each module activity, role playing and identifying points of complexity, potential challenge, and intended learning goals with faculty and staff. In future years, a train-the-trainer model will be employed for efficiency, with faculty and staff taking a backseat.

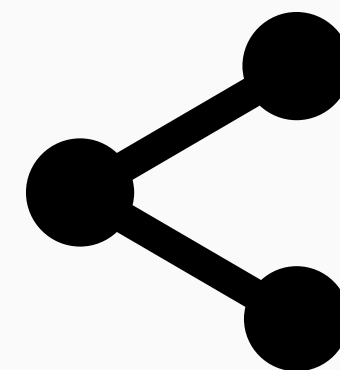


Community Pod Program Domains





Social Connectedness



Module Overview

An essential component of student success and learning is having a deep sense of community and belonging both inside and outside of the classroom. Students who can identify peers on campus that they feel connected to and have meaningful relationships with have secure foundations from which to explore social and intellectual life on campus. This module intentionally facilitates interpersonal relationships between upperclass and underclass students to ensure that newer students can benefit and inherit the social/cultural capital that has been historically useful for Redding University students.

Sample Modular Activities

20 Things We Have in Common: Identify and celebrate common traits, values, feelings, and histories among pod members; this activity recognizes that students may be more alike than what can be seen.

Situation Room: Students act out possible uncomfortable social scenarios that might happen on campus and problem-solve the situation, debriefing with each other to share strategies and learn how to circumvent potential pitfalls.

Campus Partners

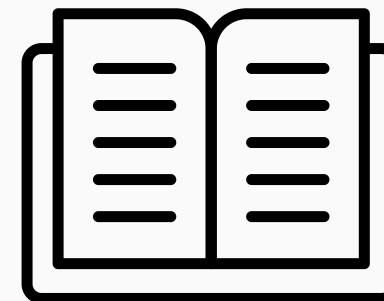
Multicultural Center, Residential Life, Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life, Dean of Students Office

Theory to Practice: College Student Development Theory

Chickering's Seven Vectors and the Collins Model elucidate the importance of cultivating a sense of belonging and community in students' new educational environment. The Collins Model outlines the elements necessary to engender students' interpersonal development in their new learning context. This module introduces students to their shared virtual space (co-presence), stresses building unique community norms and identifying commonalities among members (ritualized common activities and exclusivity), and engages students in communal activities (shared focus of attention). Chickering's Seven Vectors utilize group membership and the creation of durable relationships as its building blocks for identity development. This module adopts these tools; students use their pod to develop personal and social competencies (vector 1) and adopt social/culture capital frameworks from upperclass facilitators to shape their student identity (vector 3).



Academic Skills



Module Overview

Critical to students' academic success at Redding University is understanding and leveraging the myriad of resource available to them on campus. This module will re-introduce students to academic resources and encourage students to maximize academic potential and pursue their authentic interests. Participants will understand where they can seek academic support and recognize when they may benefit from such services.

Campus Partners

Registrar, Academic Affairs, Faculty Advisors, Writing Center, Tutoring Center, Career Services Office, Library Services, Accessibility Services

Sample Modular Activities

Academic Resource Scavenger Hunt: Students will receive prompts from upperclass facilitators who will take on a mock “new student” role and ask participants to help them find answers to questions about academic resources available at Redding University. For example, the facilitator may ask: Is free tutoring available, and how do I request a tutor? Students will be timed to explore the Redding University website to find the appropriate information.

“What I Wish I Knew”: Upperclass facilitators will share tips and tricks on being a successful student that they learned along their journey. These may include best practices regarding course selection, choosing a major, emailing professors, and how to effectively use office hours.

Theory to Practice: College Student Development Theory

During this module, students will challenge their initial conceptions of their identities as students and future professionals. **Marcia's Matrix** displays the four potential outcomes of students who work through crisis, or identity development. Notably, identity achievement is not a default outcome, but requires a crisis that facilitates change in the student, who ultimately makes a commitment to identity. **Kuh's Engagement Theory** tells us that a shared responsibility for development exists between students and their institution. If students necessitate cultural capital and specific academic resources to thrive at Redding University, then Redding University must offer that information; at that point, students are responsible for engaging in spaces (like pod communities) that offer such resources.



Intrapersonal Identity Development



Module Overview

A goal at Redding University is to create community across difference through the exploration of social identities. Guiding this work is the question: Who am I? These activities recognize that students are entering a stage of disequilibrium and are also entering a new learning context from their home environment. As students are shifting their sense of self and worldview, this module will offer students the opportunity to explore personal identity in a scaffolded and supported environment. These activities will be guided through a “challenge by choice” norm.

Campus Partners

Counseling Center, Student Leadership Office, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion, Identity Resource Centers, Multicultural Center

Sample Modular Activities

"Where I'm From" Storytelling Exercise: Students draw a life map, reflecting on the path they took to arrive at Redding University. Facilitators will model this activity, highlighting critical moments that have made them who they are. Underclass students will share their own life maps with their group, sharing whatever they are comfortable disclosing.

"Start Video If...": A digital adaptation of the “cross the line” exercise, students will be encouraged to respond to a variety of “I statements” and asked to turn on their camera if the statement pertains to them. Statements will range from “I am comfortable with public speaking” to more identity-based statements such as “I identify as a person of color.” The experience is aimed to challenge what students see on the surface to generate conversation around similarities and differences within the pod community.

Theory to Practice: College Student Development Theory

Chickering's Seven Vectors and the RMMDI Model are heavily utilized during this module to effectively create community across difference and provide opportunities for personal identity development. Chickering's fourth vector informs this module's activities: students connect with peers authentically through storytelling to bridge differences and feel empowered to bring their full selves to their new virtual environment. RMMDI also frames this module's content; activities acknowledge students are adjusting their meaning-making filters and undergoing changes in self-perception based on their new environmental and contextual shifts.



Diverse Citizenship



Module Overview

Aligned with Redding University's mission to develop well-rounded student citizens, activists, and scholars, this module will equip students with the tools they need to raise concerns and implement solutions to benefit themselves and their communities – both those on campus and at home. With the support of their upperclass pod facilitators, students will identify pathways for changemaking and the modes of action best suited to their skills and interests. This will be achieved through experiential programming with a focus on critical service reflection.

Campus Partners

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion , International Studies Office, Student Engagement Office, Public Service Center, Multicultural Center, Service-Learning/Community-Based Programs

Sample Modular Activities

Campus Community Mapping: Upperclass facilitators lead their pods in an interactive activity that explores the history of advocacy at Redding University through place-placed historical exploration (e.g. sites of protests). This activity aims to introduce students to the physical campus and community partners as well as the underlying social justice history that they are joining. Campus Compact's [Social Change Wheel](#) will also be employed as students consider the modes of action they hope to utilize as the newest generation of campus citizens.

Home Community Mapping + Issue Analysis: This online workshop emphasizes different forms of changemaking particular to the virtual environment. The workshop aims to balance students' responsibility to their new campus community with their ties and relationship to home. This activity emphasizes the different cultural, class, and race-based factors that may influence students' interaction with their home community.

Theory to Practice: College Student Development Theory

This module engages with Kuh's Engagement Theory and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory to equip students with reflective tools and skill sets used to build their civic competencies. Kuh's notion of shared responsibility between institution and student is highlighted through activities that consider campus activism and shifts in institutional policy as symbiotic and necessary for implementing lasting campus change. Bronfenbrenner's theory is utilized in this module as students experience converging microsystems; most are experiencing Redding University from their home environment, and this module leverages this unique placement to challenge students to identify their responsibility and connection to both communities in their work as changemakers.



Health and Wellness



Module Overview

College demands a lot from students' minds, bodies, and souls. The first-year experience is essential to students building the strategies they need to prioritize wellness as they experience both academic and social stressors. The Health and Wellness module encourages students to take charge of their well-being and care for their peers by discussing topics related to mental and physical health.

Campus Partners

Health Services Center, Counseling Center, Student Conduct, Title IX, LGBTQ+ Center, Women's Center

Sample Modular Activities

“Yes Means Yes”: Healthy Relationships and Sex-Positive Perspectives: Students will utilize various worksheets (“will/want/wont”) to consider the social, cultural, and familial influences on their notions of sex and explore the ways in which intersectional identities impact sexual experiences, beliefs, and norms. Students will feel empowered to consider what they *do* want to explore and the types of relationships that can foster open, positive environments conducive to those desires.

Bystander Intervention and Prevention on Campus: Diving deep into the current state of Redding University's campus climate, students will revisit and debrief the school's mandated orientation trainings on bystander intervention, campus safety, bias, and Title IX, identifying gaps in these resources and role-playing relevant scenarios.

Theory to Practice: College Student Development Theory

The transition to college life — no matter the format — instigates disequilibrium for students. The W-Curve is utilized in this module, reminding upperclass students of the full range of emotions that lie on the continuum of a first-year's fall semester and take a toll on mental and physical health. Chickering's Seven Vectors also shed light on the ways in which students can develop capacities (vector 1) and manage emotions (vector 2) through health and wellness programming that empower them to consider their needs and desires. Module activities build these competencies, providing a proactive approach to harm prevention rather than a reactive one.

Implementation Timeline

MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE - JULY
Students are accepted to Redding University; admissions letter highlights the Community Pod Program; recruitment drive begins for upperclass facilitators.	Social media campaign begins to encourage admitted first-year students to enroll in the Community Pod Program.	Community Pod Program mailer and email sent to admitted students.	Enrollment website goes live and students may opt-in by filling out participant questionnaire.
AUGUST	SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER		
Community Pod assignments released; upperclass student facilitator training occurs with Redding University faculty and staff.	The Community Pod Program takes flight!	Social Connectedness / September Academic Life / September-October Identity Development / October-November Diverse Citizenship / November Health and Wellness / December	



Storyboard and Publicity Campaign

The publicity campaign will occur in three phases: pre-program, program, and post-program.

Pre-Program: The target audience for the campaign is Redding University students, and the target outcome is recruitment for the Community Pod program. Each element of the program will be highlighted in a unique post; the focus is on how the program fosters community and why learning key domain competencies will be beneficial to students. The promotional video will be used to anchor communications describing the program.

Program: The duration of the Community Pod Program will be used to elevate and celebrate the work and journey of each pod. Student testimonials and student work created during specific modular activities will be publicized to shine light on program efficacy. The primary purpose of this publicity is the recognition of participating students and communication of the program to external stakeholders.

Post-Program: Participating students will share testimonials in short video form as well as be featured in campus publications to celebrate student work, leadership, activism, and growth.

Assets that will be leveraged include campus social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) as well as campus publications (alumni magazine, Redding News) and local news outlets.



Assessment Protocol

Prior to entering the Community Pod Program, Redding University will invite students to complete a pre-program survey to capture student competencies across the five modular components of the program. After completing the program, this data will be compared with a post-program survey to examine student growth and development.

Formative Feedback

- Brief formative survey after each session
- Temperature Check after each module
- Facilitator reflection to capture any learnings for future sessions
- Analysis of student work during the program
- Student focus groups

Theory to Practice: College Student Development Theory

Astin's I-E-O Model: To fully evaluate institutional effectiveness, Astin notes the necessity of a base understanding of student qualities and skill sets on entry (inputs) and on exit (outputs). This program represents a portion of the environment that students can engage in deeply during college to augment development; the efficacy of the programming will determine how they exit Redding University.

Community Pod Feedback Form

How would you rate your mastery of the session learning goals?

★★★★★

What is one thing that worked well during this session?

What is one thing that would improve your learning in future sessions?

What is one thing you are taking away from this session?

sample feedback form

Bibliography

Asher, S.R. & Weeks, M.S., (2014). Social relationships, academic engagement, and wellbeing in college: Findings from the Duke Social Relationships Project.

Chambliss, D.F. & Takacs, C.G. (2014). How college works. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Colby, A., Ehrlich, T., Beaumont, E., & Stephens, J.. (2003). Educating citizens: Preparing America’s undergraduates for lives of moral and civic responsibility. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Chickering, A.W. & Reisser, L. (1993). Friendships and student communities (pp 392-424). In Education and identity (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Evans, N.J., Forney, D.S., Guido, F.M., Patton, L.D., & Renn, K.A. (2010). Student development in college: Theory, research, and practice (2nd Ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Jack, A.A. (2019). The privileged poor: How elite colleges are failing disadvantaged students. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Jones, S.R. & Abes, E.A. (2013). Identity development of college students: advancing frameworks for multiple dimensions of identity. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Kinzie, J., & Kuh, G.D. (2004). Going Deep: Learning From Campuses That Share Responsibility For Student Success. About Campus, 9(5), 2-8.

Rodriguez, L. Chapter 3: Campus environments and student success (pp. 66-87).

Akens, C., Wright-Mair, R. & Stevenson, J.M. (Eds.). (2019). College students and their environments: Understanding the role student affairs educators play in shaping campus environments.

Manning, K., & Kuh, G.D. (2005). Promoting Student Success: Making Place Matter To Student Success (Occasional Paper No. 13). Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Center For Postsecondary Research.

Schreiner, L.A. (2010). The “Thriving Quotient”: A New vision for student Success about Campus, 15(2), 2-10.

Seider, S., Huguley, J.P., & Novick, S. (2013). College students, diversity, and community service learning. Teachers College Record, 115(3), 1-44.

Torres, V. & Hernandez, E. (2007). The influence of ethnic identity on self-authorship: A longitudinal study of Latino/a college students Journal of College Student Development, 48(5), 558-573.

Zeller, W. J. and Mosier, R. (1993). Culture shock and the first-year experience. Journal of College and University Student Housing 23(2).