Center for Project-Based Learning at Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Equity Audit 2022

We first want to acknowledge that we operate within structures and societies where opportunity and advantage are inequitably distributed or offered. Last year, in an effort to reduce our unwitting complicity in this inequitable situation, we undertook our inaugural equity audit. We discovered some areas where our work is doing well, and more areas where we can improve what we do to be more inclusive and supportive of marginalized people. We also committed to an annual review of our work to make sure that we continue to improve and identify areas where we can do better. This report is the result of our annual review – where again, we identified areas in which we've improved, but more areas where we still have work to do. Eliminating injustice and attaining equity is a slow process, but one to which we are committed.

Who We Are
The Center was founded in 2015 to share WPI's almost 50 years of expertise with other institutions interested in giving their students project-based learning (PBL) opportunities. This move was motivated in part by our alumni study, which provided clear evidence that our projects were indeed a transformational experience for many, combined with a desire to expand the number of students who shared these benefits. The Center's signature experience is the Institute on Project-Based Learning, offered each summer to teams of five from institutions of higher education from across the country and around the world. The Center also provides customized workshops virtually and on-site to partners and shares PBL practices broadly through its newsletter, scholarship, and social media.

The mission of the Center is to support and coach higher education institutions and practitioners committed to driving equitable, sustainable, and systemic pedagogical, curricular and cultural reform, through project-based learning (PBL). The Center prepares institutions and educators to offer diverse student bodies multiple, culturally-relevant, project-based learning (PBL) experiences. The Center serves as the hub for PBL in higher education by developing, curating and sharing best practices that advance active, student-centered education for a just, equitable, and inclusive society.

What is an equity audit?
Equity audits allow us to examine how our organizational practices are related to trends in diversity, equity, and inclusion. As a leadership tool, equity audits provide an opportunity to discuss how our actions contribute to inequitable systems using concrete, specific, and relevant data points. Equity audits result in analyses that can inform decisions about which practices might need to change; conducting equity audits regularly over time allows leaders to assess whether adjustments to practices have led to more equitable processes and outcomes.

While equity audits are not yet common in higher education, guidance for a variety of models in K-12 education have been published in recent decades:

- Linda Skrla, Jim Scheurich and colleagues[1] have suggested that schools include indicators of three areas to monitor equity in teacher quality, access to high-quality educational programming, and achievement of learning outcomes. In the K-12 realm, teacher quality and curricular quality are the prime ingredients within schools that impact learning.

- Terrance Green[2] adapted equity audits to focus on equity in community partnerships, recommending that school leaders include asset mapping, interviews with community members, and other perspectives to fully understand how diversity, equity, and inclusion practices are implemented by the school.

- Beloved Community,[3] a DEI consulting firm, designed guidance for conducting equity audits across a wider range of organizations. The free online tool is customizable with more than 200 indicators which are recommended based on aspects of the organization being audited. The tool is available at https://www.wearebeloved.org/what-we-do.

The Center for Project-Based Learning drew upon these tools and guidance to engage in an equity audit suited to our education context and business model. If you are interested in working with a national leader in student-centered, experiential high-impact practices to guide your own equity audit, please contact us to see how we might work together.

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[1] Skrla, L., Scheurich, J. J., Garcia, J., & Nolly, G. (2004). Equity audits: A practical leadership tool for developing equitable and excellent schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 40*(1), 133-161; Skrla, L., McKenzie, K. B., & Scheurich, J. J. (Eds.). (2009). *Using equity audits to create equitable and excellent schools*. Corwin Press.
[2] Green, T. L. (2017). Community-based equity audits: A practical approach for educational leaders to support equitable community-school improvements. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 53*(1), 3-39.
[3] https://www.wearebeloved.org/equity-audit

A Snapshot of Equity
within the Center for Project-Based Learning in 2022

WHO WE ARE	**Whose knowledge do we leverage as PBL experts?** **Do we include representation from marginalized communities in our staffing?**				
	BIPOC faculty & staff as experts at the PBL Institute	Women faculty & staff as experts at the PBL Institute	NTT & TPT faculty as experts at the PBL Institute	Inclusive practices for equitable staffing dynamics	Equity in Advisory Board positions

WHO WE SERVE	**Are we working with those who serve marginalized students** **to spread and scale up access to PBL in higher education?**					
	MSIs at the PBL Institute	MSIs at Center workshops	MSIs as repeat customers	OAIs attending the PBL Institute	OAIs at Center workshops	OAIs as repeat customers

WHAT WE DO	**Whose knowledge "counts" in what we share?** **What culturally-affirming skills and dispositions are being supported?**					
	DEI content at Center workshops	DEI content at the PBL Institute	DEI content in PBL Newsletter	Scholarship centering DEI	Following DEI on Twitter	Tweeting DEI content

BIPOC = Black, Indigenous, People of Color; NTT = Non-tenure track
MSI = Minority-Serving Institution; OAI = Open Access Institution; DEI = Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

- [green] The Center is inclusive and equitable in this practice
- [yellow] The Center has been improving and is nearing inclusive and equitable in this practice
- [pink] The Center is not yet inclusive and equitable in this practice

A Snapshot of Progress
on Equity Audit Recommendations from 2021

WHO WE ARE	**Whose knowledge do we leverage as PBL experts?** **Do we include representation from marginalized communities in our staffing?**

Whose knowledge do we leverage as PBL experts?
Do we include representation from marginalized communities in our staffing?

Maintaining representational equity in staffing	Maintaining inclusive practices for equitable staffing dynamics	Increasing representational equity in Center leadership

WHO WE SERVE

Are we working with those who serve marginalized students
to spread and scale up access to PBL in higher education?

Improving how we support Minority Serving Institutes	Improving how we support Open Access Institutes

WHAT WE DO

Whose knowledge "counts" in what we share?
What culturally-affirming skills and dispositions are being supported?

DEI knowledge shared in the Institute & workshops	DEI knowledge shared in the Center's PBL Newsletter	DEI knowledge shared in social media	Equity audit processes

The Center completed the recommendations related to this practice

The Center has been improving in most of the recommendations related to this practice

The Center has not yet engaged in the recommendations related to this practice

Who We Are: Center Staffing & Leadership

Whose knowledge do we leverage as PBL experts? Do we include representation from marginalized communities in our staffing?
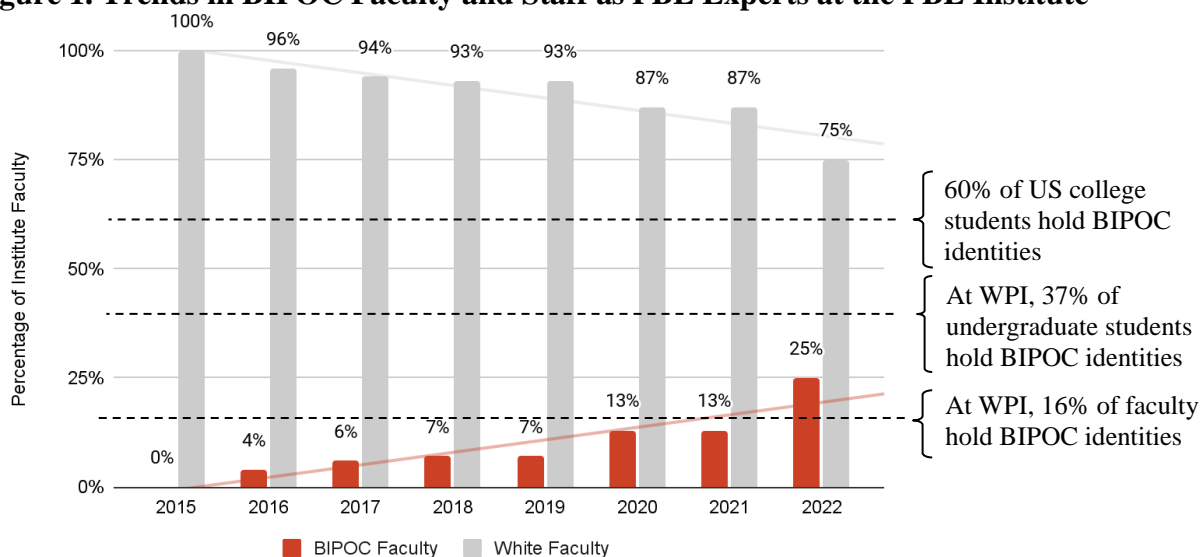
The Center uses a distributed staffing model with few dedicated staff and a roster of faculty and staff educators who contract with the Center to provide professional development services. The Center is led by a director with input from an advisory board of WPI administrators, faculty, and staff. Once university partners have attended professional development programming, they enter an alumni network, which the Center draws upon for collaborating on new ventures.

In this section, the Center examined indicators of representational equity in staffing, as well as indicators of inclusion practices when working with these staff. These analyses allow us to assess 1) whether efforts to increase the number of marginalized faculty (ie, BIPOC, women and nonbinary people, non-tenure track faculty and staff) have been effective, 2) whether practices once we have hired marginalized staff support ethical power dynamics, and 3) areas for continued improvement.
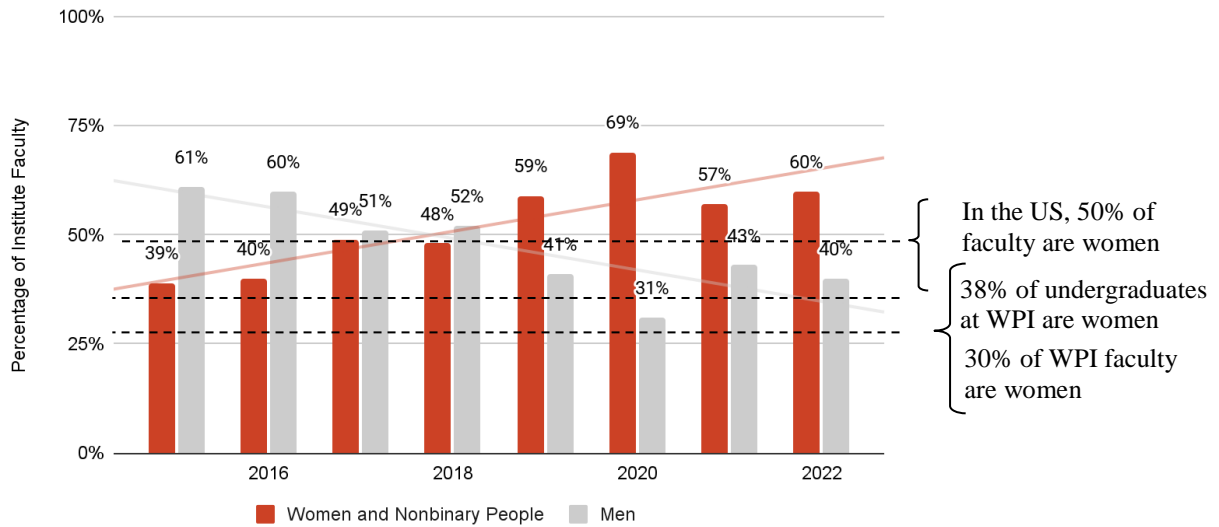
Representational Equity in Staffing

During the Institute, the Center hires faculty and staff to serve as coaches to university teams and as workshop facilitators. The Center has been close to recruiting staffing that is representational of our faculty at WPI (see Figures 1-3). Each winter we release a call for qualifications to all faculty; we then follow up with personalized emails to marginalized faculty with whom we have existing relationships or who have been recommended by colleagues as PBL experts.
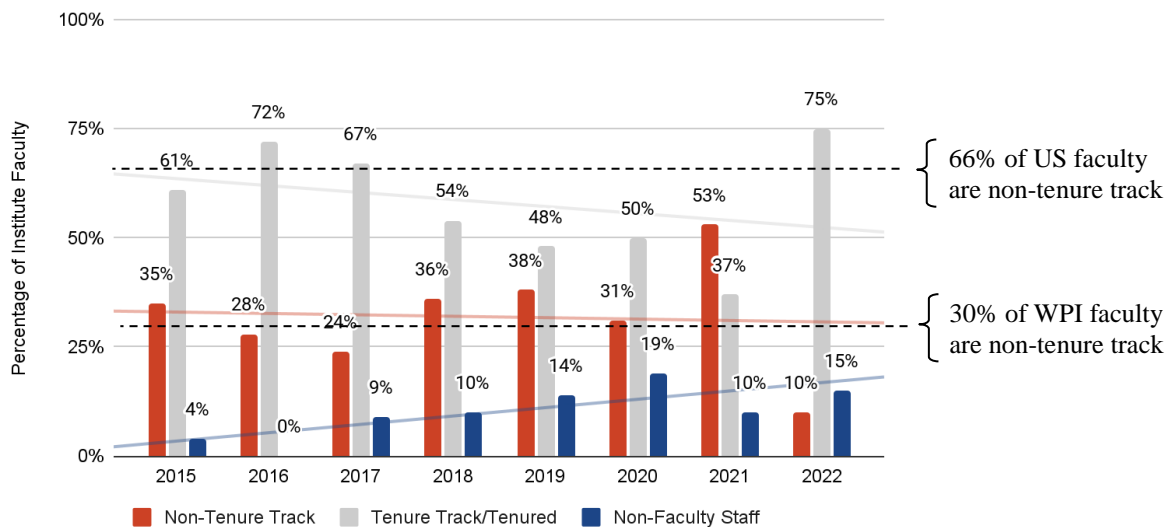
Figure 1. Trends in BIPOC Faculty and Staff as PBL Experts at the PBL Institute

60% of US college students hold BIPOC identities

At WPI, 37% of undergraduate students hold BIPOC identities

At WPI, 16% of faculty hold BIPOC identities

Figure 2. Trends in Women and Nonbinary People as PBL Experts at the PBL Institute

In the US, 50% of faculty are women

38% of undergraduates at WPI are women

30% of WPI faculty are women

Legend: Women and Nonbinary People | Men

Figure 3. Trends in Non-Tenure Track Faculty as PBL Experts at the PBL Institute

66% of US faculty are non-tenure track

30% of WPI faculty are non-tenure track

Legend: Non-Tenure Track | Tenure Track/Tenured | Non-Faculty Staff

Approximately 16% of faculty at WPI hold BIPOC racial/ethnic identities and 25% of all faculty in the US hold BIPOC racial/ethnic identities. The 2022 Institute was the first year we were not only representative of WPI faculty, but of the national proportion of BIPOC faculty. While this is not yet representative of the students enrolled in higher education in the US who hold BIPOC racial/ethnic identities, there is representational equity for faculty, broadly-speaking.

The Center continued to hire a large proportion of women as PBL experts at the Institute (see Table 2). In soliciting feedback on the measures included in the initial equity audit, we received

feedback that the current representation of gender excluded those outside oppressive conceptualizations of gender as binary. We do not currently ask faculty and staff hired by the Center to report their gender and rely instead of secondary analysis of institutional data, which is limited in gender categorization. We have included those who self-reported non-binary gender identities through the pronouns they share in analyses; as there are so few individuals in this category, we do not report trends, per standard data reporting guidelines. We value this feedback and importance of visibility for marginalized genders.

As WPI has introduced a teaching path to tenure, several of the non-tenure track faculty who have historically served as PBL experts with the Center have begun tenure-track teaching positions (see Figure 3). We remain committed to these individuals who can use their work at the Institute as evidence of tenure criteria.

Inclusive Practices for Staffing Dynamics
For marginalized WPI faculty who staff Center offerings, several processes are in place to support mutually beneficial dynamics. We continued these practices from last year.

Educational expertise, such as serving as a national leader in PBL through the Center, is recognized and rewarded in the promotion process at WPI. The Center writes letters to describe work done through the Center and to summarize the resulting outcomes on behalf of faculty submitting promotion applications. These positions are particularly impactful for teaching faculty who are expected to demonstrate expertise, yet are not expected to engage in research activities. For example, 88% of the faculty on the teaching pathway going up for tenure this year (in the first round of this new tenure track role) have worked with the Center. They will be able to include letters of impact from the Center in their applications for tenure.

Work for the Center is paid, rather than volunteered on top of regular duties. Compensation for hourly rates is comparable to mid-career salaries at WPI and paid effort includes time for preparation. This compensation ensures we do not contribute to unfunded expectations that marginalized faculty do the work of creating inclusivity and equity, furthering the burdens they face. The Center is committed to reviewing compensation rates and practices at a minimum of every three years.

We solicit potential topics from faculty during recruitment to build a strengths-based approach to the Center's collective expertise. BIPOC faculty are not expected to teach DEI or share their experiences as marginalized faculty; they are asked to share their expertise as scientists, engineers, scholars, and educators.

Representational Equity in Center Leadership
We have work to do to form more inclusive leadership. We did not convene the Center's
Advisory Board in 2021-2022 and did not initiate any changes to its composition. The Advisory
Board continues to be comprised entirely of white faculty and staff, with the majority having
held or currently holding leadership positions at WPI. In 2020-2021, a member of the faculty
with no leadership experience was added to balance the perspectives shared. There is a balance
of gender representation.

Advisory Board members include:

- Art Heinricher, Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Professor of Mathematical Sciences
- Kent Rissmiller, Associate Dean of the Global School, Professor of Integrative & Global
  Studies
- Rick Vaz, Professor of Integrative & Global Studies, former Director of the Center for
  Project-Based Learning, former Dean of Interdisciplinary & Global Studies Division
- Chrys Demetry, Director of the Morgan Teaching & Learning Center, Professor of
  Mechanical Engineering
- Kris Boudreau, Professor of Humanities & Arts, former Department Head of Humanities
  & Arts Department
- Anna Gold, University Librarian
- Can Sabuncu, Assistant Teaching Professor of Mechanical Engineering

Who We Serve: Center Clientele

Are we working with those who serve marginalized communities to spread and scale up access to PBL in higher education?

The Center for Project-Based Learning has developed a strong reputation as the national leader in advancing project-based learning. We take a broad stance regarding the spectrum of project-based learning and related high-impact practices and welcome the full range of experience, from newcomers and to those scaling up practices institution-wide. Teams of five or more come to the Institute with a goal and leave with an action plan; they learn together during plenaries, workshops, and team planning sessions, and receive the advice and guidance of a dedicated coach and colleagues at other institutions investing in PBL. The Center also provides approximately 20-30 customized workshops annually, tailoring each to the needs of the institution. Since 2016, the Center has provided professional development to faculty and staff at more than 180 colleges and universities. We have served more than 2,000 faculty and staff through the Institute and workshops.

In this section, we examine the extent to which we are helping to broaden marginalized students' access to project-based learning. It is important to note two limitations to our analyses in this part of the equity audit: 1) we can only assess who we serve at the institutional level at this time; we do not track demographics of individuals who attend our programming or the students they serve, and 2) we have limited data on the organizational goals that have motivated our partners and their implementation post-professional development.
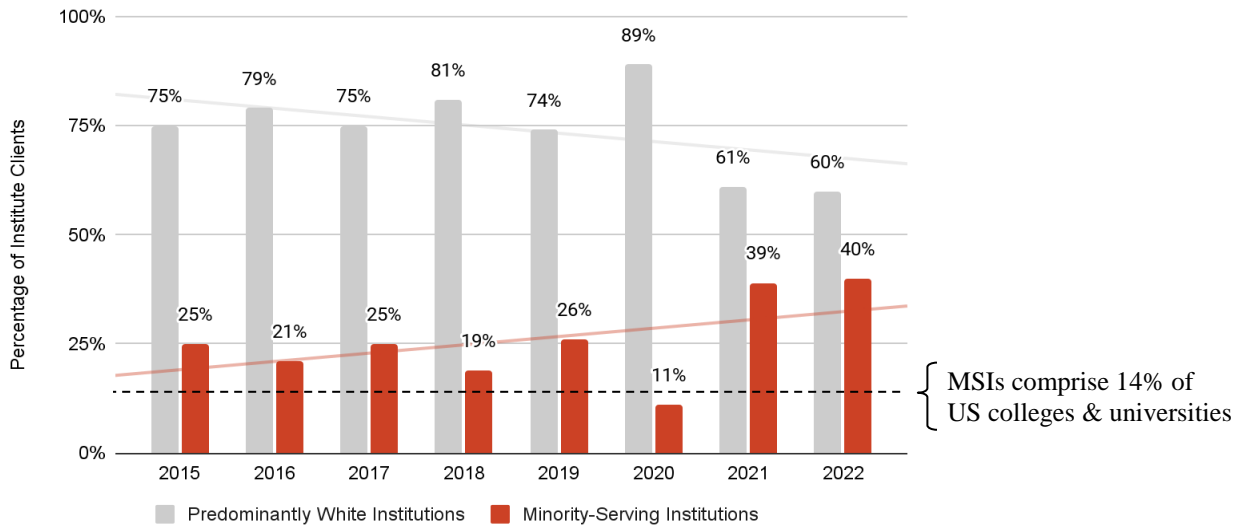
Collaborations with Minority-Serving Institutions
In the US when at least 50% of the students served by a college or university belong to minority racial/ethnic groups, they are considered minority-serving institutions (MSIs) [see § 365(3) of the Higher Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1067k(3)]. These colleges and universities represent a wide range of contexts, including private and public institutions, urban, suburban and rural settings, small and large student bodies. Some MSIs were founded to intentionally serve groups of students often marginalized from predominantly white institutions; others have grown into this role as enrollments have increasingly included Latinx and Black students.

MSIs continue to be overrepresented in Center partners (24% of all US-based clients, compared to 14% of colleges and universities nationwide; NAE, 2019). In every year with the exception of the global pandemic, MSIs were overrepresented in the Institute on Project-Based Learning, though still in the minority among participating institutions (see Figure 4). Among workshop clients, MSIs have been slower to seek out the Center; however, in recent years, MSIs have been

overrepresented among workshop clients and are even approaching parity with predominantly white institutions (see Figure 5).

Figure 4. Minority-Serving Institutions and Predominantly White Institutions at the Institute for Project-Based Learning Over Time

Figure 5. Minority-Serving Institutions and Predominantly White Institutions at Center for Project-Based Learning Workshops Over Time
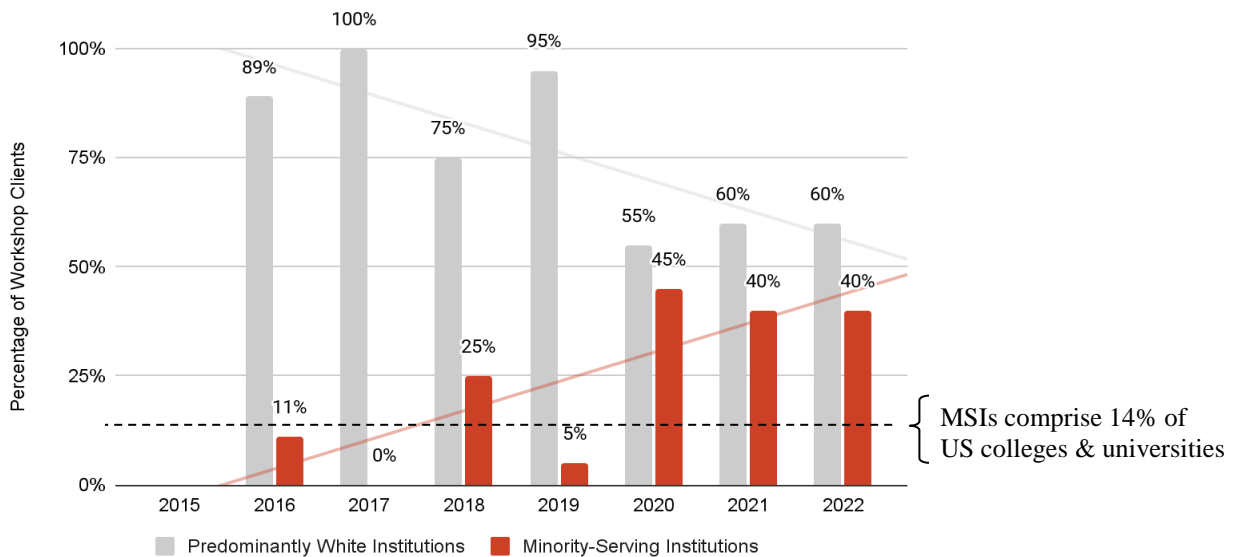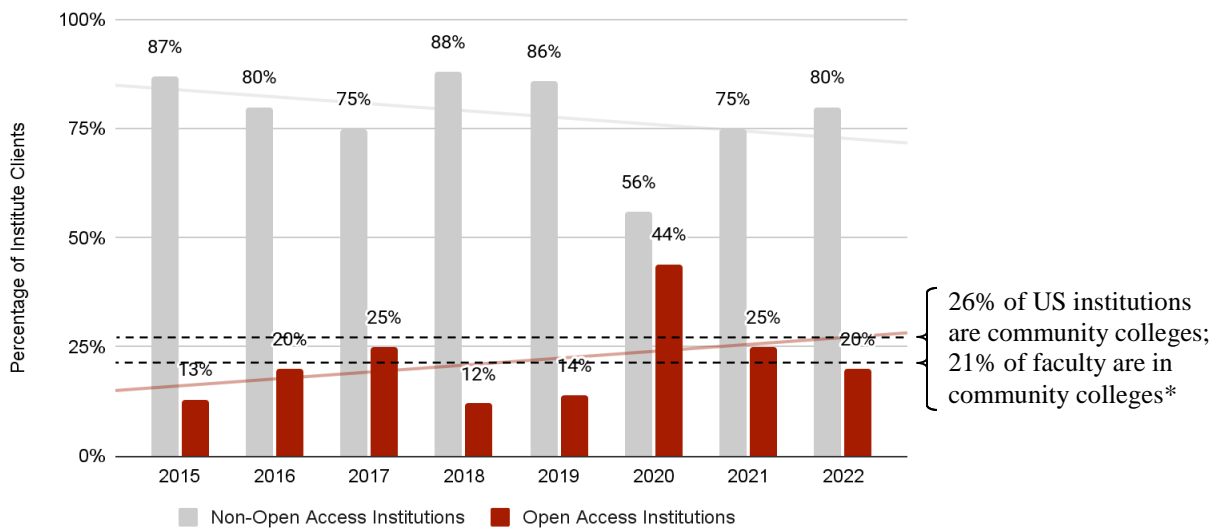

Collaborations with Open-Access Institutions

Open-access institutions are colleges and universities whose admissions practices accept 80% or more of all applicants, often regardless of traditional indicators of readiness, such as high school

achievement tests and grade point average. Community colleges are open access by mission and some four-year colleges and universities also have open access admission policies. Current reports estimate that 44% of students in the US complete at least part of their higher education at an open access institution.[4] This is due in part to accessibility via open admissions, but also to the more affordable tuition rates at most open access institutions. As such, open access institutions play a major role in the higher education of low-income students and are a major lever for educational equity in the US.

Overall, open access institutions are underrepresented in Center partners (19% of US-based clients, compared to 26% of colleges and universities nationwide).[5] On average, open access institutions vary from underrepresented to approximately represented in the Institute on Project-Based Learning (see Figure 7). Feedback from participants in the Institute has consistently included requests from faculty and staff at community colleges, in particular, for more connections to others practicing PBL in similar institutions.

Figure 7. Open Access and Non-Open Access Colleges and Universities at the Institute for Project-Based Learning Over Time

*Note: Open-access institutions include more than community colleges; these estimates are therefore lower than the actual national benchmarks.

In recent years, open access institutions have become increasingly represented among workshop clients, as well, engaging the Center at rates equal to their proportion within higher education

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[4] Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University:
https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Community-College-FAQs.html
[5] NCES, 2019

(see Figure 8). Given the disproportionately large number of students served by these institutions, the Center might consider ways to increase PBL supports for them in future.

Figure 8. Open Access and Non-Open Access Colleges and Universities at Center for Project-Based Learning Workshops Over Time
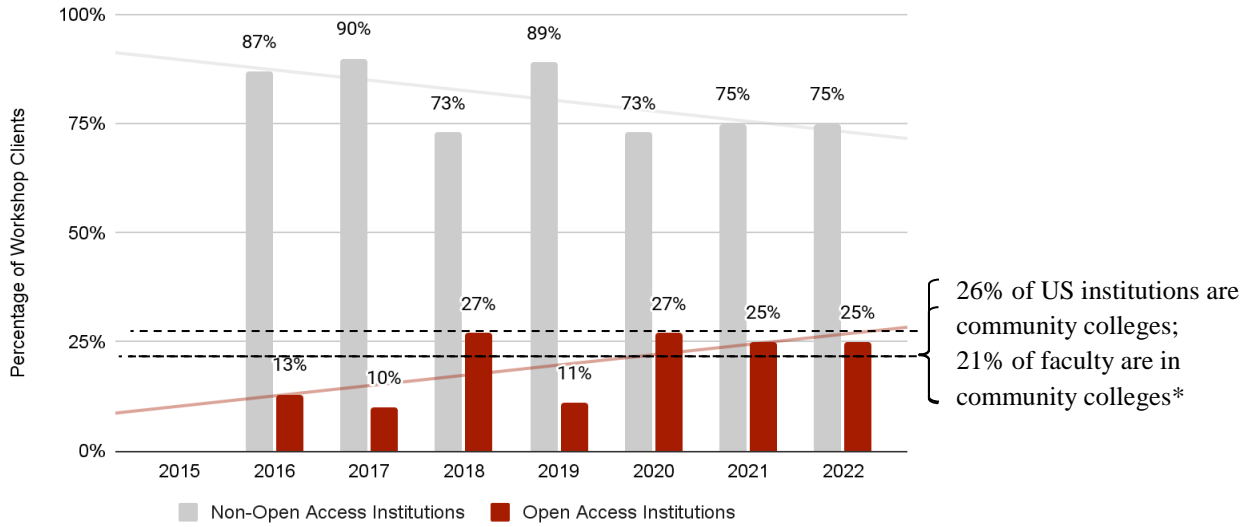
What We Do: Knowledge Sharing

Whose knowledge "counts" in what CPBL shares? What kinds of asset-based, culturally-affirming skills and dispositions are supported through CPBL capacity-building activities?

At its core, the Center's work is sharing knowledge: learning from others about what works when using project-based learning and connecting faculty and staff to experiences and people to build capacity for implementing project-based learning.

Knowledge Shared in the Institute & Workshops
The core of the Center's knowledge sharing happens at the Institute and in workshops. The content covered in the Institute is set by the Center in conjunction with Institute faculty with an eye towards common themes in participating teams' applications. For workshops, the Center is invited to a campus (or to a virtual event) to provide professional development. The topics are set through discussion with the client about their particular context and goals.

In 2022, 42% of the workshops offered at the Institute were focused on DEI topics. These included workshops on equitable team dynamics in coursework, how to build and operate supports for intervening with teams struggling with equity, designing equitable and ethical community partnerships during PBL, critical consciousness as a goal of PBL, and supporting neurodiversity during projects. These topics were nominated by faculty who wanted to facilitate them. Each block of workshops in the schedule included at least one focused on DEI to allow participants to engage in a DEI track.

During the academic year, customized workshops continued to include Lisa Stoddard and Geoff Pfeifer's equitable team dynamics. The Center Director has also begun contrasting Bloom's Taxonomy with Marcella LaFever's Medicine Wheel, which uses an Indigenous framework to understand learning outcomes. However, there is still little focus on the ways PBL can be used to improve equity in college classrooms in workshops provided by the Center.

The section of the Center's website on professional development offerings now has added clarity on how DEI issues might be included in workshops we deliver. For example, a list of potential workshop goals now includes two additions: considering how PBL can be used to meet your goals for improving equity and inclusion; and assessing the value proposition of PBL for your historically marginalized students. The new Justice, Equity, and Transformation section of the Center's website also gives several suggestions for partnership opportunities beyond workshops.

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Knowledge Shared in the Center's PBL Newsletter
The Center disseminates a quarterly newsletter highlighting PBL best practices, success stories, and student perspectives. The newsletter has a readership of approximately 3,000 unique readers. Each newsletter shares stories in six content areas among announcements and other calls to action. To assess the extent to which the newsletter highlights PBL that supports DEI, we examined 1) the purpose and motivation of using PBL in the stories shared, and 2) the institutional contexts in which PBL was practiced in newsletter stories.

The proportion of stories focused on using PBL to address DEI in 2021-2022 ranged from 11% to 50% (see Figure 9). Newsletters this past year have more consistently featured stories about DEI, though there is still room to increase this type of content. One limitation is that newsletter content depends largely on what other colleges and universities are doing with PBL and how those practices are shared publicly; with few colleges and universities explicitly using PBL to advance DEI, there is limited content to include in the newsletter. A long-term investment in fostering this utilization of PBL among those connected to the Center might result in greater DEI presence in PBL content ready to be amplified in the Center's PBL newsletter. Providing the marketing and web hosting resources that community colleges, in particular, may not have access to would also increase our ability to feature their DEI PBL work.

**Figure 9. Consistency of DEI-focused PBL Newsletter Content**
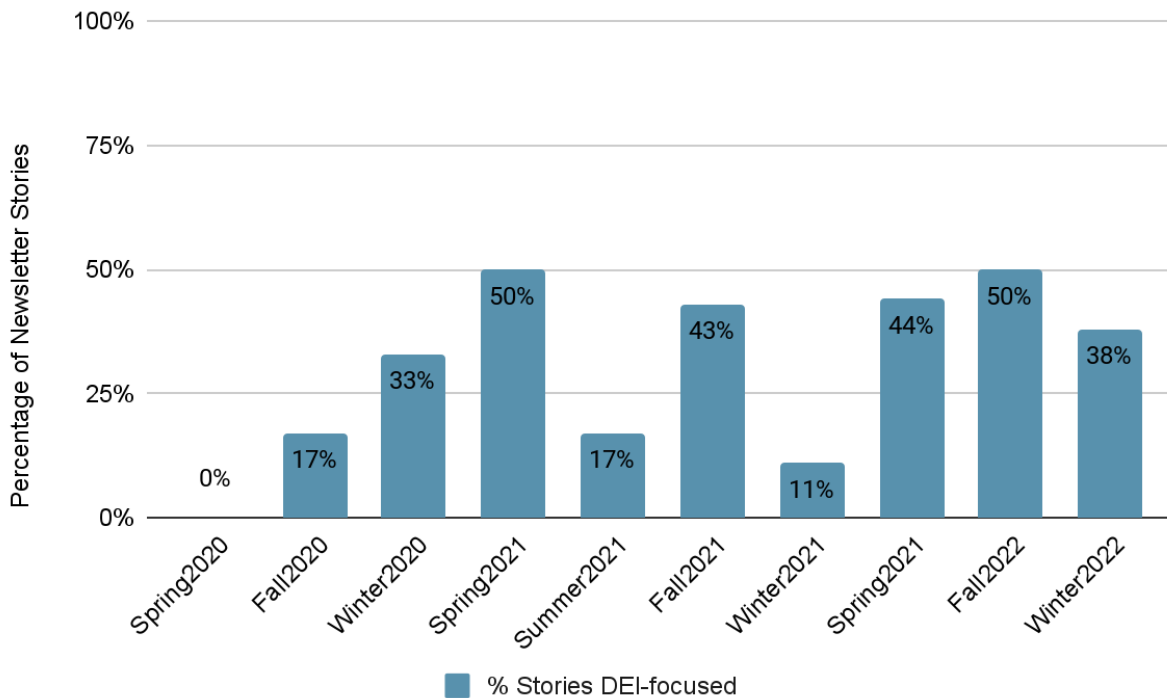
Four of the five issues since in the last equity audit included stories about PBL at Minority Serving Institutions and three issues featured institutions with open access admissions (see Figure 10). This representation is still inconsistent despite being more intentional in selecting which knowledge about PBL should be shared in each newsletter.

Visual representations of diversity that are inconsistent with content remain present. Two of the three issues with greater than 50% visuals depicting BIPOC people have far less content centering issues of diversity, equity, or inclusion (see Figure 11). This misalignment is problematic because it co-opts visuals of marginalized people for marketing content that does not address issues of marginalization. The Center should reassess the process for choosing visuals and continue discussions about why this matters to ensure that all members of the team are equipped to change the way they contribute to the newsletter.

Figure 10. Consistency of Equitable Representation in PBL Newsletter
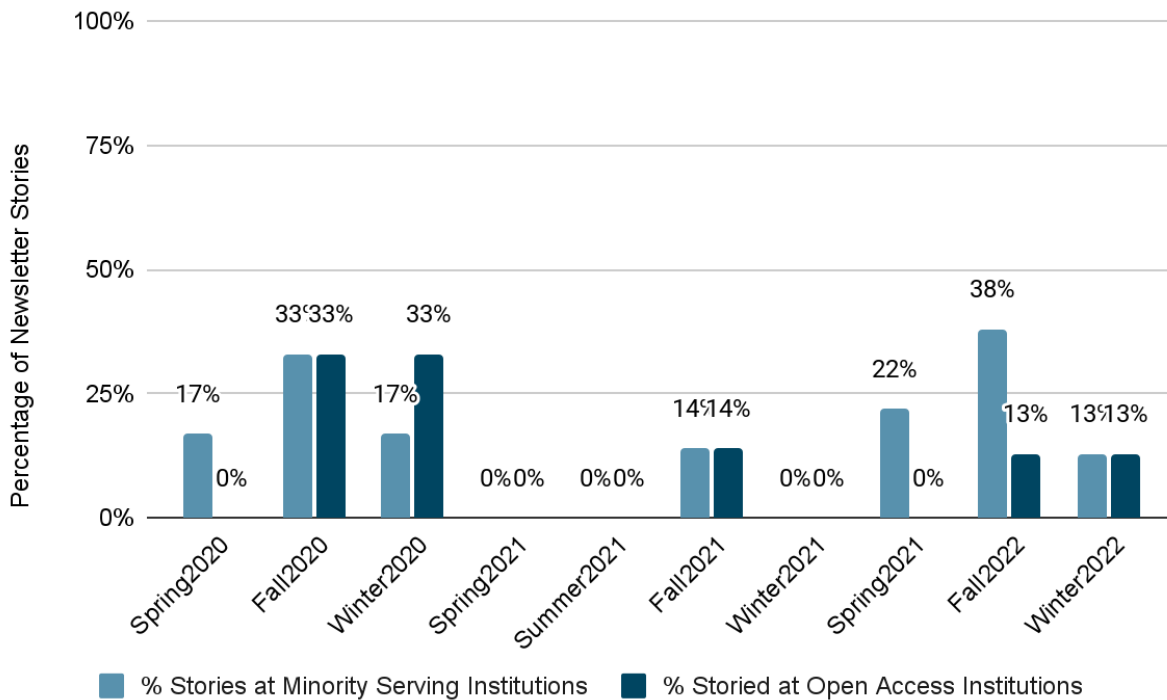
Figure 11. Consistency of Visual Diversity across PBL Newsletter Issues
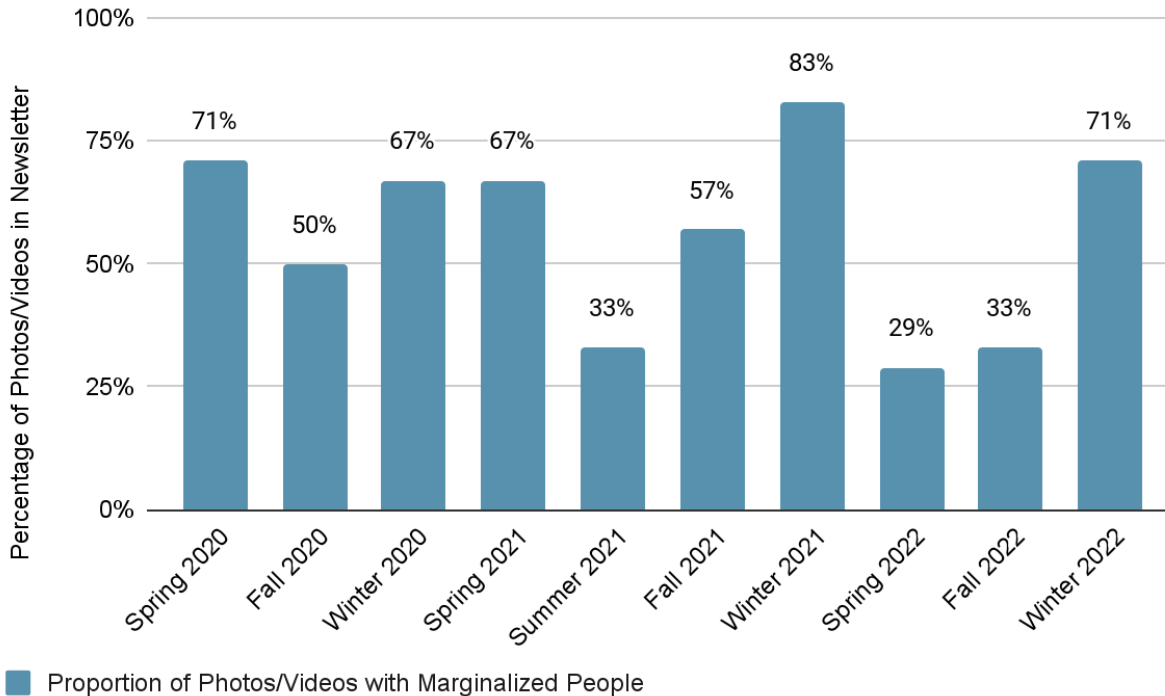
Knowledge Shared in Scholarship on PBL

Scholarship on PBL is a relatively new function of the Center. Three of the eight research briefs written and shared by the Center have focused on PBL as a lever for educational equity.

The Center hosted an American Council on Education Fellow learning about leadership focused on educational equity in Fall 2021. Dr. McLeod is a mathematician with the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. As part of her activities, Dr. McLeod worked with the Center's Director to revise the Center's mission and vision statements to better convey our values and developing understanding of DEI's role in our work. Since completing the portion of her fellowship conducted at WPI, she has continued her relationship with the Center as a workshop facilitator at the PBL Institute and as an advisor for internal capacity development.

During the 2021-2022 academic year, the Center engaged in the second year of an Improving Undergraduate STEM Education grant awarded by the National Science Foundation to build capacity for institutional transformation. The two-year grant includes components focused on broadening the team's understanding of how DEI can be supported through PBL. As part of these grant activities, the Center developed a collaborative theory of action to prepare to propose a large, multiyear initiative focused on institutional transformation advancing PBL practices. The theory of action centers the potential for PBL to increase educational equity and to serve open access institutions particularly well.

Knowledge Shared in Social Media

The Center has a Twitter account, which we use to connect with others also invested in project-based learning and related high-impact practices and pedagogies. Every time we tweet out information, click "like" on content, or retweet something we see, the Center shares knowledge. Perhaps even more importantly, who we follow and the stories they post influences our knowledge within the Center. As an equity audit activity, we assessed who we follow and the extent to which we have tweeted or retweeted content germane to discussions of DEI.

Tweets put new ideas in front of those who have social media accounts. The knowledge currently shared with us through our Twitter is currently fairly narrow. The Center currently follows 155 individuals and organizations on Twitter. Of these, 40% are internal to WPI (down from 48% the year prior).

Approximately one third (36%) of the external influencers in our social media consumption are organizations focused on PBL or higher education more broadly; two thirds (64%) are individuals. Of those external to our university, 15% have a demonstrable marginalized identity (i.e., visible or noted in profile; e.g., they/them pronouns); this may be an underestimate as there are many aspects of marginalized identity that may not readily be visible in the information people share in their profiles. In the same set of external people and organizations followed, 33% note an interest in some aspect of DEI in their profile or through regular topical tweets – up from 20% the year prior.

In terms of the knowledge being shared by the Center on Twitter, we posted 155 tweets during the 2021-2022 academic year and summer of 2022. This is triple the tweets posted during the prior year. Of these, 40% referenced or advocated DEI talks and tools or linked to members of our professional networks with marginalized identities, up from 24% the prior year. These tweet garnered a disproportionately high amount of engagement on Twitter, accounting for 33% of total engagements, which is approximately half the rate of the prior year. The tweet with the greatest engagement from the Center during the year of this audit was tied between the announcement of a new professional development offering (our PBL Collaborative) and sharing the inaugural equity audit.

We have not yet made decisions about whether and how we might continue our presence on the platform given the broader implosion of Academic Twitter. As last year's equity audit revealed, the Center's DEI-focused tweets attracted more attention than content that did not involve DEI issues. Continuing this kind of presence may be an important way to stand as an advocate and ally. However, the shifts in online community might suggest that moving to different platforms would allow us to better maintain that mechanism than remaining on Twitter. We continue to monitor the situation and will need to discuss with our marketing team and advisory board.

Progress on 2021 Action Steps

What practices did we stop, start, or sustain based on the recommendations from last year's inaugural equity audit?

As a result of the analyses presented in last year's inaugural equity audit, members of the Center for Project-Based Learning made a set of recommendations. Progress has been made on some and others have not yet begun to be implemented. Updates are provided here for full transparency color-coded with green action items completed, yellow items in process, and red items not yet taken.

Representational Equity in Staffing

Recommendation: In recruiting a member of AAC&U and/or other higher education leaders to replace Terry Rhodes at the Institute due to his retirement, recruit a scholar with expertise in equity & inclusion.
Progress: We recruited Dr. Dawn Whitehead as a keynote speaker and coach for the 2021-2022 academic year.

Recommendation: Continue to recruit faculty internal to WPI through an annual call for qualifications with a preference for hiring faculty who represent a diversity of PBL experts.
Progress: Recommended action taken.

Recommendation: If internal recruiting is limited in meeting representational benchmarks, consider collaborating with Center alumni who are interested in providing workshops.
Progress: We recruited four new faculty and staff members with marginalized identities as facilitators and coaches at the 2022 Institute and met our benchmark; recommended action not needed this year.

Recommendation: Increase the visibility of underrepresented identities that are difficult to see at the Institute.
Progress: We did not implement a strategy to achieve the recommended action; we have added this to internal checklists for the upcoming Institute.

Inclusive Practices for Staffing Dynamics

Recommendation: Commit to an annual assessment of compensation rates to ensure we continue to offer fair market compensation, particularly for faculty and staff often marginalized by unequal pay.
Progress: Recommended action taken.

Recommendation: Commit to an annual call for qualifications that allows faculty to pitch potential PBL topics they might lead at the Institute and/or workshops.
Progress: Recommended action taken.

Representational Equity in Center Leadership

Recommendation: Add a new mechanism that brings more diverse perspectives and explicit attention to DEI to the leadership of the Center.
Progress: The Board did not meet in 2021-2022 and no new mechanisms introduced.

Collaborating with Minority Serving Institutions and with Open Access Institutions

Recommendation: Conduct focus groups with Center alumni from MSIs and Open Access Institutions who are repeat customers to learn more about what they would like to see more of from the Center.

Progress: We did not complete this action in 2021-2022; we will consider it for future action.

Recommendation: Add content focused on culturally responsive pedagogy in and through PBL and content specific to MSIs and open access institutions, including exemplars, evidence of strategy effectiveness in similar contexts, and potential connections to Center alumni.

Progress: We did not complete this action in 2021-2022; we will consider it for future action.

Recommendation: Develop stronger workshop content and relationships with those with expertise in leading institutional change within community colleges.

Progress: We did not complete this action in 2021-2022, but have begun to make progress in recruiting a leader of institutional change work in the community college sector for the 2023 Institute and have submitted a grant to focus on this work in future.

Recommendation: See recommendation above re: making Institute faculty and participant identities, experiences, and contexts more visible and easier to navigate

Progress: We did not complete this action in 2021-2022; we will consider it for future action.

DEI-focused Professional Development with PWIs

Recommendation: Analyze Institute applications to assess which Predominantly White Institutions were a) motivated by needs to become more responsive to diverse student bodies, and/or b) intended to use the Institute to design courses that leverage PBL to embed DEI into the curriculum.

Progress: We did not complete this action in 2021-2022; we will consider it for future action.

Recommendation: Track data going forward to capture whether Institute teams and workshop clients are engaging in Center professional development to build capacity to use PBL to achieve DEI goals.

Progress: We did not complete this action in 2021-2022; we will consider it for future action.

Knowledge Shared in the Institute and Workshops

Recommendation: Continue to offer a DEI track at the Institute, with better visibility.

Progress: Recommended action taken.

Recommendation: Work with faculty to embed culturally-responsive pedagogy principles, language, and explicit examples in non-DEI-focused workshops at the Institute.

Progress: We did not complete this action in 2021-2022; we will consider it for future action.

Knowledge Shared in the Center's PBL Newsletter

Recommendation: More intentionally curate newsletter content to include a greater, more consistent coverage of DEI-relevant tips, tools, and examples of PBL practice.

Progress: Recommended action in process; stories centering DEI have more consistently increased, though the misalignment between visual representation and content remains.

Knowledge Shared in Social Media

Recommendation: Set a goal for regular tweeting and ensure a high proportion include sharing DEI knowledge.

Progress: Recommended action completed; we tripled tweets this year that centered DEI.

Recommendation: Add all CPBL alumni to those we follow on Twitter to increase viewership and potentially have great impact with knowledge we share through social media.   *Progress: Recommended action completed.*
Recommendation: Compile a list of relevant DEI leaders in higher education and follow them on Twitter.   *Progress: Recommended action in process; a starter list was made and followed and we will continue to add to this list if we stay active on Twitter.*
Equity Audit Process
Recommendation: Engage in equity auditing updates annually.   *Progress: Recommended action taken.*
Recommendation: Conduct qualitative coding of Institute applications and action plans to more deeply gauge the extent and kinds of DEI support institutions are seeking related to advancing PBL practice.   *Progress: We did not complete this action in 2021-2022; we will consider it for future action.*
Recommendation: Obtain funding to conduct research on how PBL is being used to advance culturally-responsive pedagogy and achieve more equitable outcomes for students at alumni colleges and universities.   *Progress: Recommended action in process; we positioned ourselves to be competitive for the next stage of an existing IUSE grant and identified a private funder to apply for funding in 2022-2023.*

Moving Forward: Action Steps

What practices do we commit to stopping, starting, or sustaining to ensure the Center is a force for equitable and inclusive education?

The exercise of conducting an equity audit is not completed with documentation of existing practices; the goal of an equity audit is to spur new thinking and changes to policies and practices. Members of the Center for Project-Based Learning commit to the following:

Representational Equity in Staffing

1. Continue to recruit faculty internal to WPI through an annual call for qualifications with a preference for hiring faculty who represent a diversity of PBL experts, including BIPOC, first gen, women and other underrepresented genders, staff, and other identities often marginalized in higher education.

2. Increase the visibility of underrepresented identities that are difficult to see. At the Institute, note teaching experience and various identities at the beginning of faculty bios and in workshop descriptions. Add optional ribbons for name badges for all participants to facilitate finding others with similar identities, contexts, and experiences.

Inclusive Practices for Staffing Dynamics

3. Continue the annual call for qualifications that allows faculty to pitch potential PBL topics they might lead at the Institute and/or workshops.

Representational Equity in Center Leadership

4. Add a new mechanism that brings more diverse perspectives and explicit attention to DEI to the leadership of the Center. This might involve recruiting at least one new advisory board member who is Black, Latinx, or a person of color, as we did to ensure teaching faculty representation; creating a new DEI advisory board composed of CPBL alumni at MSIs, open access institutions, and those who are committed to DEI; working with existing advisory board members to support a "roving DEI delegate" position tasked with entering each discussion with DEI advocacy as an explicit objective.

Collaborating with Minority Serving Institutions and with Open Access Institutions

5. Conduct focus groups with Center alumni from MSIs and Open Access Institutions who are repeat customers to learn more about what they would like to see more of from the Center.

6. Add content focused on culturally responsive pedagogy in and through PBL and content specific to MSIs and open access institutions, including exemplars, evidence of strategy effectiveness in similar contexts, and potential connections to Center alumni.

7. Develop stronger workshop content and relationships with those with expertise in leading institutional change within community colleges.

Knowledge Shared in the Institute and Workshops
8. Continue to offer a DEI track at the Institute.

9. Work with faculty to embed culturally responsive pedagogy principles, language, and explicit examples in non-DEI-focused workshops at the Institute.

Knowledge Shared in the Center's PBL Newsletter
10. More intentionally curate newsletter content to include a greater, more consistent coverage of DEI-relevant tips, tools, and examples of PBL practice.

Knowledge Shared in Social Media
11. Make a decision about whether Twitter remains a viable social media platform for engaging in public discourse on justice, equity, and transformation.

12. Continue to follow CPBL alumni on social media.

13. Compile a list of relevant DEI leaders in higher education and follow them on social media.

Equity Audit Processes
14. Continue to engage in equity auditing updates annually.

15. Conduct qualitative coding of Institute applications and action plans to more deeply gauge the extent and kinds of DEI support institutions are seeking related to advancing PBL practice.

16. Obtain funding to conduct research on how PBL is being used to advance culturally responsive pedagogy and achieve more equitable outcomes for students at alumni colleges and universities.