The Underground Railroad: Pathways, Leadership & the Role of Equity

The Pathways Project
American Association of Community Colleges
February 4, 2017

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Lillian and Norris
Common factors that advanced mobility for Lillian and Norris

- Personal drive
- Launching-pad institutions that developed confidence and skill
- Family, educators, and mentors with a commitment to equity
- An economy that generated opportunity for educated people
What factors prevented better odds for Lillian & Norris’s peers?

- Lack of commitment to racial justice and equity
- A weak Infrastructure of Opportunity
- Public policy that made advancement selective—not universal

What factors would you add?
Your Family’s Mobility Story

• When was a commitment to equity apparent in the design or execution of the pathway your forbearers travelled?

• When was a commitment to equity lacking?

• Where did mobility depend on personal heroism without the support of others?
The American Dream is broken

The chance a child raised in the bottom fifth rose to the top fifth

- 20.6% - 35.7%
- 14.1% - 20.5%
- 9.9% - 14%
- 6.5% - 9.8%
- 0% - 6.4%
- Not Available

The top fifth is equal to family income of more than $70,000 for the child by age 30, or more than $100,000 by age 45.

Source: Equality of Opportunity Project
Vigilant attention to equity is needed to ensure persistence along guided pathways.

- In what aspects of your college’s **systems, practice, and culture** will attention to equity be particularly necessary as you implement?

- What does this mean for your leadership?
Heroism is *not* a solution to persistence.

Attention to equity in design & execution *is*
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