



# North Idaho College

Set Your GPS to Student Success: Promoting Positivity Through Micromessaging

*“This experience has been truly transformational. Leadership is not only supporting our efforts but conversations are shifting across campus about what equity should look like in our teaching practice(s). We are taking steps and striving to become a community college with inclusive excellence as a top priority.”*

*-Dr. Lizabeth Zenker, Anatomy & Physiology Assistant Professor, North Idaho College*

## Exploring Ways to Increase Self-Efficacy

After attending the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE) Micromessaging to Reach and Teach Every Student™ professional development program, the idea of exploring the mindset of students and increasing student self-efficacy became a focus for the equity team at North Idaho College.

### Self-Efficacy Survey

The North Idaho College (NIC) Action Research for Equity Team developed a 3 question self-efficacy survey to understand the mindset of students.

- How confident are you that you will succeed in this course?
- Are you comfortable making mistakes and learning from them?
- Do you take on challenges and believe that effort and persistence can lead to success?

The survey was disseminated digitally to students at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester. There were 191 total recorded student responses. In year one, the team was surprised to learn that student self-efficacy was higher than initially predicted. In year two, the survey has been reworked and the team will be reviewing and reflecting on the data and studying best practices for increasing student self-efficacy in Healthcare, STEM, Trades and Industry, and Business related fields.

## Beginning the Journey to ‘Interrupt’ the Cycle of Inequity

The National Alliance for Partnership in Equity (NAPE) Education Foundation EE-STEM II grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) supported the engagement of community college teams to participate in the year-long Micromessaging to Reach and Teach Every Student™ professional development program. A team at North Idaho College (NIC) participated and launched an Action Research for Equity Project in fall 2018. The project was planned as a three-year venture with an overarching goal of supporting educators in a renovation of their practice, thus resulting in an increase of student numbers in gender-based nontraditional career pathways. The primary focus for year one was to begin to

‘interrupt’ the cycle of micromessages. Activities to support this goal included: identification of low enrollment and/or high attrition rate courses in gender-based nontraditional programs; implementation of a self-efficacy student survey; partnership with the Communication and Marketing Department at NIC to create “Positivity Postcards”; as well as the selection and training of 10 faculty members (through Division Chair recommendations) whom provided education and support for students in the targeted focus fields of Healthcare, STEM, Manufacturing/Trades, and Business Administration & Management. The result because a transforming experience that is changing the college’s culture.

## Bringing the Team Together

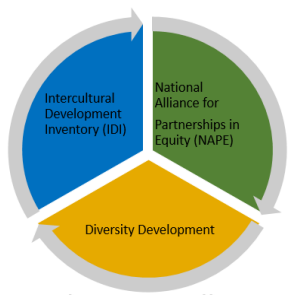
### Dean of Nursing and Health Professions at North Idaho College Assembled the Team

The Dean, Christy Doyle, was strategic in whom she selected to attend the NAPE Education Foundation: Educators’ Equity in STEM (EESTEM) II professional development. She made a call for faculty in areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, and the Center for New Directions who provides support services for gender nontraditional students and other underrepresented student populations at NIC. Having never met before, this team of four (‘core four’), joined together for the goal of creating a more equitable and inclusive experience for students at NIC.



Left to right: Dr. Lizabeth Zenker, Anatomy & Physiology Assistant Professor, Kirsten Blachette, Chemistry Associate Professor, Kathy Albin, Student Success Navigator, Center for New Directions, and Karen Thurston, Computer Science Assistant Professor.

# Campus Impact at North Idaho College



## Inclusive Excellence

Throughout the nine month journey, the 'core four' that attended Micromessaging to Reach and Teach Every Student™ training were also preparing to present their project showcase to both NAPE and NIC Leadership. In April of 2019, Kathy Albin, a member of the 'core four' had an additional opportunity to attend an intensive one week training in Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) held in Portland, Oregon. IDI is a cross-cultural assessment for building cultural competence. Kathy shared what she had learned with the other members of the NAPE team. They then identified a natural seamless connection between the current

## How is North Idaho College Leadership Responding?

The North Idaho College Action Research for Equity Team Presented their capstone project in May 2019 to NAPE and NIC Leadership.

NAPE project, IDI, and good work already happening across the NIC campus in ways of diversity development. A graphic (shown in upper left) illustrating how this relationship between the three could be catalyst to an *Inclusive Excellence* initiative was developed and shared. The team made a proposal at the end of the capstone asking leadership to support the purchase of NAPE's toolkits as well as 50+ IDI assessments to begin the formal process of assessing individuals and groups across campus in terms of cultural competence. The team would then support individuals, or groups of individuals, in training using NAPE's 'Culture Wheel' as an

educational framework for further cultural competence training. Added positive opportunities continued to arise from the "Set Your GPS to Student Success: Promoting Positivity Through Micromessaging" project. The Adult Education Center at NIC invited the team to deliver professional development to faculty and staff members throughout the five northern counties of Idaho. The project was also shared at the Idaho State CTE REACH Conference in August where a team from Idaho State University (ISU) is currently duplicating the project on their campus. The excitement generated is definitely making change.

## Word is Spreading Star Trek Parody

After presenting the culminating capstone project to NIC Leadership, the team was asked to find a creative way to share the work that the NAPE Action Research Team had been engaged in over the course of the year to the greater campus community during the All Faculty gathering in August 2019. The team wrote and starred in a Star Trek parody describing the development of the Positivity Postcards, Self-Efficacy survey, and short presentations (5 minutes videos and skits) that will be used to train and spark further conversation in the areas of equity and inclusion at North Idaho College.



## Growth Mindset Bulletin Boards

Along the journey the NIC Team also piloted a bulletin board series in hopes that students waiting for class or studying would see the messages of topics that included growth mindset, self-efficacy, and micromessages—knowing that a little positivity can effect change.



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## Positivity Postcards

Originally developed to inspire an interest and connection to STEM careers, "Kudos Cards," designed by Dr. Meagan Pollock, for NAPE was something the Action Research for Equity Team at NIC wanted to explore further. The team felt this idea would be a great tool in helping promote strong student self-efficacy in content areas across campus. The NIC team decided to refer the spin-offs as "Positivity Postcards." In partnership with the Communications and Marketing staff, the team rebranded the cards to reflect an NIC flavor as well as provide messages and quotes that were meaningful to the current student population. The "Positivity Postcards" were also designed to be distributed digitally and sized appropriately to send via USPS, if desired by faculty or staff. The goal of the "Positivity Postcards" was to provide students with 'wise feedback,' a specific feedback technique that praises process over ability, implies confidence of goal completion, and encourages self-efficacy. The cards were written by faculty and staff and distributed to students in A & P, Chemistry, Human Biology, Computer Science, Computer Information Technology Education, Workforce Training, and students in the Adult Education Center.

Student response after receiving a "You Persevered" Positivity Postcard:

*"I just wanted to thank you for taking the time to write to me—it meant more than I can say. I've often thought about how, as hard as this is for me, that it's good for me to have to truly struggle to earn what I achieve in this class."*

