The Ethic of Love

A Mixed-Methods Analysis of How Umoja Supports Its Students' Academic and Life Success

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Project Overview

In response to the educational equity gaps for students of African descent on California Community College campuses, the Umoja Community Education Foundation (Umoja Community) seeks "to transform, enrich and advance the lives of students by infusing culturally-relevant pedagogy and practices" (Umoja Community website).[1] With a focus on providing students of African descent a safe and conscious space, mentorship, guidance, and support, the Umoja Community offers and supports a network of Umoja programs to offer culturally-based and focused classes, assignments, and readings, as well as African-themed rituals and workshops to prepare students for educational and professional success.

The Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges (RP Group)[2] was funded by the Umoja Community Education Foundation[3] **to conduct a two-phase evaluation** to explore the program landscape, determine the effectiveness of support that the Umoja Community offered to the Umoja program coordinators, and highlight the experiences and academic outcomes for Umoja students. The Phase I evaluation involved interviews with individual program coordinators at 10 colleges to learn more about their program designs, successes and challenges, and perceptions of and recommendations for strengthening statewide capacity-building support and resources offered by the Umoja Community. Findings from this report can be accessed here.[4]

Building on the first phase of the evaluation, this report summarizes the results from Phase II of the study, which included quantitative and qualitative research **designed to explore the impact of Umoja programs on students**.

Methodology

The RP Group pursued a mixed-methods approach to understand Umoja participants' experiences in the program and determine if there are differential impacts on students' academic outcomes depending on whether or not they participated in Umoja. Statistical analyses of Umoja students' academic outcomes compared to a matched group of peers attending the same college were completed and this information was coupled with findings from student focus groups and a rating sheet where students shared which Guided Pathways and Umoja program elements or practices students would like to see integrated into their overall college experience. The methodology used for each is described below.

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[1] https://umojacommunity.org/mission-and-vision-statements
[2] https://rpgroup.org
[3] https://umojacommunity.org
[4] http://bit.ly/umojaCommunity

Quantitative Research Design

To better understand and determine the impacts of Umoja program participation on students' academic achievement, a statistical analysis using a quasi-experimental design was conducted to compare the academic outcomes of a cohort of Umoja students to a statistically-equivalent group of their peers. Students who were selected for this analysis were African-American students who were first enrolled in a California Community College between summer 2010 and fall 2014. Participation in Umoja was flagged by a variable in the file that colleges used to self-report Umoja participation. The following academic progress and completion outcomes were included in the comparative analysis:

1. **Academic achievements in the first year**

    a. Units attempted overall

    b. Units earned (with a letter grade of D or better) overall

    c. Overall course success rate

    d. Cumulative grade point average (GPA)

2. **Fall-to-fall persistence (subsequent enrollment in the following year)**

3. **Completion of transfer-level English and math courses within one year and within three years (throughput rates)**

    a. Transfer-level English only

    b. Transfer-level math only

    c. Transfer-level math and English

4. **Award completion within four years**

    a. Attainment of any Chancellor's Office-approved certificate or degree

    b. Attainment of a Chancellor's Office-approved certificate

    c. Attainment of an associate degree

    d. Attainment of an associate degree for transfer

5. **Transfer within four years**

   a. Transfer-ready status[5]

   b. Transfer to a four-year institution

Qualitative Research Design

The RP Group, in partnership with Umoja Community leadership, developed a focus group protocol to gather Umoja program students' assessment of, use of, and feedback on various services, supports, and resources and how they align with the Guided Pathways framework. The purpose of these conversations was to explore how students perceived the supports, services, and resources that were provided and whether and how various Umoja program and Guided Pathways components could help students clarify, select, enter, and stay on a path, while ensuring their learning. Participants attended seven of the 10 colleges that participated in the Phase I evaluation research.

Evaluation Findings

The key findings from the quantitative and qualitative research are highlighted below.

Quantitative Research Findings

Comparative analyses found positive academic outcomes for first-time students between summer 2010 and fall 2014 who participated in Umoja (*N* = 1,466) relative to their peers who did not participate in Umoja (*N* = 56,316). The analysis revealed statistically significant differences in academic outcomes for Umoja students relative to their peers who did not participate in Umoja and these results are listed in detail below.

FIRST ACADEMIC YEAR ACHIEVEMENTS

- On average, **Umoja students attempted and earned more units in their first academic year** than their peers (2.5 more units attempted, and 2.8 more units earned).

- **Umoja students successfully completed their first-year coursework at higher rates** than non-Umoja students (55.3% vs. 51.9% respectively).

FALL-TO-FALL PERSISTENCE

- **Umoja students persisted to the subsequent year at higher rates** than their peers (93.7% vs. 79.1%).

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[5] The completion of 60 transferable units with at least a 2.0 GPA and successful completion of any transfer-level English *and* any transfer-level math course by earning grades of A, B, C, P, or CR

- **Umoja students outperformed non-Umoja students in the completion of transfer-level English within <u>one</u> year** of first enrollment (24.5% vs. 11.8%)—**a gap that widens after <u>three</u> years** (50.3% vs. 26.0%).

- **Umoja students have a lead over non-Umoja students in the completion of transfer-level math within <u>three</u> years** (17.9% vs. 10.3%).

- **When examining the completion of both transfer-level math and English, Umoja students had higher <u>three-year</u> throughput rates than their peers** (15.7% vs. 8.6%).

AWARD COMPLETION

- **A higher proportion of Umoja students earned any Chancellor's Office-approved award** within four years than non-Umoja students (12.3% vs. 6.7%).

- **A greater proportion of Umoja versus non-Umoja students earned a degree** than non-Umoja students within four years of first enrollment (10.0% vs. 4.9).

- **A larger share of Umoja students earned an ADT** within four years compared to their non-Umoja peers (3.1% vs. 0.9%).

TRANSFER

- **A greater proportion of Umoja students became transfer ready than their peers** (16.1% vs. 7.6%).

The indicators where the differences between Umoja and non-Umoja students were not statistically significant were cumulative GPA in the first year, math throughput rates within one year, math and English throughput rates within one year, completion of a credit certificate within four years, and transfer to a university within four years.

Qualitative Research Findings

UMOJA SUPPORTS, SERVICES, AND RESOURCES

The 79 focus group participants **learned about the Umoja program from many different sources,** including counselors, classes, and presentations about the program at their high schools; counselors and faculty at the college itself; and family and friends who had a connection to or who were aware of Umoja. When asked why they chose to apply to the program, focus group participants pointed to the need for a sense of community, additional academic and emotional support, and a desire to learn more about themselves and their history.

The Umoja program offered students resources to clarify and support them along their academic and personal journeys. Students spoke of the personal connections and bonds they

had formed as critical to their success. In addition to personal and support bonds, **participants shared specific ways the program had sparked their motivation and focus, nurtured their personal growth, and boosted their academic success** by ensuring supportive relationships with faculty, staff, and students, as well as offering clarity, motivation, and support in the pursuit to realize their long-term goals and personal growth.

UMOJA VS. NON-UMOJA COURSES

When discussing the differences between Umoja and non-Umoja sponsored courses, students reported that **Umoja faculty shared more of themselves and worked to build relationships with students. Faculty also created a space, designed curriculum, and developed assignments that resonated with students' personal life and long-term goals**. Common themes for students included how the program faculty engaged them in their learning, promoted connections with and among students, and offered strategies and skills to ensure students stayed on and advanced along their educational paths.

UMOJA AND GUIDED PATHWAYS

To help them clarify, enter, and stay on a path, and to ensure their learning—the four Guided Pathway framework pillars—**students tended to rank many of the Umoja program components that align with Guided Pathways as important to their success**. As for clarifying a path, an outline of courses to take and when they could expect to earn a degree, certificate, and/or transfer—a mandatory Umoja component—was identified by students as most important. In terms of helping students choose and enter a path, culturally-competent academic support that addresses real-world issues to help students pass required courses again—a core element of the Umoja program—was rated highest by students. Ongoing, intrusive advising and follow-up by a counselor, such as the dedicated Umoja counselors, were critical to helping students stay on a path. Learning could be ensured by providing applied (hands-on), culturally-relevant learning experiences.

Recommendations

Based on the key findings, below are the recommendations that Umoja students from the focus groups offered to the Umoja Foundation for improving and enhancing the program across all colleges.

Recommendation 1: Expand and broaden the marketing of the Umoja program to increase participation in and awareness of the program. Students suggested having current Umoja students engage in outreach to the feeder high schools and to students already attending the college.

Recommendation 2: Enhance the Umoja curriculum by offering more hands-on experiences. Students wanted increased opportunities for internships related to their fields of study, and a larger variety of workshops (e.g., study habits, scholarships) and events.

Recommendation 3: Expand Umoja courses offering types. Students expressed a particular desire for more science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) courses to be offered through the program. They also wish that Umoja courses would be offered throughout students' educational journeys, not just during the first or second semesters.

Recommendation 4: Deploy more integrated and just-in-time resources. Students suggested the need for a system that provides regular student check-ins and dispatches resources when students experience personal, physical, or mental health issues. Students also shared that it would be helpful if Umoja programs connected students with options for flexible employment in the area and affordable on-site daycare options.

Recommendation 5: Deploy more resources to the "Village." Students described the need for a larger space that includes conveniences such as a cubby area for backpack storage, better Wi-Fi service, cell phone chargers, and more welcoming signage.

Recommendation 6: Strengthen career guidance resources and support. Students expressed the desire to be matched with mentors who had similar academic and career interests and goals. Students also indicated the need for more information and resources related to choosing a major and how different majors align with various careers. Finally, students felt that Umoja counselors may need additional training that would help them provide advice to students about a wider variety of majors and more easily identify which majors are best aligned to students' career goals and available employment opportunities.

Recommendation 7: Recruit more faculty and staff of color to serve as counselors and instructors in Umoja programs. Students stressed the desire to see more people of color counseling and teaching in the program.

Conclusion

Overall, students who participated in Umoja outperformed their non-Umoja peers on a number of academic outcomes. Umoja participation appeared to positively affect students' performance on several first-year outcomes (leading indicators of success such as unit attainment, persistence, and transfer-level English completion), as well as certain long-term outcomes (lagging indicators of success such as three-year math and English completion, transfer-readiness, and degree completion). However, it is still important to note that no differences were found between Umoja students and their non-Umoja peers in other outcomes such as first-year cumulative GPA and transfer to a university. In addition, it must be recognized that the numbers and rates are still relatively low for both Umoja students and their peers in comparison to other ethnic groups. For example, for both groups, first-year cumulative GPAs are below 2.0, and overall course success rates are below 60%.

These positive results provide evidence for the program's effectiveness in supporting African American/Black students' success. Moreover, **many of the outcomes included in the study are measures now used in determining funding to the institutions ([Student-Centered Funding Formula](#)),[6] equity planning ([Student Equity and Achievement Program](#)),[7] and developmental education reforms ([Assembly Bill 705](#)).[8]** In helping to improve outcomes for African American/Black students, Umoja programs are well-positioned to advocate for being involved in their colleges' planning and redesign efforts to address funding and equity. The benefits and importance of participating in the Umoja program—the sense of community, the intrusive and personalized counseling and guidance, and culturally-relevant coursework—as reported by students during the focus groups appear to be supported by the academic outcomes.

Given the shared components between Umoja and Guided Pathways, Umoja programs are an exemplification of Guided Pathways and can be an effective strategy to help close equity gaps. Many of the effective components Umoja students shared can and would likely benefit all students, especially in the classroom through culturally-relevant pedagogy and training of faculty and staff to address the affective domains of learning.

As colleges work to design and implement the Guided Pathways framework, the sense of belonging, the culturally-humble and sensitive coursework and support, and peer-to-peer community building are elements that should be considered. **A true student-centered approach demonstrates a college's commitment to showing students that they matter, they are capable, they are worthy, and they are deserving of success. In other words, that they are loved.**

Future Considerations and Research

The challenges encountered in accurately and completely identifying Umoja students across the state point to the need for improvements to data collection and reporting for the program. It is **incumbent upon the Umoja Community Foundation to ensure program coordinators, whether new or veteran, are fully trained on the data reporting requirements and know where to get support.** Most important is that they understand how the accuracy and completeness of the data they submit, or the lack thereof, affect the validity of studies like this one aimed at demonstrating the impact of the Umoja program on its students.

As is typically the case, results from this study raise additional questions that are worth researching. Future research is needed to examine the linkages between specific program components and student outcomes. A **deep dive at the college level would help identify which program elements are having the greatest impact on student success**. In addition, it will be important to conduct **research that examines the impact of Umoja program participation on**

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[6] http://bit.ly/ccc-scff
[7] http://bit.ly/ccc-se
[8] https://assessment.cccco.edu/ab-705-implementation

closing equity gaps. As reported, although Umoja students outperformed their peers across several leading and lagging indicators, no differences were found in terms of first-year cumulative GPA and transfer to a university. Therefore, **more research is needed to unpack and understand why Umoja students are not transferring at a greater rate, and why their first-year GPAs are not significantly higher than that of non-Umoja students**, despite having higher persistence rates and slightly higher course success rates. In addition, an examination of employment and wage outcomes for Umoja students and their peers could shed some light on why students may not be transferring, and help **determine how participation in Umoja may influence students' employment and wages**.

Given the finding that the gap between Umoja and non-Umoja students in terms of English and math throughput widened over time, with Umoja students being much more likely to complete transfer-level English and/or math after three years than their peers, it will be important to **re-examine academic outcomes post-AB705[9] implementation to determine any impacts on Umoja students**. Finally, in order to gain a deeper understanding of Umoja students entire educational journey at the college, **a longitudinal cohort analysis is needed where students are followed over a six-year period**, and perhaps beyond, to examine not just first-year and completion outcomes like degrees and transfer, but those milestones that occur in between (i.e., years two through five) that affect students' academic success, such as completing 30 units and second-year GPA, and possibly longer-term outcomes, such as earning the baccalaureate degree.

Although not explicitly linked, **what students shared about their participation in Umoja has parallels to the RP Group's Student Support (Re)defined framework,[10]** in terms of helping students experience each of the six success factors (directed, focused, engaged, nurtured, connected, and valued). Given that a direct connection was not originally included in the design of this study, **future research could examine how the Umoja program fosters these six success factors and the relationship to students' academic success.**

Finally, **one group not included in this study is the faculty teaching in the program. Future research could look at their experiences**, including the how the training they received and their experiences teaching in the program may have affected their overall approach to teaching and how they may be applying this approach in the non-Umoja courses they teach.

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[9] https://assessment.cccco.edu/ab-705-implementation
[10] https://rpgroup.org/student-support

Introduction

Overview of the Umoja Program

The Umoja Community Education Foundation (Umoja Community) is **"a community and critical resource dedicated to enhancing the cultural and educational experiences of African American and other students"** (Umoja Community website).[11] In 2006, when an effort to affiliate these programs as part of a statewide Umoja Community, nearly 20 programs for students of African descent existed. In response to the educational equity gaps for students of African descent, now over 60 Umoja programs seek **"to transform, enrich and advance the lives of students by infusing culturally-relevant pedagogy and practices"** (Umoja Community website).[12] See the textbox to the right for a summary of the statewide Umoja Community.

The Research Study

In 2018, the Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges (RP Group) was funded by the Umoja Community Education Foundation **to conduct a two-phase evaluation** that focused on: (1) understanding the Umoja landscape and the effectiveness of support to local programs, and (2) exploring students' experiences and examining the academic impacts of Umoja participation. To accomplish this goal, the RP Group partnered with the Umoja Community to design and **implement a mixed-methods research study**, gathering both qualitative and quantitative data to investigate the effectiveness of capacity-building activities for program coordinators, understand how programs tracked student and program outcomes, and analyze the impact of Umoja on students participating in the program.

The initial phase of this evaluation focused on understanding the statewide Umoja program landscape and the effectiveness of Umoja

Umoja: A Snaphot

Built on 18 foundational Umoja practices to guide and frame key programming, pedagogy, and curriculum, the Umoja Community focuses on providing students of African descent a safe and conscious space, mentorship, guidance, and support. Umoja also offers and supports culturally-based and focused classes, assignments, and readings, as well as African-themed rituals and workshops to prepare its community members for educational and professional success.

Currently, over 60 Umoja programs across the state are funded by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. These programs are often structured as one- or two-year learning communities with Umoja-led or supported coursework, most commonly in English, math, and counseling. After completing Umoja coursework, students are often still considered part of Umoja until graduation or transfer, and they have continuous access to a variety of wraparound services and benefits, such as priority registration, tutoring, a "Village" space, workshops, and university tours.

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[11] https://umojacommunity.org/mission-and-vision-statements
[12] https://umojacommunity.org/mission-and-vision-statements

Community support to local programs. Interviews were conducted with 10 California Community College (CCC) Umoja program coordinators to (1) evaluate their experiences with the statewide support and resources, and (2) understand how Umoja participants are tracked and monitored locally. These interviews with the Umoja program coordinators assessed the **effectiveness of Umoja Community capacity-building supports and resources provided**, lifting up common themes and recommendations to inform the Umoja Community leadership's efforts to provide the training, support, and resources for coordinators to sustain, strengthen, and grow their programs (Purnell-Mack, 2018).[13]

This second phase of the evaluation expands the initial research by (1) understanding whether the program is bolstering "the retention and success of… students as well as stimulating their progress to transfer ready status" ([Umoja Community website](#)),[14] and (2) capturing students' perspectives and experiences regarding the effectiveness of Umoja services, supports, and resources. This current report offers **a comparative analysis of academic outcomes** for Umoja students against those of a statistically matched group of peers. It further **summarizes seven focus groups** conducted at Antelope Valley, Bakersfield, Diablo Valley, El Camino, Los Medanos, Moreno Valley, and Southwestern Colleges **to gather students' input and feedback on program structure and practices**, highlighting common themes and suggestions offered to identify promising practices that can inform Umoja and Guided Pathways implementation.

In This Report

The first section of the report provides an overview of the research, including the methodology of both the quantitative analyses and qualitative research (i.e., focus groups) that were conducted. The subsequent section highlights the key themes that emerged from the quantitative and qualitative findings, and the following section offers a set of recommendations based on these key themes. The report concludes with additional insights to strengthen Umoja and Guided Pathways design and implementation, and future considerations and research for the program.

Methodology

This section provides a detailed description of the methodology employed to conduct the comparative outcomes analyses and focus groups with Umoja students.

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[13] Purnell-Mack, R. (2018.) *Umoja Community Insights and Feedback from Program Coordinators on Available Supports and Resources*. San Rafael: Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges.
[14] https://umojacommunity.org/mission-and-vision-statements

Comparative Academic Outcomes Analyses (Quantitative)

The quantitative research consisted of an in-depth analysis of Umoja participants' educational outcomes and a comparison of those outcomes to a demographically similar group of students who did not enroll in Umoja. Demographics such as age, gender, and whether the student ever received financial aid at the college were used to find comparable students to the Umoja participants. Student-level administrative data were obtained from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information System (COMIS) for all African-American students who were enrolled in any CCC between summer 2010 and fall 2014. Umoja students were identified using the flag in the COMIS data element SG08, where students who had been flagged at any time between summer 2010 and fall 2014 were included in the Umoja student group.[15] The analysis compared five types of academic outcomes for Umoja students (N = 1,466) and their matched peers (N = 56,316)[16] who were enrolled during the same timeframe at the same colleges in order to explore the academic impact of participating in Umoja for similar student populations.

The five academic outcomes (and related sub-analyses) that were compared between Umoja and non-Umoja students were:

1. ***Academic achievements in the first year[17]***

    a. **Units attempted in first academic year:** The total number of units attempted by each student in their first academic year as a community college student.

    b. **Units earned in first academic year:** The total number of units earned[18] by each student in their first academic year.

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[15] Students from colleges without a Umoja program were excluded from analysis. Umoja students were identified using the flag in the COMIS data element SG08. Before beginning the analysis, an alternative method of identifying Umoja students was considered. Rather than use SG08 to identify Umoja students, African-American students enrolled in course sections associated with Umoja programs were flagged as Umoja participants. Coordinators from 22 colleges provided course section information to explore the feasibility and practicality of using course information to flag Umoja students. However, usable data were only available from 17 colleges and included 83 course sections (see Appendix A). Using Umoja course sections as a way to identify Umoja students yielded 323 first-time students in summer/fall 2014 (268 of the 323 students were identified by SG08 as Umoja participants)—and drastically fewer in earlier summer/fall terms. Considering the limited scope of the sampling frame (course sections from 17 colleges), analysis proceeded using the COMIS SG08 flag.

[16] To identify a statistically-equivalent comparison group to Umoja students, the RP Group employed propensity score matching. Specific student characteristics were used to match students and were selected based on their availability for analysis, completeness, and plausible connection to students' academic achievement. See Appendix B for a list of the conditioning variables used in this analysis and descriptive statistics for each variable.

[17] Year is defined as leading summer, fall, winter, and spring terms

[18] Courses completed with letter grades A, B, C, D, or P

c. **Course success rate in first academic year:** The percentage of courses taken in each student's first academic year in which a letter grade of C or higher (or P) was earned.

d. **Cumulative grade point average in the first academic year:** The cumulative grade point average in each students' first academic year.

2. *Fall-to-fall persistence:* A first-time student in summer/fall who subsequently enrolled in any term in the following academic year.

3. *Completion of transfer-level English and/or math courses*: Students who completed transfer-level English and/or math courses within one year and within three years of enrollment (i.e., one-year throughput and three-year throughput)

   a. **Transfer-level English only**

   b. **Transfer-level math only**

   c. **Transfer-level English and math**

4. *Award attainment within four years*

   a. **Earned a credit award within four years**: The conferment of any Chancellor's Office-approved credit certificate or degree:

   b. **Earned a Chancellor's Office approved certificate within four years:** The conferment of any Chancellor's Office-approved credit certificates

   c. **Earned any degree within four years**: The conferment of an associate of arts (AA) degree or associate of science (AS) degree, including the associate degree for transfer (ADT).

   d. **Earned an associate degree for transfer within four years**: The conferment of an associate degree for transfer (ADT).

5. *Transfer within four years*

   a. **Attained transfer-ready status within four years:** The completion of 60 transferable units with at least a 2.0 GPA and successful completion of any transfer-level English *and* any transfer-level math course by earning grades of A, B, C, P, or CR within four years.

   b. **Transferred to a four-year institution within four years:** Enrollment at any other institution of higher education (except another California Commuity College) after first enrolling in a CCC and subsequently having no further enrollment at a CCC within four years of first enrollment at the CCC.

Umoja Student Focus Groups (Qualitative)

Recruitment and Participant Demographics

The Umoja program coordinators at each of the participating colleges recruited participants for the focus group. To encourage participation, students were provided an incentive in the form of a $20 gift card. **Nearly 80 students at seven colleges volunteered**—30 males and 49 females. They reported a variety of majors in liberal arts, business, social work, industrial design, nursing, and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). Students' **involvement in the program ranged from one to 12 semesters,** with most students joining the program during their first semester at the college. **Nearly all of the students planned to transfer** to a college or university, and a few were considering pursuing graduate degrees. Table 1 summarizes key student characteristics by college site.

Table 1. Umoja Focus Group Participant Characteristics

College	# of Participants	% Male	% Female	Number of Semesters in Program (Range)
Antelope Valley	10	40%	60%	2-6 semesters
Bakersfield	10	30%	70%	1-8 semesters
Diablo Valley	6	50%	50%	1-8 semesters
El Camino	10	50%	50%	2-12 semesters
Los Medanos	13	31%	69%	2-8 semesters
Moreno Valley	10	30%	70%	1-5 semesters
Southwestern	20	40%	60%	1-8 semesters
Total	**79**	**38%**	**62%**	**1-12 semesters**

Focus Group Protocol and Analysis

The focus group session (see Appendix C for focus group protocol) was scheduled for 90 minutes and included approximately 16 open-ended, discussion-oriented questions, as well as a rating sheet for students to complete. Each group was audio recorded for transcription, coding, and analysis by the RP Group. The protocol to frame and guide these discussions was developed by the RP Group with input from the Umoja Community Education Foundation Board and Transition Manager. The protocol questions provided students with opportunities to share their perceptions and experiences as participants in the Umoja program, with a focus on the importance of key elements in Umoja that align with the Guided Pathways framework.

The rating sheet was designed to determine **which Guided Pathways and Umoja program elements or practices students would like to see integrated into their overall college experience**. For each pillar of the Guided Pathways framework—clarifying the path, entering a path, staying on a path, and ensuring learning—students ranked the importance of three pre-identified components commonly offered by the Umoja program. For the program component that students marked with a "1," they were asked to explain why this aspect received their top ranking.

After an initial content analysis of the common and key themes across the seven focus groups, a secondary analysis was conducted to determine whether and how the students' experiences in the program spoke to the Umoja practices[19] (see Appendix D) that underpin the programs' strategies, approach, and activities.

Research Limitations

Quantitative Research

A few limitations of this research should be noted. First, although Umoja and non-Umoja groups were sufficiently balanced across the covariates included in this study, it is important to remember that matching was completed using a limited set of student characteristics (see Appendix B). It is possible that results may differ with the inclusion of additional student characteristics, such as college preparation experience. Diagnostic testing of the models run to produce average treatment effects on the treated (ATET) suggest the treatment assignment mechanism is likely not independent of the outcomes.[20] That is, propensity score matching on the variables included did not likely produce a perfectly exchangeable comparison group.

Second, the first-time student indicator variable present in the data received by the Chancellor's Office may not be fully reliable. Some students flagged as first-time students had enrollment records in terms prior to their first-time status, while other students flagged as first-time students completed larger number of units in their first term as a community college student (30 units or more, often completed at a secondary community college). Although attempts were made to omit students with records that suggested enrollment prior to the term in which they supposedly first enrolled at a community college, it is possible that some students continued in the data set as first-time students in multiple terms.

Finally, in earlier years after the Umoja flag was added to the COMIS database, program coordinators were not instructed that they needed to flag students in every term in which the student is enrolled. As a result, some coordinators only flagged students in their first term in the program and not in subsequent terms. The consequence is a likely underreporting of students participating in the program in several terms. This issue has since been addressed; however, it is possible that there are Umoja students who were enrolled during the timeframe of this study but had been flagged in an earlier term and therefore were not included.

Qualitative Research

Analysis of the focus group conversations aims to provide administrators, faculty, and staff with direct feedback from students regarding their Umoja program experiences. The perspectives of these students can be used to inform how specific Umoja program activities, approaches, and

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[19] https://www.umojacommunity.org/umoja-practices
[20] See Appendix E for the results from the ATET analyses.

practices support students' academic and career planning, progress, and success. However, the **focus group findings cannot be generalized to the entire Umoja student population** because the direction of the discussion was based on the personalities, interests, and dynamics among those who were present. As a result, certain issues were raised or more deeply explored among this particular group of Umoja students that may not have surfaced if different students had participated.

As such, it is important to take the findings in this report seriously, while simultaneously keeping in mind that they represent a particular perspective on the Umoja programs at the participating colleges. Therefore, **soliciting student feedback regularly is important to obtaining a more comprehensive understanding of the experience of the Umoja student population** and empowering the participating colleges, as well as the Umoja Community at large, to develop strategies that enable all students to thrive.

Key Findings

Umoja Versus Non-Umoja Students' Academic Outcomes

Across the board, students who participated in Umoja outperformed their peers across several leading (early milestones of progress towards completion such as course success rates) and lagging (completion outcomes such as degree attainment) of indicators success. For the leading indicators of success, on average, Umoja students attempted and completed more units than non-Umoja students in their first academic year (see Table 2), and successfully passed those courses at a rate of four percentage points higher than their peers (55% vs. 51%). However, the difference between the two groups' cumulative grade point averages (GPA) is not statistically significant (1.9 vs. 1.7). It is worth noting though that despite Umoja students completing more units and passing their classes at higher rates, the success rates for both groups are still relatively low – at less than 60% – and their first-year cumulative GPAs are both below a 2.0.

Table 2. First-Year Academic Outcomes for Umoja and Non-Umoja Students

Academic Outcomes	Umoja		Non-Umoja		Difference in Means
	Mean	*Standard Deviation*	*Mean*	*Standard Deviation*	
Units Attempted	14.4	9.0	11.9	9.5	+2.5*
Units Completed	12.9	9.4	10.1	8.9	+2.8*
% of Attempted Units Completed	85.5	0.33	80.4	0.42	+5.1*
Course Success Rate	55.3	54.8	51.9	32.5	+3.4*
Cumulative GPA in the First Year	1.9	1.3	1.7	1.3	+0.2

Statistically significant difference (p < .05)

In addition, Umoja students persisted into the following year at a greater rate than their non-Umoja peers (93.7% vs. 79.1%) (See Table 3).

Table 3. Fall-to-Fall Persistence of Umoja and Non-Umoja Students

	Umoja		Non-Umoja		Difference in Percentage Points
	Number of Students	*Percentage of Students*	*Number of Students*	*Percentage of Students*	
Fall-to-Fall Persistence	1,373	93.7	44,563	79.1	+14.6*

Statistically significant difference (p < .05)

Umoja students also have a lead over non-Umoja students in completion of transfer-level English courses within one year of first enrollment (24.5% vs. 11.8%)—a gap that almost doubles after three years (50.3% vs. 26.0%) (See Table 4).

Table 4. Completion of Transfer-level English among Umoja and Non-Umoja Students

Completion of Transfer-Level English	Umoja		Non-Umoja		Difference in Percentage Points
	Number of Students	*Percentage of Students*	*Number of Students*	*Percentage of Students*	
Within One Year	359	24.5	6,623	11.8	+12.7*
Within Three Years	737	50.3	14,648	26.0	+24.3*

*Statistically significant difference (p < .05)

Likewise, Umoja students have a slight lead over non-Umoja students in completion of transfer-level math courses within one year of first enrollment (4.2% vs. 3.4%), but this difference is not statistically significant. However, when this gap that widens after three years (17.9% vs. 10.3%), the difference becomes statistically significant (See Table 5).

Table 5. Completion of Transfer-level Math among Umoja and Non-Umoja Students

Completion of Transfer-Level Math	Umoja		Non-Umoja		Difference in Percentage Points
	Number of Students	*Percentage of Students*	*Number of Students*	*Percentage of Students*	
Within One Year	61	4.2	1,905	3.4	+0.8
Within Three Years	262	17.9	5,781	10.3	+7.6*

*Statistically significant difference (p < .05)

The gains of Umoja students in completion of transfer-level math and English courses are also seen in comparisons of completion of both transfer-level math and English (See Table 6). Umoja students completed transfer-level math and English within one year and within three years at much greater rates than their peers – within one year their rate of completion is 0.7% percentage points higher than their peers, but this difference is not statistically significant. However, as was seen above, when the timeline is extended to three years, this completion rate increases greatly, with Umoja students' rate being 7.1% points higher than their peers, and the difference between the two groups becomes statistically significant.

Table 6. Completion of Both Transfer-level English and Math among Umoja and Non-Umoja Students

Completion of Transfer-Level Math and English	Umoja		Non-Umoja		Difference in Percentage Points
	Number of Students	Percentage of Students	Number of Students	Percentage of Students	
Within One Year	35	2.4	971	1.7	+0.7
Within Three Years	230	15.7	4,842	8.6	+7.1*

Statistically significant difference (p < .05)

When examining longer-term outcomes (i.e., lagging indicators of success), Umoja again outperformed their non-Umoja peers. A greater proportion of Umoja students completed any Chancellor's Office-approved award (5.6% points higher), associate degree (5.1% points higher), and associate degree for transfer (ADT) (2.2% points higher) within four years than their non-Umoja peers, and all of these differences are statistically significant (see Table 7). The only outcome that was not statistically different between the Umoja and their non-Umoja peers was credit certificate attainment rates.

Table 7. Awards Earned within Four Years by Umoja and Non-Umoja Students

Academic Outcomes	Umoja		Non-Umoja		Difference in Percentage Points
	Number of Students	Percentage of Students	Number of Students	Percentage of Students	
Any Award	181	12.3	3,802	6.7	+5.6*
Credit Certificate	35	2.4	1,036	1.8	+0.6
Any Degree	146	10.0	2,766	4.9	+5.1*
ADT	46	3.1	496	0.9	+2.2**

Statistically significant difference (p < .05)
**Statistically significant difference (p < .01)*

A greater proportion of Umoja versus non-Umoja students became transfer-ready[21] within four years (16.1% vs. 7.6%) (See Table 8). However, Umoja students were not any more likely to transfer to a four-year institution within four years than their non-Umoja peers, with the difference between the two groups not being found to be statistically significant (17.2% vs. 16.7%).

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[21] The completion of 60 transferable units with at least a 2.0 GPA and successful completion of any transfer-level English _and_ any transfer-level math course by earning grades of A, B, C, P, or CR

Table 8. Transfer Outcomes within Four Years among Umoja and Non-Umoja Students

	Umoja		Non-Umoja		Difference in Percentage Points
	Number of Students	*Percentage of Students*	*Number of Students*	*Percentage of Students*	
Transfer Ready Status	236	16.1	4,273	7.6	+8.5*
Transfer to University	252	17.2	9,424	16.7	+0.5

Statistically significant difference (p < .05)

Student Focus Groups and Rating Sheets

Evidence supporting the Umoja program's student-centered approach to increase success is not only reflected in the students' academic progress and completion outcomes, but also in the experiences of the focus group participants. This section highlights the key findings from the focus groups and rating sheets students completed as well as the comparative outcomes analyses. The textboxes highlight the foundational and essential "Umoja Practices"[22] (see Appendix D) linked to students' experiences as determined by their responses and feedback. These Umoja practices were outlined early in the program launch by Umoja faculty to inform and guide Umoja program design and implementation.

Umoja Services, Supports, and Resources

Participants were asked a number of questions regarding Umoja services and supports, the overall impact of the Umoja program, and Umoja courses. Focus group participants had accessed the Umoja resources outlined in Appendix F.

> ### Community–Building Communal Intelligence
>
> **"Community is absolutely fundamental to an Umoja learning experience, for the students, the faculty, and the staff**. Umoja practitioners intentionally call out and support students' talents in an effort to build community and self-esteem. By tapping the intellectual and social capital represented by our students, we build community and greatly enhance the meaning of our classrooms/offices. Beyond helping keep our students in school, building community causes students to be accountable to each other's learning. Communal intelligence implies that we teach a willingness to see your own suffering and that of your sisters and brothers and taking responsibility for it. Community transcends our courses and services and reaches into the "I am, because you are" (Umoja Community, 2017).

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[22] https://umojacommunity.org/umoja-practices

Students **learned about Umoja from many different sources,** including counselors, classes, and presentations about the program at their high schools; counselors and faculty at the college itself; and family and friends who had a connection to or who were aware of Umoja. When asked why they chose to apply to the program, focus group participants pointed to the following program aspects as critical to their decisions:

- A sense of community

- Additional academic and emotional support

- Ability to learn more about themselves and their history

These three themes are explored in detail below.

A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Students were **attracted to the community aspect of the program** and its focus on building bonds and connections to their peers, particularly Black peers. The Village space, a dedicated location on campus for Umoja where students complete homework and hang out, helps to nurture connections to the program, the campus, and the program participants. Two of the Umoja practices, *Community-Building, Communal Intelligence* (see textbox on the previous page) and *Occupy Study Spaces on Campus* (see textbox on the right), are focused on creating a safe and supportive environment.

Five of the students' responses highlight the importance of these program elements:

> *I moved to [the area] ... [and] what made me first seek out like supportive services on campus was just that fact. I'm new here and I'm a continuing student, so I want to finish. So when I noticed that there was a Black supportive program, I said "Oh, yeah, that's where I need to be because I'm used to already being surrounded by Black people."... So I pursued it. I read about everything from the [college] website, and I applied, and I got in.*

> *I joined Umoja because of my friend. … He told me how much he gained from Umoja. … He felt that in an Umoja community, … it was family. … We don't really have a lot of programs that unite us as family.*

> **Occupy Study Spaces on Campus**
> "**Studying in the Village—a dedicated, welcoming Umoja space where students study and spend time together—builds community and nurtures academic success**. Designed by students and staff, the Umoja village is a sacred space that offers opportunities to increase exposure to historical and cultural experiences from the African diaspora. The Umoja village is an expression of and celebration of our students' voices and model for how students can approach their homework. Encouraging, even requiring, studying on campus works well with our students because it models, practices and affirms sustained and effective study habits for our students. We must positively and actively foster studying, deep concentration and creativity for our students to be successful in their academic pursuits" (Umoja Community, 2017).

[The Umoja counselor] was just telling us about the program, but I didn't understand exactly what she meant … [by] "it's a community." You're going to know everybody. You're going to build actual friendships. … It was like I just walked into the class, and I felt like I knew everybody. I was at home.

Before Umoja, school … was just school. … I didn't have anybody to really do it with, so … most of the time I didn't feel like it. … And even before I started interacting with people, I used to like to just sit in the Village and watch people. So I think the Village mentality is what kept me in school, because I was used to doing a semester or two and then leaving because I was doing it myself.

[Umoja] pushed me to be better in school because you have that support system in the Village. When you get to know people, they remind you to do your homework or go to class, turn in your work. So it's just the support that helps me.

ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Other students felt the program **provided additional academic and even emotional support that they needed, a key aspect of the Umoja practice of** *Ethic of Love—The Affective Domain* (see textbox at right). The bonds they describe suggest that emotional support was offered and promoted as part of the program design. Three students shared:

> **Ethic of Love—The Affective Domain**
>
> "When practitioners move with an ethic of love they touch their students' spirits. Moving with an ethic of love means having a willingness to share ourselves, our stories, our lives, our experiences to humanize and make real the classroom. **This leveraging of the affective–emotion, trust, hope, trauma, healing–moves the discourse deliberately as an inroad to the cognitive domain**. Approaching one's practice with an ethic of love implies a holistic approach—Body, Mind, Spirit"

I mostly came because I figured I don't have the study habits, and I figured if I were surrounded by people who do, then I will get better at it and hopefully be more prepared for the rest of my college life.

Having the cohorts, … you have two or three or four classes that you're all going to share. You are not taking your first classes … by yourself, and if you need help, you can get help.

It just seemed nice to be a part of a community where people were supposed to help you and be there for you.

ABILITY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THEMSELVES AND THEIR HISTORY

For some students, the draw was the **opportunity to be in classes where they would learn more about the history and experiences of people of African descent**. The Umoja practice of *Tapping African American Intellectual, Spiritual, and Artistic Voices*, as described in the textbox on the next page, outlines how Umoja practitioners incorporate Black voices in the classroom. Two students noted:

I had this thing after school [when in high school]. It was a class where I can learn about programs at [college]. I joined because I didn't know as much about African-American history.

I've never been in all-Black classes until now. So that was the really appealing part of it, being in Black classes and getting a Black education.

General Feedback on the Umoja Program

The Umoja program offered students resources to support them along their academic and personal journeys. While these resources were important, students also spoke of the personal connections and bonds they had formed as critical to their success. In addition, **participants shared specific ways the program had sparked their sense of motivation and focus, nurtured their personal growth, and ensured their academic success**. These findings fall under the following three themes:

- Supportive relationships

- Clarity, motivation, and support to realize long-term goals

- Personal growth

These themes are explored in detail below.

SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Participants across all seven focus groups shared that they were attracted to the Umoja program because they **longed to be part of a group of peers that shared similar experiences**. For those who had been a student at the college before joining Umoja, they often felt isolated and misunderstood. These feelings resulted in many students being less motivated and focused on their studies. The following four students described how Umoja met this need for connection:

> **Tapping African American Intellectual, Spiritual, and Artistic Voices**
>
> "Informed by their distinct history, African Americans have created a unique African diaspora experience expressed through myriad intellectuals, artists and spiritual leaders. Umoja sees individuals like Phyllis Wheatley, David Walker, Frederick Douglass, Ida B. Wells Barnett, Robert Johnson, W.E.B. Dubois, James Baldwin, Maya Angelou, Alan Locke, Thelonious Monk, Malcolm X, Romaire Bearden, Aaron Douglas, Langston Hughes, Ra Un Nefer Amen, Cheikh Anta Diop, bell hooks, and many, many others as ancestral bridges—a way of reaching back while moving forward. The Umoja Community **encourages our practitioners to continually mine the work of African Americans in the interpretation and construction of knowledge in our classrooms**. We invite our students and ourselves to claim this richness that resides, so often, below the surface" (Umoja Community, 2017).

When I started with English, … I could not relate [to] my fellow classmates. But joining Umoja made a big difference, because now I have a big family, actually.

The friends that I used to have, … they are out of school now. … Now that I'm in Umoja, I feel I have people that actually check on me.

When I'm in an Umoja class, ... I get to see [program staff members] in the back learning too. I get to see [them] and the professors talking, communicating, like, "Hey, I saw [a student] sleeping today, let's make sure she's good, that she's okay at home." Like you've got somebody else who cares about you, and everybody's checking in with each other.

If anybody in the Umoja Program finds out you said you were going to drop [out], you've got 20 missed calls, you've got [an] email [from the program coordinator and counselor and] all the students.

One of the resounding themes from the focus group discussions was **the personal connections and relationships students had made with not only their peers, but the Umoja administrators, staff, and faculty, particularly the counseling faculty**. The support participants received extended beyond the boundaries of the school, likening the Umoja community to an extended family, "like a church home." The **theme of family** also emerged when students described the counselors as a concerned "auntie" or "uncle." This terminology spoke to how students' relationships with the dedicated Umoja counselor went beyond just developing and monitoring a student educational plan.

Participants agreed that the program has had a **major impact on their lives, and they expressed gratitude and appreciation for the overall personal and academic support and sense of community offered**. The following student quotes offer insights into these positive and supportive relationships and illustrate how students experienced two of the Umoja practices that helped them stay on a path: the *Umoja Counseling: Affirming, Integrated, Intentional* (see textbox on the right) and *Mentoring* (see textbox on the right).

Umoja Counseling: Affirming, Integrated, Intentional

"Umoja counseling is intentional and deliberate. It transcends the school environment and helps to empower students to make positive changes in their lives and the lives of their communities. **We seek out the student, not waiting, immediately exploring what is going on with our students. Seeking out our students and not waiting holds our students close, keeps them in school, believing in themselves, each other and the Umoja program**. To do best by our students, accuracy and wisdom matter. Umoja counseling has no walls, no time clock; dialogue is open and responsive, based in building relationship. There is a communal dimension to Umoja counseling" (Umoja Community, 2017).

Mentoring

"A wise and trusted counselor or teacher." A major reason students drop out of college is due to feelings of isolation or alienation. Mentoring is a practice that **allows students to make a more personal connection with someone who can offer support, guidance, and encouragement while dealing with the challenges of managing school and life**. Many Umoja programs offer mentoring for students in a variety of formats that may include faculty and staff mentoring, mentoring from the community and peer mentoring" (Umoja Community, 2017).

Five students described:

As Umojians, we have our own counselor, and she's the truth. … When you go to [her], it's like going to sit down with your auntie. … You go in there for a counseling appointment, but it's going to become a whole session [about your] … life.

[The program coordinator] really pushes us to do our best, not just in the classroom, but in all aspects. She really pushes us to do better than we can do. … She goes the extra mile to accommodate to our needs.

What people don't realize is there are a lot of students that come ... to college, and they don't have that stuff at home. So they may not have a father figure ..., [but] they can go talk to [the Umoja Program Coordinator], or they may not have a mother figure, ... [but] they can go talk to [the Umoja counselors]. ... I think it's really important that you can go to a program and find mentors, find peers that care about you.

With the Umoja community, which is our extended family outside of the campus, that's a whole other experience. And it teaches us, …it shows us that we're a part of a big picture, and that's major…when you see the powerful community that you belong to, it does something to you. It's amazing.

CLARITY, MOTIVATION, AND SUPPORT TO REALIZE LONG-TERM GOALS

The support of the program coordinator and dedicated counselor in developing students' educational plans and providing needed materials and general encouragement was noted as key to some students' persistence. Others spoke about how the program helped them to prioritize school, stay motivated, and remain focused on their studies. The Umoja practices of Umoja Counseling: Affirming, Integrated, Intentional (see textbox on previous page) and Raising "Intentional & Deliberate" (see textbox below on the right) focus on purposefulness in all aspects of a student's education. Three students reported specific ways the program ensured they stayed on their educational pathways:

If it wasn't for [the Umoja program], I wouldn't be into school how I'm into school.

[Umoja] helped me not move aimlessly through college like I probably would have, and it's really useful having like a counselor at our disposal. It's helped me in a lot of ways. I would have been just like taking random stuff.

> **Raising "Intentional & Deliberate"**
>
> "In Umoja we **deeply value intentional and deliberate purposefulness**. We should know why we are doing what we do; nothing should be random. This does not mean that learning and teaching is all pre-determined, proscribed, or pre-scripted. We are claiming here that **we need to raise our capacity to be intentional and deliberate while creating "live learning" spaces and programs**. Doing so helps our faculty engage a conscious dialogue informing their practice and choices and helps us engender in our students a similar conscious dialogue about their practice and choices." (Umoja Community, 2017).

Courses fill up quick, and you don't want to be left out, especially if you need a particular class even if it's a prerequisite… Priority registration keeps you on track.

PERSONAL GROWTH

Other students shared how the program **honed their leadership skills and self-confidence and helped them be their authentic selves**. Students' reports of taking what they learned and putting this new knowledge into practice is a key element of the Umoja practice of *Manifesting* (see textbox on the next page). Five participants' responses spoke to how they had grown as students and people:

Umoja has really broken me out of my shell because, one, if I don't know you, I'm not going to talk to you. And like [the program coordinator] and most of the other [Umoja] professors will have you get up and socialize even though you don't want to, but it allows you to be less scared. So when I'm in other places, I'm still a little scared, but it's like, "Okay, if I want information, I need to ask it. I've got to go and ask."

My speech has changed. … I'm learning about my history and how our past trauma has affected us.

After I started coming to school and participating in Umoja, it gave more sense to my education, my learning and my growing because in Umoja we had a chance to be together with more people.

When you come to college, you expect to graduate with academics in check, but Umoja helps you graduate with life skills in check as well.

It was … not judging people that looked like me, because often times we're stereotyped in the media and we internalize that. And so I took it as everyone has their different goals and aspirations here and not judging them based on their appearance.

> **Manifesting**
>
> "How does the student reproduce what you do in class with their friends, family, and community? Students should be able to put into practice what they're learning in your class. They should intentionally bring their learning into the community and share with family, folks that support them, friends who could benefit and be edified by the Umoja consciousness. **The practice of manifesting intends to make sure that all of what we do in our programs is applied, connected, and relevant to the students' lives, and that the learning manifests inside the identity—spirit and mind—of the students**. The question: "How is this manifesting in a way that is helping them survive in their daily lives?"– is part of the consciousness of all Umoja practitioners and in turn a part of our students' consciousness so they can take their learning with them outside our campuses."

Once you start networking with people that are in other Umoja programs, … you get to see these people got a whole different lifestyle that might be beneficial to you and bring out another side of you that you didn't think was there.

Umoja Versus Non-Umoja Courses

Each Umoja program offers Umoja-specific courses taught by Umoja instructors or sponsored courses that are taught by faculty who are supportive of the Umoja effort. Faculty who teach these classes receive training and access to resources to effectively implement the Umoja practices. When discussing the differences in Umoja versus non-Umoja courses, students reported that **Umoja faculty shared more of themselves, worked to build relationships with students, created a space, and designed curriculum and related assignments that resonated with students' personal life and long-term goals**. Common themes for students included the following:

- Bonds with faculty and students

- Engagement in learning

- Academic success skills and strategies

These three themes are explored in detail below.

BONDS WITH FACULTY AND STUDENTS

Participants appreciated the **openness to and commitment of faculty to build supportive and positive relationships with students** and the peer connections that their Umoja instructors supported in the classroom. Participants indicated that they felt a deeper connection to their Umoja professors and used the term **"Umojafied"** to describe the classroom atmosphere and sense of community and family they perceived, not only in the program, but across the larger campus. The Umoja practice *Raising "Intentional and Deliberate"* provides guidance for shaping the learning spaces the program hopes to create (see the textbox on page 20). Five students described the power of these bonds:

> *All the professors that I've had within … Umoja teachers … would give me the opportunity to … get to know them and for them to get to know me*.

> *To touch on … relationships with your professors, … starting in Umoja and being able to feel comfortable enough to go and talk to your teachers outside of their assigned hours … right after class or before class … helped a lot. … [It] makes us more comfortable to do that outside of an Umoja class because you've done it before.*

> *In Umoja [courses,] we all … bond with each other just because we understand what everybody's going through, so it's different [from non-Umoja courses].*

> *[It's helpful] having professors that care about us and want to see us succeed and having that extra attention, as opposed to just having professors that [are like], "If you don't [turn in your assignment], you don't. That's your grade." But having professors that actually push us to do good and turn in your work and hold us accountable—I feel like it helps the majority of us to do better.*

I think [being in Umoja] makes us feel more connected to like our peers and our professors because they can relate to a lot of the stuff that we're either going through or have been through, so it just gives us like a real personal connection.

One student's response regarding the power of bonds across the campus captures the Umoja practice, *Everybody's Business,* which focuses on a communal approach to student support. (See textbox to the right for a definition of this practice.)

> *I don't even think I would just say Umoja services. It's just that everybody that's of African-American descent or is with our movement, … they want to help… . We went to the Transfer Center to go print our papers out for free. We do all these things in order to keep our academics up, but everybody's trying to help at the same time.*

ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING

Other students spoke about how the Umoja or Umoja-sponsored courses created a supportive environment in which the **instructors taught in relevant and engaging ways**. Three participants reported specific ways the program ensured they stayed on their educational pathway:

> *The way [the Umoja professor] teaches is not like any other class on campus. There is no repetitive, "You need to learn these vocabulary words." [Instead] it's, "Sit down, let's have a discussion for six weeks about it." And that's the only class I can truly tell you I remember things from... after we leave that class we take those discussions with us to the village...and we take them to BSU [Black Student Union].*

> *[The professor] instills accountability [and] responsibility for our other Umojians.*

> *I find myself participating more [in my Umoja classes]. … We give answers, we talk to each other … [and] discuss anything, and in other classes you just sit and learn.*

ACADEMIC SUCCESS SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

Participants stated that the Umoja courses **better prepared them for the academic demands of their non-Umoja courses** by providing them with the skills and strategies required to be

Everybody's Business

"**We are a village, acting in accord, and unafraid to be seen and heard as we do our work, leveraging every voice and source of information to do our best by our students**. We gather and share information about our students. As Umoja professionals, we feel that including everybody in our distinct disciplines and work duties shares knowledge and builds commitment. In Umoja a counselor is an English teacher, a Math teacher is in the history class, an administrative assistant is a tutor and everybody is a coordinator. We know what each other is up to, in an intimate, detailed way, so that we can support and reinforce each other. We cover and pitch in on each other's work, even while we maintain our areas of expertise. When a program event or program need comes up, we all inquire and support. And particularly when it comes to our students, we all stay aware of their progress, their challenges and crises, and their successes" (Umoja Community, 2017).

successful. In the Umoja courses, students reported learning more, being pushed "harder," and being required to meet "more expectations." For example, two students expressed:

> *In an Umojafied course, you're taught what to do and what the other teachers expect of you in other classes that are not Umojafied, so that when you are in those classes, you know what [those teachers] are looking for and you're able to give them what they're asking.*

> *I didn't talk to anyone in the class [last semester], but this semester I made those connections with other people. … I took what I learned in Umoja and applied it to my other classes.*

At least half of the students in each focus group had taken a course with a section taught by an Umoja or an Umoja-friendly faculty member. **Students enjoyed the smaller Umoja class sizes and "the bond with people, because you already know them."** Several participants noted that they felt more **comfortable** and **encouraged** in the Umoja courses compared to non-Umoja courses. They indicated that the Umoja faculty are more **"understanding," and "patient"** and cared about their success, stating that the Umoja faculty believed in their potential.

Umoja and Guided Pathways

Guided Pathways offers a highly-structured approach to the student experience that provides ongoing, intentional support from connection to completion, inside and outside the classroom—guaranteeing students get the help they need at every step of the way (see *Figure 1, Principles of Guided Pathways*).[23] The goal of Guided Pathways is to serve as a framework for transforming colleges to be student-centered institutions that produce more equitable academic outcomes, greater social mobility, and improved economic health for their students. Guided pathways **establish a clear structure for ensuring students are successful**.

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[23] http://bit.ly/GP-Principles

Figure 1. Guided Pathways Pillars

The Umoja program's design and core practices have several elements that mirror key activities and strategies of the four Guided Pathways pillars: 1) clarifying the path, 2) entering a path, 3) staying on a path, and 4) ensuring learning. Some program coordinators who were interviewed as part of the Phase I Umoja evaluation noted that the Umoja practices[24] could provide a foundation and model for Guided Pathways implementation. Considering the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office's adoption of the Guided Pathways framework, the Umoja Community Board has outlined how many of the program's core components align with the elements of the Guided Pathways pillars. For example, mandatory meetings with a counselor and a guidance course help students select and begin an academic and career pathway (pillars 1 and 2).[25] Appendices G and H outline the intersections between Umoja program elements and practices and the Guided Pathways.

A content analysis of the focus group transcriptions and rating sheets focused on illuminating ways that the students' experiences in Umoja helped them to clarify a path, enter a path, stay on a path, and ensure learning. This analysis further identified what could be learned from their experiences to inform both Umoja and Guided Pathways design and implementation. The evaluation team found that the students' comments and experiences exemplified the Umoja practices in action and the most effective aspects of the program highlighted elements of the Guided Pathways framework. Students' detailed responses related to each of the Guided Pathways pillars are shared below.

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[24] https://umojacommunity.org/umoja-practices
[25] The full crosswalk that shows how Umoja strategies and practices align with the different elements of Guided Pathways can be accessed at http://bit.ly/umojaGuidedPathways.

Guided Pathways Pillar 1 is focused on clarifying paths to student end-goals. Its design and implementation highlight the value proposition for enrolling in the institution in general, and a pathway in particular—allowing students to secure a direction and visualize the academic and career benefits of completing their goals.

Umoja focus group participants were asked several questions regarding their chosen major, specifically focusing on their decision-making process. Nearly all participants had chosen a major; however, a few indicated that their majors had changed throughout their time in the Umoja program. Some participants cited childhood and life experiences as critical to their decisions, while others specifically cited the Umoja program or a high school/college course/instructor as being instrumental.

A few students indicated that a career or personality assessment helped to inform their major and career choices. These participants referred to experiences and connections provided through the Umoja program (e.g., participation in the Umoja conference) as broadening their options and their perspectives related to their educational goals. The Umoja program elements of *fully mapped out programs* and *proactive academic and career advising* were most often mentioned by students when discussing clarifying their academic and career pathways. In the words of six students:

> *Ultimately, my high school teachers … opened my eyes … Both of my sports medicine teachers … opened my eyes to the field. And I'm very close to one of them. I still talk to him to this day, so that helped me choose my major.*

> *Last semester, we took a communications class. And at first, I came in thinking my major was going to be [in another area], but then as we are doing speeches in [the] communication [course], I realized that I like talking. I do. I like talking, and [that class] helped me discover a new passion.*

> *[In] my career class right now for Umoja, … we took a survey. The Strong Interest Inventory and the MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator). …There's about 300 questions each … about your tendencies and what you like in your work or school setting or how do you feel you work best… . I was thinking of doing a business major, … but after getting the results, I had some engineering qualities in there and then some business… .*

> *I [chose] my major because of my mother; she was a registered nurse.*

> *When I first started, I was [choosing] between English and history, … but I took [an African-American history class] and just seeing how [the professor] presented the information and what it was about, I was like, "Okay, I'm doing history." … [This professor] definitely helped with my decision.*

> *I picked my major when I was in high school. I knew I wanted to be a lawyer and work in the criminal justice field.*

Students were then asked to consider what had helped or could help them clarify paths to their career and life goals. In response, one-half (50%) indicated that the **most useful tool was a detailed plan of what courses were necessary to meet their goals and the order in which those courses should be taken**. One-fourth (25%) selected information on careers, including wage and advancement opportunity, and contextualized general education requirements as key to helping them clarify a path. The remaining one-fourth indicated that math and general education (GE) requirements taught in a way that connects to students' pathway of interest were most important. Students' rankings are shown below in Table 9.

Table 9. Students' Rankings of the Most Important Support Related to Helping Them Clarify a Path

Type of Support	% and # of Students Who Ranked as *Most* Important	
	%	n
An outline of courses you would need to take and when in order to complete an associate's degree, certificate, credential, and/or transfer	50%	38
Information on possible careers and their median wages and advancement opportunities	25%	19
Math and general education (GE) requirements taught in a way that connects to your pathway of interest	25%	19
Total*	**100%**	**77**

Note. Although 79 students participated in the focus groups, not all students were able to stay for the completion of the rating sheet.

Students indicated that this **outline of courses could save them time and money** by ensuring that they were not taking courses that would not fulfill the requirements for their degree and/or transfer. Six students stressed how important an outline of courses would be to their overall success as a student:

> *If you don't have a clear outline of what courses you need to take in order to achieve your goal, it will be very hard for you to 1) succeed and 2) avoid wasting time and money!*

> *If you don't have a set plan, it makes it harder to be successful, so having the knowledge to get from point A to B is good.*

> *I need to know what [classes] I'm taking and when I'm going to need to take them so I can transfer and continue with my career.*

> *It's the blueprint to college success, so you know what path to take. The Umoja program ensures that.*

> *Frankly, because students need [an outline] to be successful, … especially first-generation [students].*

Having an outline makes it less intimidating on what to do and shows what I need to do. It also acts as a to-do/checklist that shows how much progress I have made or need to make.

Providing career information, including wage data and advancement opportunities, was important to **helping students feel confident and secure in their career choices**. The comments of the following four students highlight this theme:

I see great success from college students who know what career their major applies to. Students who go through college with only a major without a career is a waste of time and money.

The more information you get on the career path you choose, the more sure you are about your decision.

Knowing information about careers and their wages and advancement opportunities is important to my success so that I am able to choose a career that best fits my interests and allows me to seek higher opportunities within that field.

This will help us stay on the path to success because it will pinpoint our end game.

Teaching general education and math requirements in ways that are relevant to students' pathways of interest **would make these classes less difficult and more interesting**. As three students shared:

Oftentimes you are taking math courses that really have nothing to do with the degree you choose.

The way math is forced on students that are not math and science majors [is difficult]. … For people who haven't been in school in a while, … algebra is a waste for some people.

[General education requirements] are already annoying, but if it is taught in a way that connects to my pathway of interest, I will actually be interested and stay on top of classwork, homework, attendance, etc.

When asked to suggest ways the college could help more students clarify a path, students made the following recommendations:

- Summer orientation

- Mandatory counseling sessions to:

  o Help students understand which majors are best aligned to their career goals

  o Ensure that students are not taking unnecessary courses

- Updates to the students' online portals to include IGETC[26] and ASSIST[27] information

- Hands-on experience related to their fields of study (e.g., internships)

- Mining the wealth of expertise that faculty could offer to students about potential academic and career paths

GUIDED PATHWAYS PILLAR 2: ENTERING A PATH

Guided Pathways Pillar 2 helps students choose and enter a pathway. Its design and implementation can guide students in selecting a program of study based on their skills, interests, and goals and develop a personalized education plan. This upfront support shows students the college cares about their future success and can help them stay focused because they know how completing specific courses, key milestones, and actions will lead them to their goal. When students enter a pathway community, they feel more connected to a group of peers, faculty, and staff, which can help increase their sense of belonging.

Umoja participants were asked questions regarding how they chose their courses. All students in the focus groups had a student education plan as required by the Umoja program. **The Umoja counselor, IGETC, and ASSIST were key resources to help students to develop and refine their plans**. Four participants discussed what services and supports helped them enter a path:

> *When I've had appointments with my counselor about my ed plans, they used ASSIST, which is you type in your major and it gives you all the classes you need. So that's a pretty good tool that they use.*

> *Where we sign up for classes, it has all of our student information. We get all of our updates through [the student portal]. It has our financial aid information. It'll let us know when we get our financial aid package.*

> *My experience, it's like a mother/son kind of situation. So when it comes to my classes, I don't ever get to pick my classes or when I take them. [The dedicated counselor] forces me to take them when she feels I need to take them. And I just roll with it.*

> *So for other programs that I'm in … that requires you to see a counselor, it's just not as personal… . If you're in there [meeting with a counselor], you will have somebody else*

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[26] The Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum or IGETC represents a series of California community college courses that students can complete to satisfy first and second year level general education requirements to prepare them to transfer in any major at any California college or university (http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/transfer/general-education-igetc/igetc/index.html).
[27] ASSIST.org is a free online student-transfer information system that assists students in choosing courses that align with their transfer goals.

knocking like, "I need work on my ed plan." [For Umoja counseling appointments], it's like, "This is my appointment."… That's the way that it works in Umoja.

When asked to consider what had helped or could help them choose and enter a path to their career and life goals, 41% of students indicated that **they most needed academic support that is culturally-competent and addresses real-world issues**. Nearly 40% **of students indicated that the most important need they had was a course designed to help them identify a career and select a relevant major.** One in five (20%) students felt that an educational plan informed by career and college exploration was key. Students' rankings are shown below in Table 10.

Table 10. Students' Rankings of the Most Important Support Related to Helping Them Choose and Enter a Path

Type of Support	% and # of Students Who Ranked as *Most* Important	
	%	n
Academic support that is culturally competent and addresses real-world issues to help you pass required courses	41%	31
An initial mandatory guidance course that helps you explore a career field and choose a related major	39%	29
A comprehensive education plan informed by the required career/college exploration	20%	15
Total	**100%**	**75**

Support that is culturally competent and addresses real world issues "helps encourage and show possibilities" and is "vital to one's success." As four students noted:

> *I've had this type of support in choosing and entering a path and knowing myself, I know without it, I wouldn't be so well off.*

> *If you have academic support that's culturally competent, when you go out to the real world and you're working with people, you'll be able to understand them and talk to them.*

> *I work well when I have strong support, but unless my courses are culturally relevant, I will have a hard time resonating with them.*

> *Knowing how this all connects to the real world sticks more than just normal information.*

An initial mandatory guidance course was important to allowing students to explore and select a career. Five students shared:

> *It is important to know what you want to do. Most students don't know. We need courses to help us explore our interests.*

Working with your major can help you … know if this career is for you and to see if you see yourself doing this career. Being able to explore can be a major key.

It's important that I know what I want to do before I take my classes.

A lot of times, students switch majors because their initial major isn't what they thought it would be, but with the [guidance] course, you are set to find what major is right for you.

Many people aren't taught about how to choose a career field, and many are confused on making a decision.

Education plans were viewed as "a roadmap" and important to "knowing exactly what you need to do" to meet long-term goals.

When asked to suggest ways the college could help more students choose and enter a path, participants made the following recommendations:

- Expansion of learning community programs like Umoja

- More First-Year Experience courses to support more students, including re-entry students

GUIDED PATHWAYS PILLAR 3: STAYING A PATH

Guided Pathway Pillar 3 helps students stay on the path. Its design and implementation may offer schedules based on student demand—allow students to feel more motivated to continue because they can get the courses they need when they need them. When students are able to see the progress they are making and how close they are to achieving their goals, it helps keep them on track towards meeting their goals. Ongoing and proactive outreach by counselors and advisors shows students that someone cares about their progress and is there to help them address barriers affecting that progress. Notifying students when they veer off their path either by taking courses not on their education plans or not reaching milestones by certain times can help bring students back on track.

Focus group participants were also asked questions regarding potential reasons for students stopping or dropping out before finishing their educational programs. Participants cited family, financial issues, delays in receiving financial aid, mental health issues, and stress as common reasons. Several students described why other students had left the college:

Most of it was family issues. …They weren't able to commit the time to Umoja.

A few people I know had a psychotic breakdown … because they were going through so much at home, and everything was coming at them at once. They had to keep up with the requirements in the program, [and] they just couldn't do it.

My fear isn't personally that I'm going to drop out. It's just that being an out-of-state student and paying $10,000 dollars to go to a community college is so expensive. And

not having access to the same resources that in-state people have, it kind of makes me mad. … That's where some of my frustration comes [from].

When you get older and you reach your financial aid cap, they call you into the financial aid office and say, … "You only have [a small amount] left." So that means everything else is going to be out of pocket or student loans. … [You] feel hopeless.

It wasn't that I dropped out because I didn't have the family support, … but for me it was like a mental thing. … I just didn't want to be in school. I wasn't going [to school] for something in particular. I was just going.

When asked to consider what had helped or could help them stay on a path, nearly one-half (48%) of students indicated that **most of all they needed ongoing and intrusive support** from a counselor. Slightly more than one-third (36%) of students welcomed ways to take ownership of monitoring their progress on their educational plans that did not require meeting with a counselor. The remaining 16% felt that the ability to move to another program was important to staying on their path. Students' rankings are shown below in Table 11.

Table 11. Students' Rankings of the Most Important Support Related to Helping Them <u>Staying on a Path</u>

Type of Support	% and # of Students Who Ranked as *Most* Important	
	%	n
Ongoing, intrusive advising and follow-up by a counselor	48%	35
A way for you to easily track your educational plan progress	36%	26
Ability to, with support from counselor and faculty, move to another program if you are not progressing along your selected pathway	16%	12
Total	**100%**	**73**

Ongoing and intrusive **support from a counselor** was viewed as key. Three students explained:

There should be [a] counselor [who is] on students about being on-track.

It is vital that the counselors do follow-ups and advise [you] if you are sliding or stepping back in your academics, because knowing that they care makes you put in your best too.

My counselor and my mom are the ones that keep me going when I feel like giving up.

Students **welcomed ways to take ownership of monitoring their progress** along their educational paths that did not require meeting with a counselor. Several participants spoke of using their colleges' student portal for this purpose. In the words of three students:

If I had the information I needed to track my educational plan, I would be advancing …. forward and not have to rely on a counselor.

Being able to track your progress yourself is crucial! Knowing you are on-track and will stay on-track is crucial.

I think that in order for you to succeed in the real world, it's on you to keep track of your progress. … Not everything will be done [for you] or handed to you.

When asked to suggest ways colleges could help more students stay on a path through the college, participants recommended:

- Lower college costs;

- More holistic student support (a la Umoja);

- Additional programming and support for first-generation college goers; and

- Timely financial aid distribution.

GUIDED PATHWAYS PILLAR 4: ENSURING LEARNING

Guided Pathway Pillar 4 ensures students are learning. Its design and implementation may include embedding applied experiences throughout students' program of study to help students stay engaged by highlighting the connection between their coursework, the real world, and their goals. Providing proactive academic support along the way increases students' chances of success. Offering students learning opportunities in the classroom and across the campus that honor their cultural and family background can demonstrate their experience is valued and matters. Ultimately, knowing that they are learning helps students stay motivated and make progress towards completing their goals.

When asked questions regarding their acquisition of knowledge and skills required to be successful, students shared that they found themselves talking to others about what they were learning and **applying that learning to life outside of the classroom**, a key aspect of the Umoja practice of *manifesting*. Participants felt comfortable discussing the content of their majors with people in their respective fields. As five students explained:

Once a week, I'd tell my mom something I learned in Umoja, … even [biology]. … I just feel more connected in all of my Umoja classes.

What I learn in class, I apply into real life. … I saw something happen and I'm like, "Oh, that's because of this from biology, and this happened because of that."

We [have discussions] and it helps to expand your vocabulary… I never wrote a 10-page paper ever in my life, and each paper I wrote, I got an eighty-five or better.

Being in this program just makes you think outside the box. You feel like you're just as intelligent as White people, … so most definitely my vocabulary has been expanded being in this program.

What I'm learning throughout college, almost anywhere I go these subjects keep coming up and I … have my input and people listen, … and they're like, "We can't argue with that. You know your stuff."

When asked to consider what had been or could be done to ensure their learning, more than one-half (57%) of students indicated that **hands-on learning experiences were most important**. One-fourth (25%) felt clear course learning outcomes were critical, and the remaining 18% believed that career-relevant and collaborative (team) learning was important. Students' rankings are shown below in Table 12.

Table 12. Students' Rankings of the Most Important Support Related to Ensuring They Are Learning

Type of Support	% and # of Students Who Ranked as *Most* Important	
	%	**n**
Applied (hands-on) learning experience	57%	43
Clear information on what you are to learn in each course	25%	19
Career relevant and collaborative (team) learning	18%	14
Total	**100%**	**73**

Applied learning was viewed as providing a real introduction to future careers and as a tool for helping students successfully grasp the material. Three students reported:

Hands-on learning experience[s] can help dictate whether you want to continue or not in [a] particular career.

In some majors, it is helpful to have hands-on experience to see how your life would be at your future job.

Experience is the best teacher and learning hands-on … stays in your brain longer.

When asked to suggest ways the college could ensure students were learning, participants recommended a process and tools for students to monitor their course grades within the term and their academic progress across terms.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the research team offers the nine recommendations to the Umoja Community Education Foundation for consideration. These recommendations draw from suggestions that Umoja students who participated in the focus groups offered when they were asked for their opinions on how the Umoja program could be improved.

Recommendation 1: Expand and broaden the marketing of the Umoja program to increase participation in and awareness of the program. Students suggested having current Umoja students engage in outreach to the feeder high schools and to students already attending the college.

Recommendation 2: Enhance the Umoja curriculum by offering more hands-on experiences. Students wanted increased opportunities for internships related to their fields of study, and a larger variety of workshops (e.g., study habits, scholarships) and events.

Recommendation 3: Expand Umoja courses offering types. Students expressed a particular desire for more science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) courses to be offered through the program. They also wish that Umoja courses would be offered throughout students' educational journeys, not just during the first or second semesters.

Recommendation 4: Deploy more integrated and just-in-time resources. Students suggested the need for a system that provides regular student check-ins and dispatches resources when students experience personal, physical, or mental health issues. Students also shared that it would be helpful if Umoja programs connected students with options for flexible employment in the area and affordable on-site daycare options.

Recommendation 5: Deploy more resources to the "Village." Students described the need for a larger space that includes conveniences such as a cubby area for backpack storage, better Wi-Fi service, cell phone chargers, and more welcoming signage.

Recommendation 6: Strengthen career guidance resources and support. Students expressed the desire to be matched with mentors who had similar academic and career interests and goals. Students also indicated the need for more information and resources related to choosing a major and how different majors align with various careers. Finally, students felt that Umoja counselors may need additional training that would help them provide advice to students about a wider variety of majors and more easily identify which majors are best aligned to students' career goals and available employment opportunities.

Recommendation 7: Recruit more faculty and staff of color to serve as counselors and instructors in Umoja programs. Students stressed the desire to see more people of color counseling and teaching in the program.

Conclusion

The Umoja program has been designed to ensure the success of California Community College students of African descent, a group that has traditionally struggled to complete a credential, degree, and/or transfer. Framed around 18 practices, the program offers many of the activities and employs several of the recommended strategies and approaches associated with Guided Pathways:

- **Helping to clarify the path** for students through a mandatory guidance course that explores career and academic pathways;

- **Helping students enter a path** through a mandatory comprehensive educational plan;

- **Helping students stay on their path** through a dedicated counselor offering proactive support and advisement; and

- **Ensuring students are learning** through culturally-relevant pedagogy and hands-on experiences.

Overall, students who participated in Umoja outperformed their non-Umoja peers on a number of academic outcomes. Umoja participation appeared to positively affect students' performance on several first-year outcomes (leading indicators of success such as unit attainment, persistence, and transfer-level English completion), as well as certain long-term outcomes (lagging indicators of success such as three-year math and English completion, transfer-readiness, and degree completion). However, it is still important to note that no differences were found between Umoja students and their non-Umoja peers in other key outcomes such as first-year cumulative GPA and transfer to a university. In addition, it must be recognized that the numbers and rates are still relatively low for both Umoja students and their peers in comparison to other ethnic groups. For example, for both groups, first-year cumulative GPAs are below 2.0, and overall course success rates are below 60%.

These positive results provide evidence for the program's effectiveness in supporting African American/Black students' success. Moreover, **many of the outcomes included in the study are measures now used in determining funding to the institutions (Student-Centered Funding Formula),[28] equity planning (Student Equity and Achievement Program),[29] and developmental education reforms (Assembly Bill 705).[30]** In helping to improve outcomes for African American/Black students, Umoja programs are well-positioned to advocate for being involved in their colleges' planning and redesign efforts to address funding and equity.

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[28] http://bit.ly/ccc-scff
[29] http://bit.ly/ccc-se
[30] https://assessment.cccco.edu/ab-705-implementation

The benefits and importance of participating in the Umoja program—the sense of community, the intrusive and personalized counseling and guidance, and culturally-relevant coursework—as reported by students during the focus groups appear to be supported by the academic outcomes. Students shared that the relationships that they were able to build with program administrators, faculty, and peers helped them feel connected and nurtured, and supported their retention and commitment to work hard and be successful. The culturally-relevant coursework helped them to fully engage with the course content and support their learning and personal growth. Dedicated counselors who understood students' strengths and challenges helped to provide appropriate, timely, and effective guidance and advice to keep students on track and motivated.

Commonly, student feedback spoke particularly to the affective domain that could be summarized as faith, family, and friendship. Faith that they could be successful, that someone wanted them to be successful, and that the system could work for them. Family given the ways they spoke about the deep bonds with Umoja staff and faculty, and friendship which described the support and community they had built with their peers. **The family atmosphere and the relevant and culturally-sensitive pedagogy and guidance allowed students to better grasp and actively engage with their coursework material, and to bond and create their own support systems.**

As colleges work to design and implement the Guided Pathways framework, the sense of belonging, the culturally humble and sensitive coursework and support, and peer-to-peer community building are elements that must be considered. For these focus group participants, in addition to the Umoja program components, their sense of connection to the program and, as a result, the college and their fellow Umoja peers, were all seen as invaluable to their success. **Given the shared components of Umoja with Guided Pathways, Umoja is an exemplification of Guided Pathways and can be an effective strategy to help close equity gaps.** Many of the effective components Umoja students shared can and would likely benefit all students, especially in the classroom through culturally-relevant pedagogy and the training of faculty to address the affective domains of learning.

The alignment between the components of the Umoja program and the Guided Pathways framework, and in particular Umoja's programmatic strengths, including building a sense of community and helping to motivate students towards achieving their goals, are what can be applied to redesign a more holistic and student-centered institutional experience. A holistic approach focused on mind, body, and spirit that is espoused by Umoja works to infuse love into the students' college experience: the love of an academic family, the love of student peers, the love and nurturing of instructional and counseling faculty, and the love and support of the larger campus community. Love provides students—any of us—with a foundation to be confident, secure, comfortable, ready, and grounded to be successful. **A student-centered approach could benefit from a commitment to showing students that they matter, that they are capable, that they are worthy, and that they are deserving of success. In other words, that they are loved.**

Future Considerations and Research

The challenges encountered in accurately and completely identifying Umoja students across the state point to the need for improvements to data collection and reporting for the program. It is incumbent upon the Umoja Community Foundation to ensure program coordinators, whether new or veteran, are fully trained on the data reporting requirements and know where to get support. Most important is that they understand how the accuracy and completeness of the data they submit, or the lack thereof, affect the validity of studies like this one aimed at demonstrating the impact of the Umoja program on its students.

As is typically the case, results from this study raise additional questions that are worth researching. Future research is needed to examine the linkages between specific program components and student outcomes. A **deep dive at the college level would help identify which program elements are having the greatest impact on student success**. In addition, it will be important to conduct **research that examines the impact of Umoja program participation on closing equity gaps**.

As reported, although Umoja students outperformed their peers across several leading and lagging indicators, no differences were found in terms of first-year cumulative GPA and transfer to a university. Therefore, **more research is needed to unpack and understand why Umoja students are not transferring at a greater rate, and why their first-year GPAs are not significantly higher than that of non-Umoja students**, despite having higher persistence rates and slightly higher course success rates. In addition, an examination of employment and wage outcomes for Umoja students and their peers could shed some light on why students may not be transferring, and help **determine how participation in Umoja may influence students' employment and wages**.

Given the finding that the gap between Umoja and non-Umoja students in terms of English and math throughput widened over time, with Umoja students being much more likely to complete transfer-level English and/or math after three years than their peers, it will be important to **re-examine short- and long-term outcomes (i.e., leading and lagging indicators) post-[AB705](#)[31] implementation to determine any impacts on Umoja students**. Finally, in order to gain a deeper understanding of Umoja students entire educational journey at the college, **a longitudinal cohort analysis is needed where students are followed over a six-year period**, and perhaps beyond, to examine not just first-year and completion outcomes like degrees and transfer, but those milestones that occur in between (i.e., years two through five) that affect students' academic success, such as completing 30 units and second-year GPA, and possibly longer-term outcomes, such as earning the baccalaureate degree.

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[31] https://assessment.cccco.edu/ab-705-implementation

Although not explicitly linked, **what students shared about their participation in Umoja has parallels to the RP Group's Student Support (Re)defined framework,**[32] in terms of helping students experience each of the six success factors (directed, focused, engaged, nurtured, connected, and valued). Given that a direct connection was not originally included in the design of this study, **future research could examine how the Umoja program fosters these six success factors and the relationship to students' academic success.**

Finally, **one group not included in this study is the faculty teaching in the program. Future research could look at their experiences**, including the how the training they received and their experiences teaching in the program may have affected their overall approach to teaching and how they may be applying this approach in the non-Umoja courses they teach.

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[32] https://rpgroup.org/student-support

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Appendix A: Colleges Represented in Quantitative Sample

College Name	Number of Umoja Students	Percentage of Quantitative Sample
American River College	38	2.62
Antelope Valley College	29	2.00
Bakersfield College	3	0.21
Berkeley City College	8	0.55
Butte College	2	0.14
Canada College	2	0.14
Cerritos College	5	0.34
Cerro Coso Community College	1	0.07
Chabot College	143	9.85
Chaffey College	23	1.58
Citrus College	1	0.07
City College of San Francisco	15	1.03
Clovis Community College	1	0.07
Coastline Community College	3	0.21
College of Alameda	19	1.31
College of Marin	11	0.76
College of San Mateo	7	0.48
College of the Canyons	5	0.34
Crafton Hills College	2	0.14
Cuyamaca College	2	0.14
Cypress College	3	0.21
De Anza College	48	3.31
Diablo Valley College	38	2.62
El Camino College-Compton Center	3	0.21
El Camino Community College District	89	6.13
Feather River College	1	0.07
Folsom Lake College	1	0.07
Fresno City College	2	0.14
Fullerton College	35	2.41
Gavilan College	1	0.07
Golden West College	1	0.07
Grossmont College	58	3.99
Laney College	28	1.93
Las Positas College	2	0.14
Long Beach City College	11	0.76
Los Angeles City College	3	0.21
Los Angeles Harbor College	2	0.14

College Name	Number of Umoja Students	Percentage of Quantitative Sample
Los Angeles Southwest College	8	0.55
Los Angeles Trade Technical College	29	2.00
Los Medanos College	46	3.17
Merced College	12	0.83
Merritt College	22	1.52
Mission College	3	0.21
Modesto Junior College	11	0.76
Moreno Valley College	69	4.75
Mt San Antonio College	3	0.21
Mt San Jacinto Community College District	4	0.28
Napa Valley College	25	1.72
Norco College	34	2.34
Ohlone College	5	0.34
Palomar College	3	0.21
Pasadena City College	57	3.93
Riverside City College	32	2.2
Sacramento City College	13	0.9
San Diego City College	24	1.65
San Diego Mesa College	31	2.13
San Diego Miramar College	3	0.21
San Joaquin Delta College	35	2.41
San Jose City College	20	1.38
Santa Monica College	101	6.96
Santa Rosa Junior College	3	0.21
Santiago Canyon College	1	0.07
Sierra College	38	2.62
Skyline College	11	0.76
Solano College	53	3.65
Ventura College	2	0.14
Victor Valley College	2	0.14
West Los Angeles College	3	0.21
West Valley College	5	0.34
Yuba College	1	0.07
Total	1,452	100.0%

Appendix B: Descriptive Statistics for Matching Variables

Matching Variables	Umoja		Non-Umoja	
	Mean	**Standard Deviation**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
Age	20.3	6.8	23.4	9.8
	N	%	N	%
Gender				
Male	654	44.6	30,789	54.7
Female	812	55.4	25,527	45.3
Financial Aid Recipient				
Yes	1,364	93.0	47,532	84.6
No	102	7.0	8,784	15.6
Parent Education Level: Baccalaureate or Higher				
Yes	115	7.8	2,546	4.5
No	1,351	92.2	53,770	95.5
Disability				
Yes	213	14.5	5,350	9.5
No	1,253	85.5	50,966	90.5
Academic Disadvantaged				
Yes	1,271	86.7	40,605	72.1
No	195	13.3	15,711	27.9
Learning Disability				
Yes	77	5.2	979	1.7
No	1,389	94.8	55,337	98.3

Appendix C: Umoja Student Focus Group Protocol

Introduction & Ground Rules

Personal Introduction: My name is _____. I am a senior researcher with /executive director of the Research & Planning Group for CA Community Colleges or the RP Group.

Introduction of Study: I am here because we are working on a study that seeks to increase our understanding of Umoja students' experiences and academic journeys. This study puts students at the center of the research and our assignment here today is to learn from your experience about what has made a difference for you. Another part of the study involved interviewing your program coordinator and future research will examine student academic outcomes.

Audio-recording and context: I will audio-record this 90-minute session and our conversation here today is one of 7 focus groups we are having at colleges around the state. To show you how much we value your time and willingness to share your experience as a student, you will receive a $20 [store] gift card.

Confidentiality: We will analyze the information we gather across all the focus groups to identify themes. We will not report out in a way that can be connected back to you as an individual. Our focus is not on who says what, but on what you all say.

Consent: Thank students for participating. Inform them their participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw at any time by leaving. Ask them to sign consent form. HAND OUT 2 COPIES OF CONSENT FORM; one for the students to complete and submit and another for them to keep for their records.

Ground Rules: Review the following ground rules.

- No idea is a bad idea; show respect for others' comments and ideas

- Don't interrupt

- Share the air

- One person speaks at a time

- Respond/add to others' thoughts

- All comments are confidential

- Hold questions to the end

- [What would you add?]

Participant Introduction: Ask participants to briefly introduce themselves with their name, how many semesters they've been at this college and involved in the Umoja program, and what their educational goal and major is, if they have one, and what their future plans are after they graduate and/or transfer.

Focus Group Questions

Introduction

1. How did you learn about the Umoja program and what led you to participate?

General Feedback

2. In what ways has participation in the Umoja program supported your academic and personal journey [PROMPTS: better grades, six success factors—more focused, directed, connected, engaged, nurtured, valued)]? Affected your overall experience at [name of college]?

Umoja Services, Supports, & Resources

3. What Umoja services, supports, and resources have you used the most and why? What resources/supports/services are you currently using? What does Umoja provide that no other program provides?

4. Are you taking or have you taken an Umoja course? If so, how do would you compare your Umoja and non-Umoja course experiences?

5. If you were asked to compare your life before you joined Umoja and your life after joining Umoja, what would you share? What are the biggest differences? What didn't change?

6. If you could share with the program coordinator one or two ideas for how to improve the Umoja program, what would you recommend and why? What should remain the same and why?

Your College Journey

Clarifying a path

7. How many of you have chosen a major already? How many of you feel you have not made a decision about your choice of major yet? [Look for a show of hands, say the number out loud for the recorder]).

8. Let's begin with those of you who have decided on a major already. How did you go about making that decision?

    [PROMPTS]

    - How long did it take you to choose a major?

- Have you changed your major along the way? (Look for a show of hands from people who changed their major multiple times)

- What was helpful in exploring what your interests were?

9. For those who have not decided on a major, how do you think you will go about making the decision?

   [PROMPTS]

   - How much do you know about your areas of interest? What other information do you need to make a decision?

10. What do you think the college could do to help you and other students decide on a major early on?

Entering a path

11. How do you decide which courses to take?

    [PROMPTS]

    - Do you know which courses you need to take next semester? If not, how will you find out?

    - Where can you get the most helpful information on which courses to take every semester?

    - What has been your experience in choosing courses? Can you usually register for the courses you need?

    - Are you able to get the advising/counseling that you need?

    - What do you think works well when it comes to choosing your courses every semester?

    - What do you think could improve?

Staying on a path

12. Have you yourself or do you know anyone who has had to stop or drop out before finishing your/their program? Why did you have to stop out or why do you think that happened with the person you know?

13. What kinds of things can the college do to help students overcome their biggest challenges and stay in school?

Ensuring learning

14. How do you know you are gaining the knowledge and skills required to be successful? In what ways, does the college let you know that you are making progress on your chosen academic or career path? What more could the college do?

15. Now let's review the RATING SHEET. [Follow directions at the top of the rating form. Be sure to collect these forms after the activity is completed. Ask a few students to share what they picked as most important and why.]

16. Is there anything else you would like to share about the Umoja program and how it has affected you and impacted your academic journey?

Thank you all so much for your participation and help with our research.

Appendix D: Umoja Practices

The [Umoja Practices][33] presented below, developed by a group of Umoja faculty, are foundational elements that guide and inform Umoja program design and implementation.

"Raising "Intentional & Deliberate": In Umoja we deeply value intentional and deliberate purposefulness. We should know why we are doing what we do; nothing should be random. This does not mean that learning and teaching is all pre-determined, proscribed, or pre-scripted. We are claiming here that we need to raise our capacity to be intentional and deliberate while creating "live learning" spaces and programs. Doing so helps our faculty engage a conscious dialogue informing their practice and choices and helps us engender in our students a similar conscious dialogue about their practice and choices.

Ethic of Love–the Affective Domain: When practitioners move with an ethic of love they touch their students' spirits. Moving with an ethic of love means having a willingness to share ourselves, our stories, our lives, our experiences to humanize and make real the classroom. This leveraging of the affective–emotion, trust, hope, trauma, healing–moves the discourse deliberately as an inroad to the cognitive domain. Approaching one's practice with an ethic of love implies a holistic approach—Body, Mind, Spirit.

Manifesting: How does the student reproduce what you do in class with their friends, family, and community? Students should be able to put into practice what they're learning in your class. They should intentionally bring their learning into the community and share with family, folks that support them, friends who could benefit and be edified by the Umoja consciousness. The practice of manifesting intends to make sure that all of what we do in our programs is applied, connected, and relevant to the students' lives, and that the learning manifests inside the identity—spirit and mind—of the students. The question: "How is this manifesting in a way that is helping them survive in their daily lives?"– is part of the consciousness of all Umoja practitioners and in turn a part of our students' consciousness so they can take their learning with them outside our campuses.

Umoja Counseling: Affirming, Integrated, Intentional—Umoja counseling is intentional and deliberate. It transcends the school environment and helps to empower students to make positive changes in their lives and the lives of their communities. We seek out the student, not waiting, immediately exploring what is going on with our students. Seeking out our students and not waiting holds our students close, keeps them in school, believing in themselves, each other and the Umoja program. To do best by our students, accuracy and wisdom matter. Umoja counseling has no walls, no time clock; dialogue is open and responsive, based in building relationship. There is a communal dimension to Umoja counseling.

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[33] https://umojacommunity.org/umoja-practices

The Porch: To say at all times "What Is Really Going On Here," a learning environment should be open, respectful, playful; there should be argument, dissection and revision. It should be personal, political and philosophical. The porch can often be candid and sometimes even painful. Storytelling is privileged and sometimes song breaks out. Porchtalk invites humor, noise, sometimes unruliness. A classroom with such honesty and visibility can produce frustration and also acceptance. Needless to say, trust is at the foundation of a porchtalk learning environment and trust has to be earned, modeled, practiced, openly reflected upon, and revisited. Porchtalk is intentional, for example, the instructor looks for an opportunity to draw out, celebrate and dignify the quieter students, so all the voices in the room make up the porch. The porch is a place where our students safely communicate and advocate for themselves.

Live Learning: Live learning is risky; it is freewheeling and open. The instructor yields control of meaning and understanding in the classroom while keeping a keen eye on learning as it is emerging. Live learning implies that the learning experience is generative and performative. In a live learning situation, the exact content and learning experience are not known before the class session begins. Surprise and original language burst out all over the classroom; the instructor facilitates and culls the learning that is happening. Live learning intentionally captures and documents learning in real time. It is a way of having a discussion that really flies, while focusing the insight, capturing it on boards and in notebooks, so the discussion does not disappear after the students leave the class session. It is democratic and analytically rigorous at the same time. Live learning demonstrates to the students through their own words that language is powerful; ideas and texts are rich and can be made their own. Most importantly live learning demonstrates to the students that they are smart, deep.

Language As Power: When we recognize and validate the language that our students bring to the classroom—that which they create amongst themselves—our students open up to the power of language. We can help them to develop a sense of pride, ownership and responsibility in their own speaking and writing. By so doing, we can bring our students inside the conscious experience of wielding language, all types of language—academic, standard, Black English, theoretical. Our classrooms can be a multilingual experience which provides an impetus for our students to represent themselves while crossing bridges into other, unfamiliar language they are bound to encounter in their lives. When our students experience language as power, curiosity, playfulness and agency replace what might have been standoffishness and uncertainty.

Tapping African American Intellectual, Spiritual, and Artistic Voices: Informed by their distinct history, African Americans have created a unique African diaspora experience expressed through myriad intellectuals, artists and spiritual leaders. Umoja sees individuals like Phyllis Wheatley, David Walker, Frederick Douglass, Ida B. Wells Barnett, Robert Johnson, W.E.B. Dubois, James Baldwin, Maya Angelou, Alan Locke, Thelonious Monk, Malcolm X, Romaire Bearden, Aaron Douglas, Langston Hughes, Ra Un Nefer Amen, Cheikh Anta Diop, bell hooks, and many, many others as ancestral bridges—a way of reaching back while moving forward. The Umoja Community encourages our practitioners to continually mine the work of African

Americans in the interpretation and construction of knowledge in our classrooms. We invite our students and ourselves to claim this richness that resides, so often, below the surface.

Awareness of Connectedness to African Diaspora: Umoja students are interconnected to African peoples around the globe. Umoja practitioners can facilitate an awareness of how students' actions impact all African people. This sort of practice intentionally traces the historical, political and cultural lines emerging from Africa. This practice encourages a global African consciousness in an effort to foster collective responsibility, empathy and self-awareness. This practice also actively asks that students join their voices and stories with the voices and stories of peoples across the diaspora. In this way, Umoja students will become aware of the diaspora and articulate their place in that experience.

Community–Building Communal Intelligence: Community is absolutely fundamental to an Umoja learning experience, for the students, the faculty, and the staff. Umoja practitioners intentionally call out and support students' talents in an effort to build community and self-esteem. By tapping the intellectual and social capital represented by our students, we build community and greatly enhance the meaning of our classrooms/offices. Beyond helping keep our students in school, building community causes students to be accountable to each other's learning. Communal intelligence implies that we teach a willingness to see your own suffering and that of your sisters and brothers and taking responsibility for it. Community transcends our courses and services and reaches into the "I am, because you are."

Acceleration–English, Math, ESL, and Counseling: The vast majority of our students begin community college in basic skills courses, and like many students, they often do not make it to transfer-level English and Math. Students are warehoused. So often our students are taught from a deficit perspective; Umoja flips this and engages students from a capacity perspective. One-way acceleration has been talked about is as a shorter pathway through sequences, moving students more quickly through basic skills to transfer-level courses. Of course shortening sequences, when it makes sense, matters. Many Umoja instructors are working with new accelerated curriculum expressions. The Umoja Community recognizes that faculty must design and own the curriculum which they offer students and that local authorship and expression is fundamental to the success of accelerated curriculum redesign. Umoja encourages "deep acceleration," where faculty go beyond structural changes into questions of pedagogy, practice, student capacity and current theories around adult learning. Furthermore, Umoja asserts that counselors are integral to the success of any innovative curriculum and pathway being offered to students.

Occupy Study Spaces on Campus: Studying in the Village—a dedicated, welcoming Umoja space where students study and spend time together—builds community and nurtures academic success. Designed by students and staff, the Umoja village is a sacred space that offers opportunities to increase exposure to historical and cultural experiences from the African diaspora. The Umoja village is an expression of and celebration of our students' voices and model for how students can approach their homework. Encouraging, even requiring, studying on campus works well with our students because it models, practices and affirms sustained and

effective study habits for our students. We must positively and actively foster studying, deep concentration and creativity for our students to be successful in their academic pursuits.

Mentoring: "A wise and trusted counselor or teacher." A major reason students drop out of college is due to feelings of isolation or alienation. Mentoring is a practice that allows students to make a more personal connection with someone who can offer support, guidance, and encouragement while dealing with the challenges of managing school and life. Many Umoja programs offer mentoring for students in a variety of formats that may include faculty and staff mentoring, mentoring from the community and peer mentoring.

Mattering: Mattering is intersectional-cultural, social, political, civic, spiritual. Given the years of institutionalized educational inertia, which often includes potent doses of failure and disaffection, we are being asked to create learning experiences that reclaim mattering and give agency to our students as matters. It matters what we teach; we must take a risk to include content that fuses suffering, identity and freedom. Mattering increases context while making choices about what is urgent. As matters students' experiences and perspectives become a critical resource to the knowledge and analyses emergent in the class and in the program.

Umoja as a Power Base: Umoja Community programs use their infrastructure, their resources, and their community as a model for Black achievement across the campus, state and nation. The dearth of ideas regarding Black student success, calls us out to participate actively and openly in the analysis and decision-making about how to reverse the tide. We share awareness with our students of their shoulders being leaned upon by their brothers and sisters, their mothers and fathers and many others. Our students, as leaders, are trained and empowered to engage faculty, administrators and staff alongside and on behalf of their peers to voice their desire to achieve their educational dreams and goals. Our students, as leaders, are empowered to partner with faculty in the spirit of dual commitment- "I commit to you, you commit to me." When we embrace our position, Umoja becomes more than a program; it is a privilege that will be leveraged, a power base from which action and commitment to success for historically under resourced students and others.

Encircling Diversity: Encircling diversity affirms my "I am" as we stand in a place where we feel embraced and connected to everyone and empowered to rebuke all forms of cultural domination of any kind. Encircling diversity brings about a fully-present student and challenges the community to make justice and freedom a primary question; in MLK's words, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." When we encircle diversity, we are more than merely tolerant, we seek deep understanding and celebration of the way someone different than ourselves speaks, thinks, imagines, and becomes. When we encircle diversity, we acknowledge and appreciate our oneness and diversity becomes a resource, and a strength, to our Umoja community.

Gifting: Sharing what we learn honors and extends learning. Umoja students become teachers and pass wisdom as they gift their learning to their family, their community, their peers in the program, and at Umoja events. Preparing the gift of learning by collectively identifying what is most meaningful, what is necessary and why this learning gift matters is an act of grace that

helps us become accountable to each other's collective intelligence for purposes that uplift the community. Umoja practitioners believe that knowledge and practice are communal and meant to be freely gifted. When we give a learning gift, we become conscious and thoughtful about belonging to each other's achievement; our students become one thousand wide and ten thousand deep.

Everybody's Business: We are a village, acting in accord, and unafraid to be seen and heard as we do our work, leveraging every voice and source of information to do our best by our students. We gather and share information about our students. As Umoja professionals, we feel that including everybody in our distinct disciplines and work duties shares knowledge and builds commitment. In Umoja a counselor is an English teacher, a Math teacher is in the history class, an administrative assistant is a tutor and everybody is a coordinator. We know what each other is up to, in an intimate, detailed way, so that we can support and reinforce each other. We cover and pitch in on each other's work, even while we maintain our areas of expertise. When a program event or program need comes up, we all inquire and support. And particularly when it comes to our students, we all stay aware of their progress, their challenges and crises, and their successes."

Appendix E: Estimated Treatment Effect of Participation in Umoja

Estimated average treatment effects for students receiving embedded support are reported under the column heading "ATET" and should be read as the effect of Umoja participation on outcome attainment. For units attempted, units completed, the ATET is interpreted as the increase/decrease in average number of units attempted and/or completed. Similarly, for GPA, the ATET is interpreted as the increase/decrease in average number of grade point units completed. For all other outcomes, the effect is interpreted as the average percentage point increase/decrease in the outcome attainment for students who participated in Umoja compared to students who did not. An asterisk indicates when a result is statistically significant, meaning that results are unlikely to have occurred by chance or sampling error.

Outcomes	ATET	SE
Units Attempted	1.4*	0.24
Units Earned	2.1*	0.24
Course Success Rate	6.5*	0.8
Persistence	6.2*	0.7
Completion of Transfer-level Math within One Year	0.8	0.5
Completion of Transfer-level Math within Three Years	6.5*	0.9
Completion of Transfer-level English within One Year	11.1*	1.1
Completion of Transfer-level English within Three Years	19.3*	1.3
Completion of Transfer-level Math and English within One Year	0.7	0.4
Completion of Transfer-level Math and English within Three Years	5.9*	0.9
Cumulative GPA in the First Year	0.2*	0.3
Earning any credit Certificate or Degree within Four Years	5.4*	0.9
Earning a Credit Certificate within Four Years	0.7	0.4
Earning a Degree within Four Years	4.6*	0.8
Earning an ADT within Four Years	7.8**	2.8
Transfer Ready	7.1*	0.9
Transfer	0.9	1.0

Notes. ATET = Average treatment effects on the treated; SE = Robust standard errors. *p < .05 **p < .01

Appendix F: Umoja Services, Supports, and Resources Used by Focus Group Participants

Type of Services, Supports, and Resources
Academic Supports
• Study groups
• Onsite and embedded course tutoring
• Peer tutoring
Counseling
• Dedicated counselors and counseling
• Peer counseling
Academic Incentives
• Priority registration
Faculty Support
• Mentorship
• Guidance
• Support
Community Building Supports
• Village/Umoja dedicated space
• Porch talk
• Food and snacks
• Computers and printing access
• Group Chat, a mobile app that allows students to text the Umoja community
Personal Growth Opportunities
• **Conferences (e.g., Umoja Conference)**
• Field trips (e.g., California State Universities, Black History Museum)
• College tours (e.g., Historically Black Colleges and Universities, state universities)
• Workshops (e.g., networking, leadership)
Financial Resources
• Bus passes
• Book vouchers

Appendix G: Alignment between the Umoja Practices and Guided Pathways

Chancellor's Office Elements for Guided Pathways	Umoja Program Elements in Alignment with Guided Pathways Structure	Related Umoja Practices
Proactive Advising & Career Advising	• Mandatory meetings with Umoja Counselors • Mandatory guidance class serves as anchor course • Program workshops	• Raising intentional and Deliberate • Ethic of Love: The Affective Domain • Umoja Counseling: Affirming, Integrated, Intentional
Early Alert System	• Academic progress monitoring through faculty contact at regular team meetings • Intrusive counseling and follow-up with students	• Umoja Counseling • The Porch • Occupy Study Spaces on Campus • Mattering • Everybody's Business
Redesigned and Acceleration	• Programs have flexibility to adapt to changing student needs • Programs encouraged to design accelerated courses to get students through basic skills sequence faster	• Accelerated: English, Math, ESL, and Counseling • Umoja as a Power Base
Structured Onboarding Process	• Mandatory program orientation required at start of academic year • Summer bridge • Financial aid workshops	• Community building • Communal intelligence • Manifesting
Instructional Support and Co-curricular Activities	• Summer Learning Institute • Fall Conference • Regional Symposia • Field Trips • Culturally Relevant Curriculum	• Live Learning • Language as Power • Tapping African-American Intellectual Spiritual, and Artistic Voices
Fully mapped out programs	• Yearlong learning community sequence • Comprehensive educational plan required	• Umoja Counseling

Appendix H: Alignment of Umoja Practices and Program Elements with Guided Pathways Elements and Pillars

Selected Guided Pathways Elements (Pillars)	Related Umoja Practices	Umoja Program Elements in Alignment with Guided Pathways Structure
Proactive Academic & Career Advising (Clarifying, Entering, and Staying a Path)	• Raising intentional and Deliberate • Ethic of Love: The Affective Domain • Umoja Counseling: Affirming, Integrated, Intentional	• Mandatory meetings with Umoja Counselors • Mandatory guidance class serves as anchor course • Program workshops
Early Alert System (Staying on a Path)	• Umoja Counseling • The Porch • Occupy Study Spaces on campus • Mattering • Everybody's Business	• Academic progress monitoring through faculty contact at regular team meetings • Intrusive counseling and follow-up with students
Redesign and Acceleration (Staying on a Path)	• Accelerated: English, Math, ESL, and Counseling (Entering a path, Ensuring Learning) • Umoja as a Power Base	• Programs have flexibility to adapt to changing student needs • Programs encouraged to design accelerated courses to get students through basic skills sequence faster
Structured Onboarding Process (Entering a Path)	• Community Building Communal Intelligence • Manifesting	• Mandatory program orientation required at start of academic year • Summer bridge • Financial aid workshops
Instructional Support and Co-curricular Activities (Staying on a Path)	• Live Learning • Language as Power • Tapping African-American Intellectual Spiritual, and Artistic Voices	• Fall conference • Field trips • Culturally relevant curriculum
Fully mapped-out programs (Clarifying a Path and Ensuring Learning)	• Umoja Counseling	• Yearlong learning community sequence • Comprehensive educational plan required

Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges

The RP Group strengthens the ability of California community colleges to discover and undertake high-quality research, planning, and assessments that improve evidence-based decision-making, institutional effectiveness, and success for all students.

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