

Title: A Second Home on Campus: Closing the Achievement Gap with Safe Spaces
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Research shows that campus involvement improves academic achievement, yet higher education institutions do not provide all students on campus the opportunity to be engaged on campus. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* described the emotional power of physical spaces on campuses by highlighting the memories, meaning making, long-term satisfaction, and institutional loyalty that can develop in campus facilities.

Today the efforts of higher education institutions to close the achievement gap are being done through academic support programs. Support is different for every student. I hope to prove the importance of safe spaces on campuses and the need for support that isn't academics-related. Retention rates and transfer rates are low for disproportionately impacted groups. Veterans are classified under El Camino College's Student Equity Plan as a disproportionately impacted group. In El Camino College's Student Equity Plan for 2015-2016, the data showed that veterans achieved higher than non-veterans in many different areas after the creation of a Veterans Resource Center. Veterans earned degrees and certifications at much higher rates compared to the general population. I hope to bring awareness to the importance of physical, safe spaces on campus for marginalized communities by comparing disproportionately impacted groups at El Camino College, like the foster youth, without a significant place on campus. Community colleges struggle with keeping their students engaged because of the lack of students staying on campus. Today, higher education institutions attempt to close the achievement gap with support programs, but all students need to succeed is a second home.

Works Cited

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