Advancing Equity and Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education: Implications for State Policy and Institutions

| Presented to the Joint Committee on Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education |
| June 16, 2022 |

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Purpose

- Identify and discuss salient challenges and issues that exasperate inequities and negatively impact success for underrepresented and underserved students in higher education.

- Propose policy and practice solutions to close equity gaps and improve student success outcomes for underrepresented and underserved students in higher education.

Toward an Understanding of Equity & Equity Mindedness

Equity refers to a heightened focus on groups experiencing **disproportionate impact** in order to remediate disparities in their **experiences** and **outcomes**

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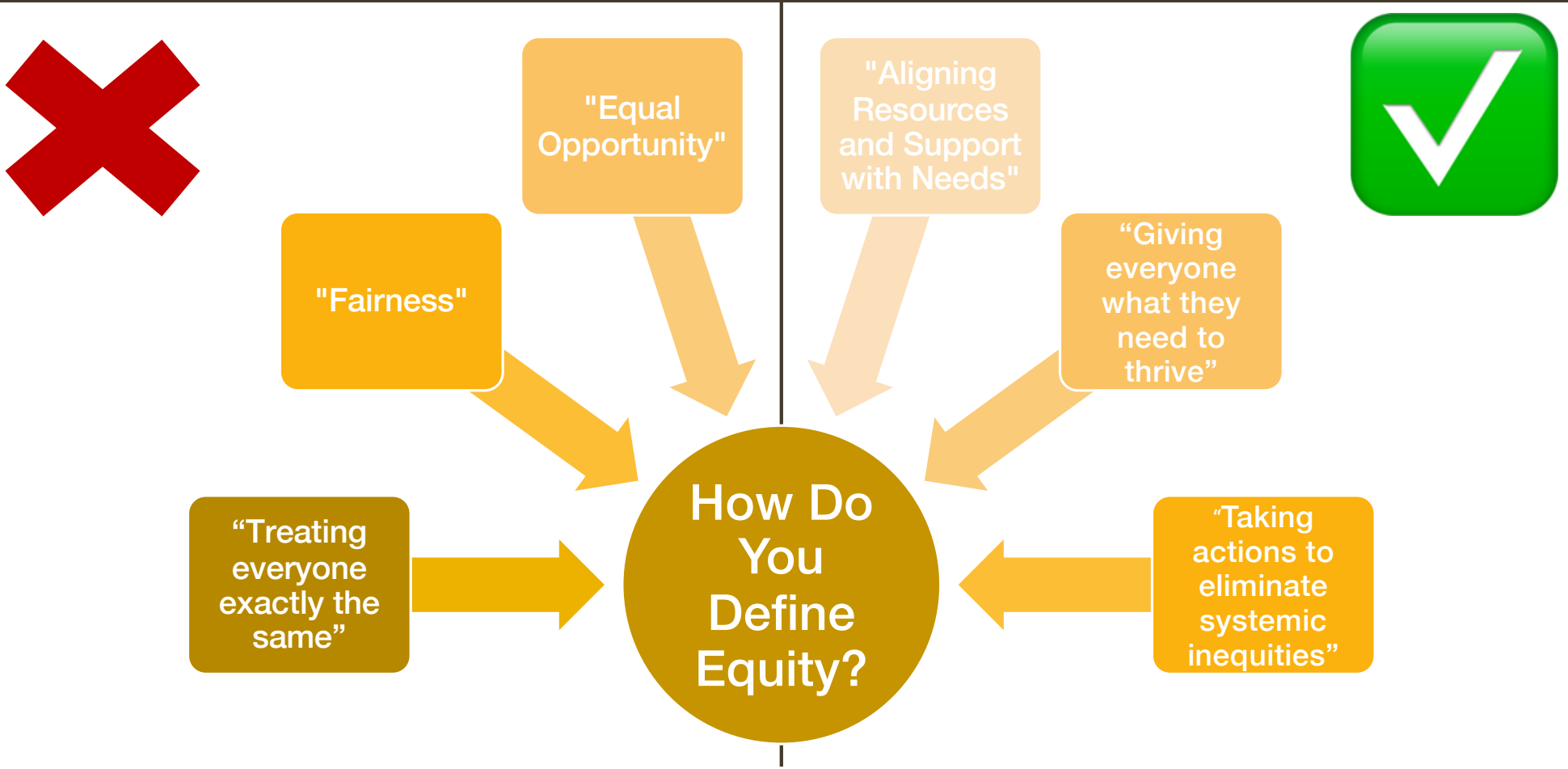
Defining Equity



Toward an Understanding of Equity & Equity Mindedness

Equity refers to a heightened focus on groups experiencing **disproportionate impact** in order to remediate disparities in their **experiences** and **outcomes**.

Being systemically aware

Being racially conscious and affirming

Demanding institutional responsibility and accountability

Assuming personal responsibility and accountability

Caring deeply about students, their lived experiences and their success

E. M. Bensimon

Equity-Mindedness in the COVID-19 Context

Ensuring that all students, regardless of their identities or circumstances, can participate in the virtual learning space in ways that will be value-added to achieving their personal and academic goals. Special attention must be given to digital equity in that students must have access to the technology and technological knowledge they need to seamlessly access and make meaningful contributions to the virtual learning space.

Harris III & Wood

What Derails Equity?

- A culture of compliance
- A culture of complacency
- Deficit perspectives
- A lack of data transparency
- Instability
- Misappropriation and a lack of intentionality
- Poor conceptualization of equity
- Marginalization
- Siloing
- A lack of institutional buy-in
- Exceptionalism
- Toxic Resistance
- Toxic Support

What Derails Equity?

COMPLIANCE: “Listen. Let’s just do what we have to do to secure our funding and get the state/district of our a***s.”

COMPLACENCY: “Why do we have to do this? Nothing’s going to change. The problem is so much bigger than me/us.”

DEFICIT PERSPECTIVES: “Now they want everyone to go right into college level math/English. That’s crazy. Some of these students have no chance of succeeding.”

DATA TRANSPARENCY: “We have all this data, but what does it mean? What should I make of it?”

INSTABILITY: “We had an amazing VPI who was an equity champion, but she left to be president at another college.”

MISAPPROPRIATION AND INTENTIONALITY: “Can we use equity monies to buy this copier? It’s not exactly aligned with equity, but everyone will eventually benefit from it.”

What Derails Equity?

POOR CONCEPTUALIZATION: “Let’s be honest, equity really means lowering standards and rigor.”

MARGINALIZATION: “All of our equity work takes place in EOP/Umoja/Puente.”

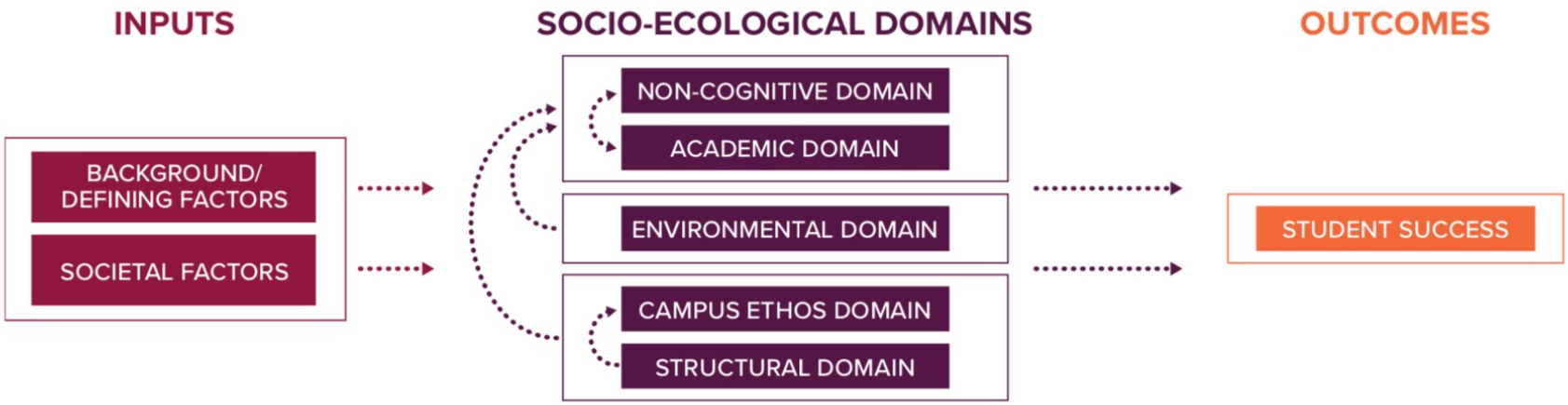
SILOING: “Oh no, the equity plan is due soon! Let’s have the dean and [one other person] write it.”

INSTITUTIONAL BUY-IN: ”We have an equity plan, but no one really takes it seriously. We did what we had to do to get the money.”

EXCEPTIONALISM: “We aren’t like the other colleges in the State. We have the highest graduation rates so we don’t need to worry about equity.”

EQUITY-DEPRIVED INSTITUTINAL CULTURES . . .

Socio-Ecological Outcomes (SEO) Model



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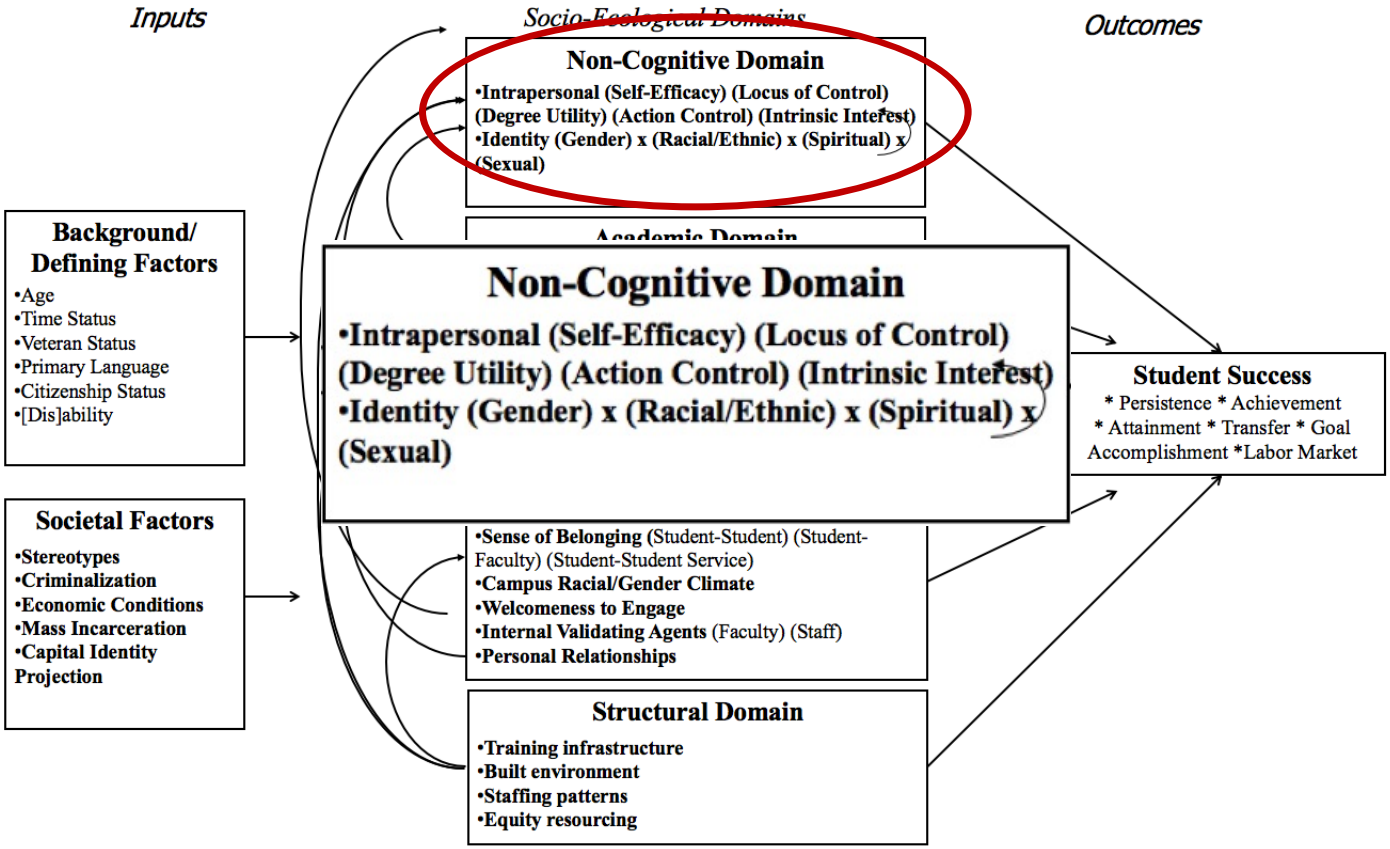

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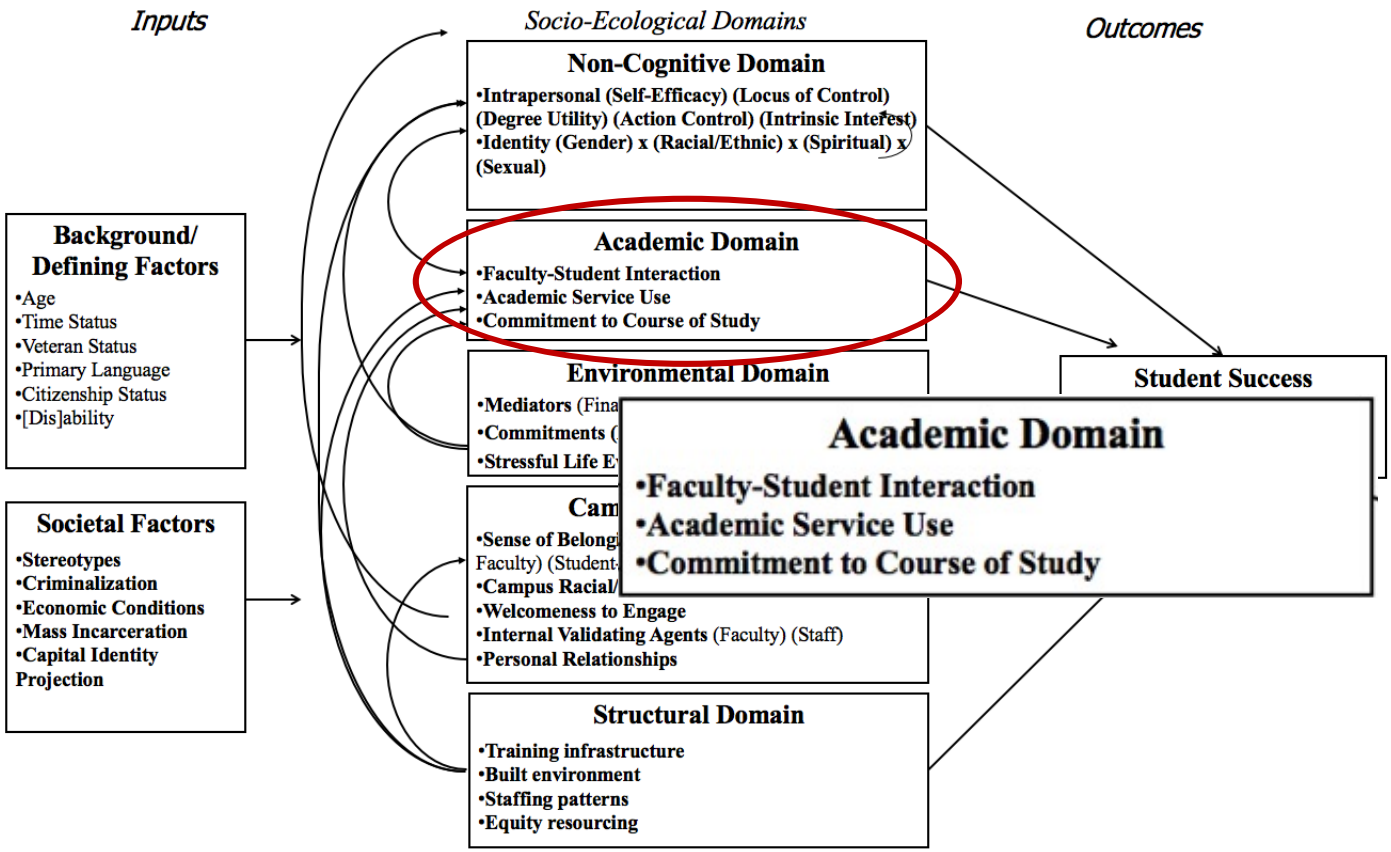

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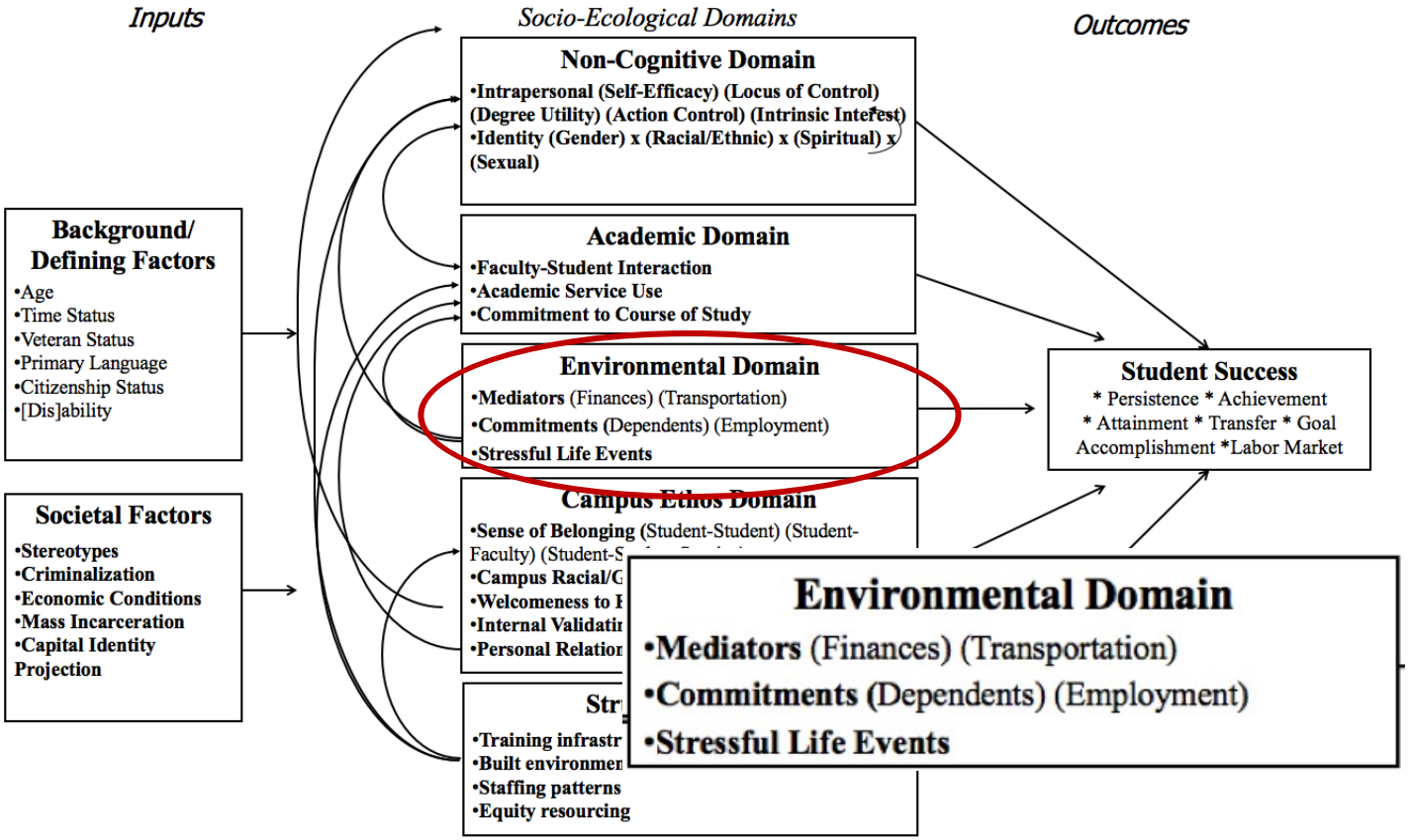

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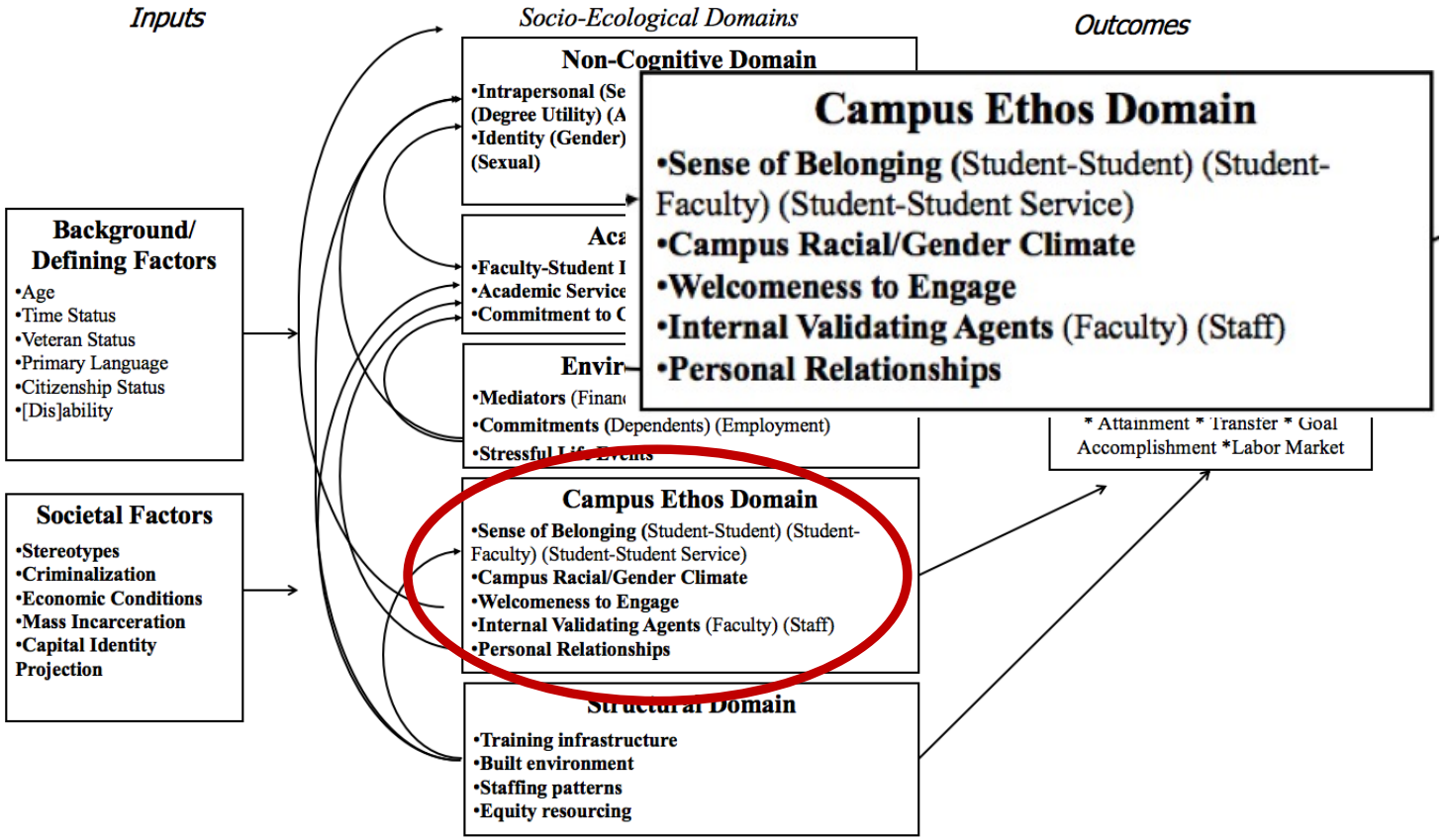

Recommendations for State Policymakers

Establish Equity Benchmarks and Milestones for the 40-40-20 Educational Attainment Goal

Conduct An Equity Audit of All State Higher Education Policies

Require All Public Colleges and Universities to Develop Equity Plans That Align With 40-40-20

Hire Equity-Minded Institutional Leadership

Incorporate Equity Into All Personnel Evaluation Processes

Invest in a Robust State Data System with Data Disaggregation Customizable Dashboards

Require Every High School Senior to Complete and Submit an Application for Admission to a Public Institution in the State

Invest in Dual Enrollment Programs that Target Underrepresented Students

Recommendations for Institutional Practice

Incorporate Equity Goals into Strategic Planning

Build the Equity-Minded Capacity of All Postsecondary Educators

Change Hiring Processes

Coordinate Efforts Around Basic Needs

Engage in Equity-Minded Institutional Research

Create Opportunities to Lift Students' Voices

Thank You!

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