

## ATD Cultural Equity & Awareness Intervention “A Closed Mouth Doesn’t Get Fed”: Culture of Poverty Flex Workshop

On Tuesday, August 21, faculty attended a two-hour Flex workshop designed to increase awareness and sensitivity to poverty as an issue among LAHC students. Facilitated by Lisa Mednick Takami, Curriculum Specialist, Mercy Yanez, Associate Dean for EOP&S and CalWorks, and Mario Lacy, ASO President, the workshop opened by highlighting surrounding community demographics, particularly the low number of college degrees attained, the high number of single parent households, and the high number of students at or below the poverty level, 40.8%, in the cities of Carson, Wilmington, and San Pedro.

Second, an overview of the ATD data findings was provided to remind faculty that ATD’s main objective at LAHC is increasing student retention and degree attainment among those groups whose numbers lag the most: African-American males, Latino males, and African-American females. The main workshop component engaged faculty in playing the simulation game, “The Finish Line” developed by ATD headquarters in Baltimore, MD. The game enables players to “walk a mile” in the shoes of a community college student challenged in getting to the finish line, representing college graduation. Game characters range in age and background and face diverse obstacles in proceeding through college including transportation, finances, family responsibilities, and pre-college preparation. Success factors included: internships; peer, faculty and community support; mentors; and contextualized and industry-aligned curriculum.

Following the simulation game, faculty shared what they had learned and generated specific ways in which to incorporate “The Finish Line” into classroom practice. A sociology professor, for example, plans to have students play the game and then write their own version using examples from their lives; an ESL instructor intends to ask students to write a paragraph for homework after participating in the simulation game. Faculty were provided with resources including a campus-wide student services brochure, information on how to obtain the game for classroom use, and announcement of an upcoming pamphlet on financial literacy workshops and coaching assistance available at the Youth WorkSource Center on campus. Because

workshop evaluations were overwhelmingly positive, the workshop will likely be offered again for winter flex in January. For information regarding the workshop or “The Finish Line” game, please contact Lisa Mednick Takami at [medniclc@lahc.edu](mailto:medniclc@lahc.edu) or at ext. 4513. While we have copies of the game on campus, you may also contact Achieving the Dream at this link: [http://www.achievingthedream.org/resource/finish\\_line](http://www.achievingthedream.org/resource/finish_line).