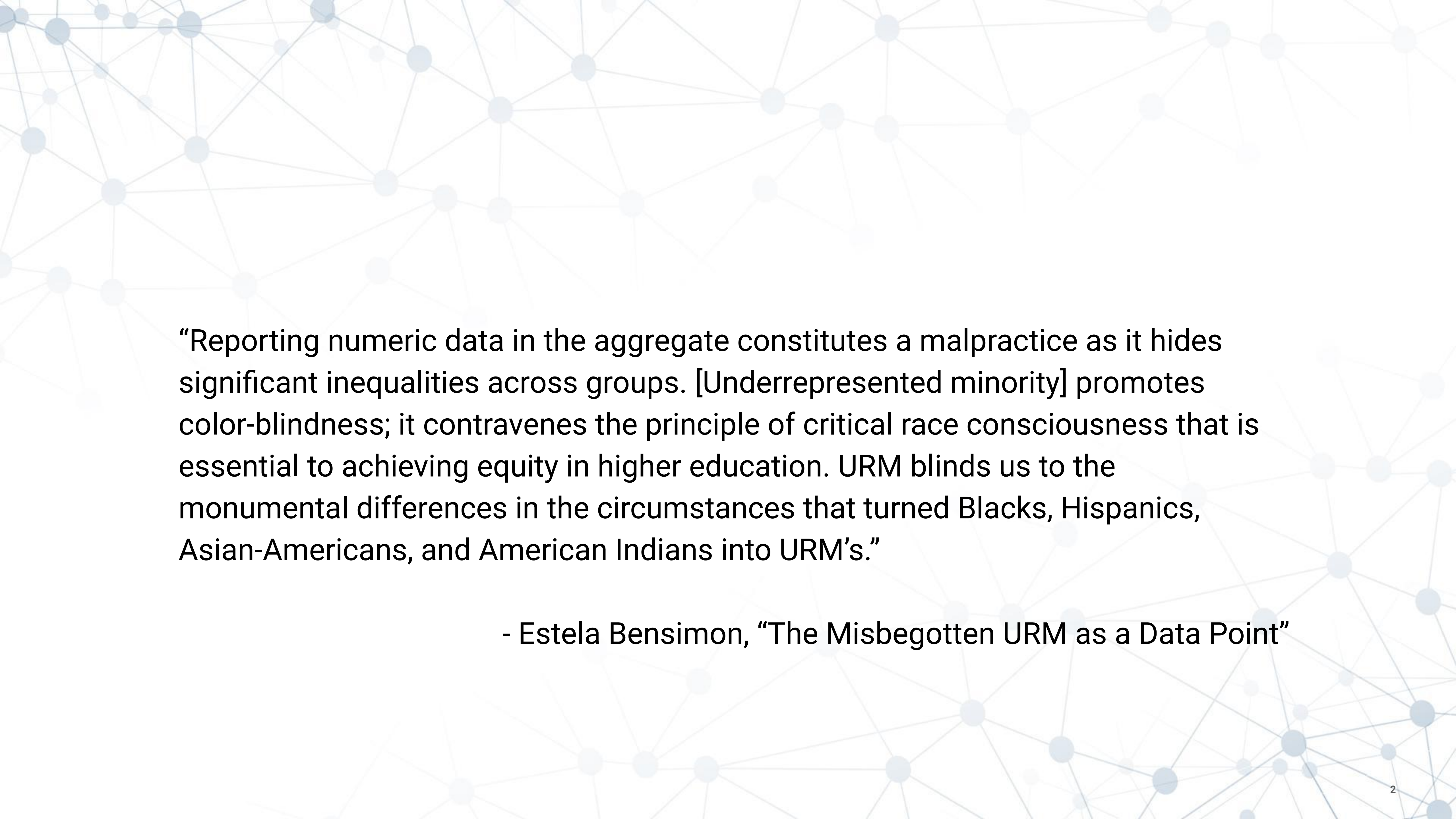




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**Toward Ending the Monolithic View of
“Underrepresented Students”: Why Higher
Education Must Account for Racial, Ethnic, and
Economic Variations in Barriers to Equity**

Robert McGuire
June 2022 for ASU REMOTE



“Reporting numeric data in the aggregate constitutes a malpractice as it hides significant inequalities across groups. [Underrepresented minority] promotes color-blindness; it contravenes the principle of critical race consciousness that is essential to achieving equity in higher education. URM blinds us to the monumental differences in the circumstances that turned Blacks, Hispanics, Asian-Americans, and American Indians into URM’s.”

- Estela Bensimon, “The Misbegotten URM as a Data Point”

The work in progress



- ▶ What does disaggregated data show about how barriers to equity in higher education vary for specific student populations?
- ▶ Populations of interest: Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian American and Pacific Islander, poverty-affected, and first-generation students
- ▶ Goal of the report is to advance intersectional and data-informed conversations about equity in digital learning
- ▶ Process: Literature review + original interviews with experts including students, educators, and researchers

Limited disaggregated data

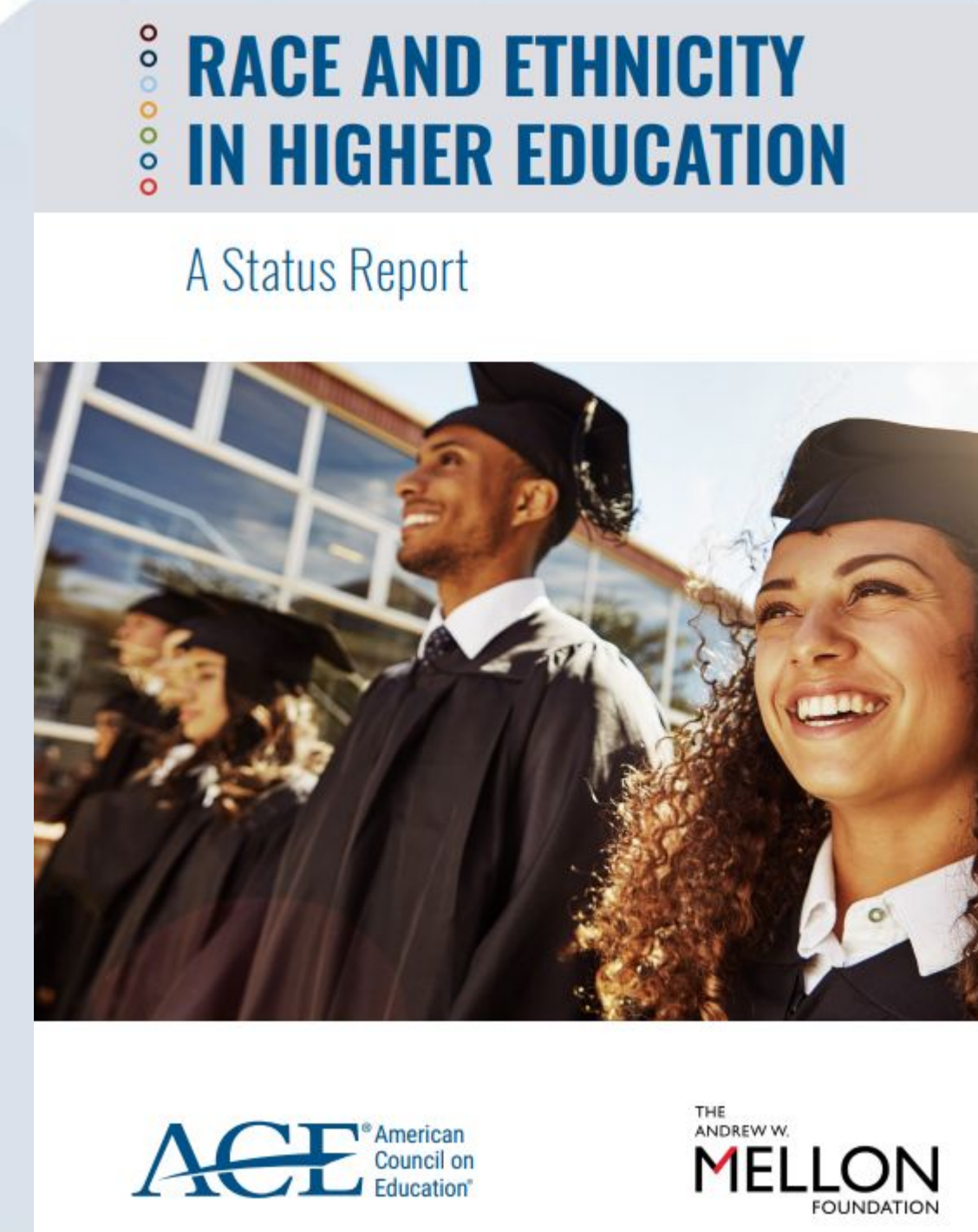


- ▶ Student data is rarely disaggregated. (But not never.)
- ▶ The disaggregated that does exist goes only so far. (i.e. columns on white students, Black students, and “other minorities.”)
- ▶ Even less disaggregated data for digital learning.
- ▶ Student data tends to be limited to inputs and outputs. (i.e. admissions and commencement) There is little disaggregated data about student experiences of barriers to equity while in college and of what works.

Some disaggregated data

**American Council on
Education's *Race and Ethnicity
In Higher Education*, 2019 and
2020 supplement**

<https://www.equityinhighered.org/>



Also of interest



AIHEC AIMS

American Indian Measures of Success
database

Managed by The American Indian Higher
Education Consortium

<http://www.aihec.org/our-stories/measuresSuccess.htm>

SEARAC/IHEP

*"Everyone Deserves to be Seen:"
Recommendations for Improved Federal Data on
Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders*

The Southeast Asia Resource Action Center and
the Institute for Higher Education Policy

<https://www.searac.org/education/everyone-deserves-to-be-seen-hep-and-searac-release-recommendations-for-improved-federal-data-on-aapi-communities/>

Why does disaggregation matter?



- ▶ Illuminate group heterogeneity

Why does disaggregation matter?



- ▶ Illuminate group heterogeneity
- ▶ Illuminate students' assets

Why does disaggregation matter?



- ▶ Illuminate group heterogeneity
- ▶ Illuminate students' assets
- ▶ Illuminate overlooked barriers to equity
- ▶ Enable intersectional analysis
- ▶ Enable localization
- ▶ Illuminate systemic inequities and enable institutional transformation that centers equity

Discovering individual student experiences

There is a perceived tension between data and personalization.

Institutions must better understand patterns of lived experiences and also make space to understand students individually.



Two early findings



Students value safe space to address issues of identity

Students value compassion and kindness

In summary . . .



- ▶ Broad agreement that it's counterproductive to treat all minoritized and poverty affected students as a monolith and agreement that their experiences of barriers to equity vary.
- ▶ But there is not enough disaggregated data to show comprehensively how those variations are at work.
- ▶ Advancing equity efforts will depend on better disaggregated data and on creating systems and cultures to understand students individually.
- ▶ Interviews start to illuminate the question to show:
 - student heterogeneity
 - student assets
 - unanticipated barriers to equity
 - what's locally relevant
 - the institutional role in systemic inequities

Thank You

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