February 3, 2021 #EquityChat
David Helene (@David_Helene),
CEO of Edquity (@edquityapp)

@SDMesaPrez It's Wednesday and that's time for #EquityChat sponsored by @CollegeFutures w/your #EquityAvengers @Iamkeithcurry & @SDMesaPrez ! Tonight our guest is for @edquityapp CEO @David_Helene ! Join us to learn about emergency funds w/an equity lens. Welcome David!

@SDMesaPrez Q1. @David_Helene Our education, background, and experiences make us who we are. Please tell us about the non-resume you? We want to know what's not on your resume. #EquityChat @Iamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures
@David_Helene I was born/raised in Brooklyn, which exposed me to diff communities & experiences from a young age (I still live in Brooklyn bc #whereBrooklynat). Both parents were teachers, who left edu to start small businesses, so edu & entrepreneurship were valued @🏠 #EquityChat
@David_Helene I had the #RealPrivilege of being able to focus only on my studies at college & never had to worry about my basic needs. But my Dad was a #RealCollege student at Hunter, though at a time when tuition was ~0. He was able to go to college bc policy made it possible. #EquityChat
> @David_Helene I've internalized that my own experience was a gift made possible bc policy made it so for my dad. And I've been hell bent on making sure we create like policy that makes college completion realistic for other #RealCollege students like my dad bc justice requires it. #EquityChat
> @saragoldrickrab Ok you just introduced me to a new hashtag! @hope4college I am loving #RealPrivilege [GIF: https://twitter.com/i/status/1357133725235044352]
>> @ahandsintheair Right?!?! That's so good!

@Iamkeithcurry Q2. @David_Helene . Tell us about @edquityapp? And your work as the @edquityapp? @equityavengers @edquityapp #EquityChat #
@David_Helene As you and @SDMesaPrez know well, emergency aid is an absolutely essential modern tool to address #RealCollege students' basic needs. @edquityapp helps institutions deliver it equitably and easily, maximizing enrollment, retention, & graduation. #EquityChat
> @ahandsintheair .@sdmesacollege is #allin. We can't wait to maximize our partnership and support our students in meaningful, efficient, effective and real ways!
> @David_Helene Based on the research of our CSO @saragoldrickrab (🙌), our approach treats students with dignity. No one has to perform their poverty to get help. Students who need help are taken seriously & given support fast. And funds get to students who can benefit the most. #EquityChat
>> @ahandsintheair We launched our app yesterday and … wow! All I can say is Thank You for having dignity as a core value as we support our students during these unprecedented times!
>> @David_Helene Traditional emergency aid is fraught with administrative burden and bias. Colleges lose money, students lose time -- and their prospects for persisting. We're proving there's a better way that reduces stress for everyone, students and staff. #EquityChat @Iamkeithcurry @SDMesaPrez
>>> @ahandsintheair 🙌🏽🙌🏻🙌🏾🙌🏼🙌🏿
>>> @David_Helene Processing a single application can take 2-10 hours of college staff time. That's a lot! We handle the end to end process: application, decisioning, distribution, compliance reporting. #EquityChat @Iamkeithcurry @SDMesaPrez

@David_Helene Our platform relieves these burdens, so college staff & faculty can focus on the student-centered work of advising/teaching. The pandemic is stressful for everyone, & we know students aren't the only ones facing basic needs insecurity. #EquityChat @Iamkeithcurry @SDMesaPrez

@David_Helene Most important, Edquity treats an emergency like an emergency. We receive and process applications and distribute funds all in the same day, 24/7. Students can't afford to wait, so we waste no time. #EquityChat @Iamkeithcurry @SDMesaPrez

@saragoldrickrab [GIF: https://twitter.com/i/status/1357135185146482688]

@LaurenMcgowan The @unitedwaykc team thinks that taking @edquityapp to scale is key to increasing persistence & completion for #RealCollege students. We must trust students when they have a financial emergency and trust that with $ they can resolve that emergency. @edquityapp does that & more

@David_Helene I know I'm biased but even if you removed me from the @edquityapp team, I'd still tell everyone I know that there are few people who know as much about anti-poverty work as @LaurenMcgowan.

@TraciKirtley Same for us at @BelieveStudents!

@saragoldrickrab #fachat #sachat #emchat @SwipeHunger @RiseFreeOrg @swiftstudents

@saragoldrickrab Hey @pyeper @LaurenMcgowan @PresidentBaston @markmilliron @iamwesmoore @ChloeBMcKenzie chat with us!

@ChloeBMcKenzie I'm in

@PencilearsArt my experience with edquity is there is no way to tell them what you need.they decide what you are going to get based on your demographic information. you cannot say "I need this much to pay my rent" you cannot show them a bill you need help with, you get what you get.

@PencilearsArt in addition their app is help together with twine and bailing wire, it is designed to skim the information from your banking habits and you don't bank with a bank who will allow them to do this, the service does not function.

@PencilearsArt they are a poor replacement for a functioning financial aid department, and a poor replacement for 2k backdated monthly pandemic releif checks from the government.

@SDMesaPrez Q3. @David_Helene How does the @edquityapp approach promote racial equity? #EquityChat @Iamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures @edquityapp

@David_Helene This may be the single most important issue we focus on @edquityapp #EquityChat

@David_Helene Structural racism pervades typical emergency aid design, w/ a focus on "deservingness" & other microaggressions. Applications often make students jump through hoops and wait days, even weeks, for help. #EquityChat @Iamkeithcurry @SDMesaPrez

@David_Helene Often, student need is assessed in ways that allow for implicit bias or given out on a "first-come, first-served" basis that advantages white students & those with family wealth. #EquityChat @Iamkeithcurry @SDMesaPrez

@David_Helene Other programs assess need using FAFSA EFC, which neglects core causes of racial wealth inequality such as debt, which again, disadvantage minoritized students. #EquityChat @Iamkeithcurry @SDMesaPrez

@David_Helene Our approach works the opposite way. We are universally accessible, understandable, and caring. We use a decisioning framework that focuses most on objective conditions more often experienced by BIPOC students. #EquityChat @Iamkeithcurry @SDMesaPrez https://t.co/lJplPtkyCR

@SDMesaPrez This is amazing

@ahandsintheair It is! We dipped our toes in for our initial roll out and plan to completely submerge ourselves moving forward. Ripples will be made and felt by our students!

@David_Helene We also use lessons from public health to deal w/ resource scarcity & avoid first-come, first-served funding, prioritizing using objective criteria. And we review the data to assess our actual impact to continuously refine our approach. #EquityChat @Iamkeithcurry @SDMesaPrez

@weeepam_ Serving large public institutions atm? How many EAID cases are they seeing? We serve 55k students & (lengthy)applications aren't slowing down at all. How do we best handle this kind of VOLUME in a TIMELY manner while being hyper sensitive to who's applying / who's not & why. 😫

@Iamkeithcurry Q4.@David_Helene. Many @CalCommColleges have begun to receive the HEERF II. What advice would you give to higher education and @CalCommColleges leaders as they prepare to spend the HEERF II funds? @edquityapp #EquityChat @SDMesaPrez @Iamkeithcurry

@David_Helene Recognize that this is a major opp for innovation & systems change, and a chance to move to more aspirational practices away from the same old thing. It's also a chance to prove to the feds and states that emergency aid is a critical and effective tool they must fund. #EquityChat

@David_Helene HEERF II thankfully offers greater flexibility than CARES. Students don't have to be T4 eligible (at least based on language we've seen), and they don't even have to be currently enrolled in some cases. Awards can also be made for anything w/in COA. #EquityChat

@David_Helene That said, a big change is institutions must prioritize students w/ "exceptional need", which means that the rationale for funding & ability to represent the methodology for determining need may be scrutinized more. @edquityapp makes that easy. #EquityChat

@David_Helene My advice to leaders: make the process easy for students, prioritize equity in decision making, and make it fast -- but NOT first-come, first-served. #EquityChat @Iamkeithcurry @SDMesaPrez

@SDMesaPrez Q5. @David_Helene Why is emergency aid to students so essential, and what evidence do you have that supports @edquityapp has been working? #EquityChat @Iamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures

@David_Helene Unconditional cash transfers are clearly effective anti-poverty tools all over the world. Cash is king when it comes to addressing basic needs flexibly and with dignity. Yet another study was covered just today on this topic. #EquityChat https://t.co/ofDwdvBcPF

@David_Helene As you know, we have the 🐐 in @saragoldrickrab to ensure our work is grounded in ongoing research and to ensure we understand our ongoing impact. #EquityChat

Edquity's research-informed approach to distributing emergency aid

edquity

Edquity is the first-ever emergency aid platform for colleges, aimed at helping to improve students' basic needs and financial security. To support students, including the 3 million who drop out every year due to a time-sensitive financial crisis, Edquity provides partner colleges with a white-labeled mobile app and web platform where students can apply for emergency grants, discover emergency resources, receive personalized financial management, and more.

When we say "research-informed," we mean it.

We created the first-ever emergency aid platform hand-in-hand with our Chief Strategy Officer, Dr. Sara Goldrick-Rab, the nation's leading expert on student basic needs insecurity.

"The evidence is clear: cash transfers are essential to addressing widespread financial precarity among college students. Delivering that support quickly and with minimal red tape is essential to ensuring that students succeed."

- Dr. Sara Goldrick-Rab

Dr. Goldrick-Rab, who won Temple University's first-ever Carnegie Fellowship, is a professor and research scientist whose work focuses on policies that aim to reduce socioeconomic and racial inequalities.

In addition to leading the first experimental trial of need-based financial aid, and conducting research funded by numerous federal agencies, Dr. Goldrick-Rab founded The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice. Since 2013, The Hope Center has conducted the leading research on emergency aid and student basic needs insecurity.

Moreover, Dr. Goldrick-Rab has authored numerous policy reports and literature on the subject of college financial insecurity, including the book Paying the Price: College Costs, Financial Aid, and the Betrayal of the American Dream. The Chronicle of Higher Education once referred to Dr. Goldrick-Rab as "a defender of impoverished students, and a scholar of their struggles."

Thanks to Dr. Goldrick-Rab, our emergency aid platform is rooted in both conceptual and empirical evidence on today's students. Moreover, it draws extensively from both her own expertise and the broader fields of sociology, psychology, and economics.

edquity.co   inquiries@edquity.co   @edquityapp

@David_Helene @Hope4College found that during the first wave of federal emergency aid (CARES), it took colleges on average 13 days to turn money around to students, which is devastatingly long. #EquityChat @Iamkeithcurry @SDMesaPrez

@David_Helene Meanwhile, we've helped students go from application to claiming funds in on average 25 hours and 87% of students we've served have reported that the grant has helped their likelihood of persisting. #EquityChat @Iamkeithcurry @SDMesaPrez

@David_Helene We are proud to be serving 30+ colleges (w/ serious love to @compton_college, our first CA partner, & @sdmesacollege) & have processed over 30,000 applications & distributed over $13MM in the last 7 mos. $2.5MM of that came in the last mo. #EquityChat @Iamkeithcurry @SDMesaPrez

@David_Helene We have data from our partners indicating that we've served a proportion of minoritized students that are disproportionate relative to the demographics of the overall student population. #EquityChat @Iamkeithcurry @SDMesaPrez

@David_Helene Most importantly, we'll be releasing research shortly showing that during the pandemic we've doubled graduation rates among students we've served at one of our earliest partners, one that both of you know quite well. #EquityChat @Iamkeithcurry @SDMesaPrez

@mzinshteyn Ah! Please share with me this research once it is out!

@saragoldrickrab 👏🏻

@saragoldrickrab @ronlieber you're going to want to check out the whole #EquityChat tonight- relevant to your book

@Iamkeithcurry Q6.@David_Helene. What gives you hope? @edquityapp #EquityAvengers @SDMesaPrez @Iamkeithcurry.

@David_Helene Those early results 👆! But also the election, and trends in more enlightened policy. I'm heartened to see emergency aid continue to be included in the stimulus packages, and to see a third stimulus likely coming. #EquityChat @Iamkeithcurry @SDMesaPrez

@SDMesaPrez Me too…sunlight is peeking through the clouds @David_Helene [GIF: https://twitter.com/i/status/1357144464624545794]

@David_Helene This also gives me a lot of hope:
https://twitter.com/bmckib/status/1357091951720464390?s=20&t=47aXiwBFZ1-aF05lz7XzSA
@David_Helene And with the above in mind, we need to see sustained emergency aid for students &
bills like @SenTinaSmith's proposed Oct bill that would provide YoY federal funding for EA passed.
States also need to do more to provide sustained appropriations for annual EA. #EquityChat
@David_Helene And last: everytime I'm in a room (Zoom?) with leaders like @Iamkeithcurry,
@SDMesaPrez, @LoweryHart, @ChancellorMay I have hope. We have transformative leaders fighting
their ❤️s out for students. It's hard not to have hope when you see the intensity of that fight.
#EdquityChat
@David_Helene It's also good to see states like California respond to #EquityAvengers and continue to lead the
way on state-based #RealCollege policy, with Governor Newsom including $100MM in emergency aid to CCs this
year. #EquityChat @Iamkeithcurry @SDMesaPrez

@SDMesaPrez Q7. @David_Helene What are you reading? And what book(s) would you recommend we consider
reading? #EquityChat @Iamkeithcurry
@David_Helene We've actually put together a reading list that has inspired our work and speaks to issues like scarcity,
administrative burden, the importance of cash transfer, and impacts of policy on #RealCollege students that I'd highly
recommend. #EquityChat https://t.co/VaBxPNjtmb
@David_Helene I also think a lot about leadership, which I know you and @Iamkeithcurry do too. The Advantage
by Patrick Lencioni has been tremendously helpful as I think about culture building and broader organizational
health, and applies to all sort of leadership environments. #EquityChat
@David_Helene Finally, Automating Inequality by Virginia Eubanks, for someone who runs an antipoverty
tech co., is a key reminder that tech is no panacea. Books like that motivate us @edquityapp & reinforce
the need for our practice of building w/ the communities we serve. #EquityChat
@ahandsintheair 🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥

@SDMesaPrez TY @David_Helene @edquityapp for giving us so much to learn tonight on #EquityChat I'm going back to
read a few more times..This work is changing lives! Join us next week as we host Dr Gabrielle Starr @pomonacollege
President! @Iamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityAvengersOut
@ahandsintheair Loved everything about this #EquityChat. @JlynnAleman, check out the dialogue!
@David_Helene Always honored to be on a thread with you and @Iamkeithcurry!