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## Factors Influencing the Institutionalization of Diversity in Higher Education

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**Factors Influencing the Institutionalization of Diversity in Higher Education**

**By**

**Kelly S. Meier**

**This Dissertation is Submitted in Partial Fulfillment**

**of the Requirements for**

**the Educational Doctorate Degree**

**in Educational Leadership**

**Minnesota State University, Mankato**

**Mankato, Minnesota**

**May 2012**

Factors Influencing the Institutionalization of Diversity in Higher Education

Kelly S. Meier

This dissertation has been examined and approved by the following members of the dissertation committee.

Dr. Ginger L. Zierdt, Advisor

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### **Abstract**

To understand the impact of diversity in higher education, it is important to consider the critical role that diversity plays in the educational process. This requires a broader understanding of the influence diversity can have on the curricular, co-curricular, and interpersonal experience of a developing college student (Denson & Chang, 2009). Strategies for anchoring diversity as a core value or relating it to the inner workings of an institution are in demand (Chun & Evans, 2008). The purpose of this study was to identify highly actualized diversity initiatives and practices that can be replicated at other institutions meeting the sample criterion demographic.

The methodology for this study involved a critical case study approach to highlight an institution of higher education that demonstrates exceptional diversity practices. Identifying a model institution with regard to diversity work and then studying it as a singular example provides practical strategies of how to best institutionalize diversity in higher education.

An institution held in high esteem for best practices in diversity work was identified and interviews were conducted with various community members representing broad campus constituent groups. Interviews were transcribed, analyzed, and coded for the following themes: a commitment to diversity incorporated into the institutional mission of the institution; diversity is considered by major areas of the institution as central to the work of that area; diversity is integrated into the generalized curriculum of the institution; co-curricular program and activities include diversity as a regular part of the experiences offered to the University community; White students are clearly involved

in diversity and eager to engage in opportunities related to the diversity learning process; the University community celebrates success related to diversity education and initiatives; and the University community is encouraged and rewarded for engaging in diversity work.

The findings of this study attempt to merge the concept of embedded diversity practices with strategic, practical identified initiatives to help institutional leaders begin the process of transforming Academia. By understanding successful practices and the leadership strategies employed to make change at other institutions, we can better comprehend how to apply those concepts to other institutions of higher education. Insight gained from this study of an exemplar institution will provide perspective about the following:

1. How the institution as a whole was involved in diversity work.
2. How White students were impacted by diversity initiatives.
3. How diversity work was encouraged and rewarded at the institution.



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I am thankful to my mentor, Henry Morris, for teaching me so much about diversity over the past 22 years. It is because of him that I became invested in studying this topic.

I would like to acknowledge the people who participated in this study. Their commitment and enthusiasm for diversity work serves as an inspiration to everyone in higher education that is working to further diversity and inclusivity.

I am indebted to my husband for his unyielding support. His support and love made it possible for me to realize this dream.

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## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

#### **Background of the Problem**

The rise of diversity as an integral part of the student learning experience in higher education has become a critical component of the post-secondary learning environment. Demands for a workforce expected to interact within a global society and the changing demographics of the United States present a need for an increase in diversity efforts (Chun & Evans, 2008; Denson & Chang, 2009). As our country continues to diversify culturally and ethnically, so will institutions of higher education both in terms of student profile and faculty and staff composition. The effort to help academic leaders be transformative in organizational approaches calls for further exploration of best practices and innovations in diversity work and enhancement.

To understand the impact of diversity in higher education, it is important to consider the critical role that diversity plays in the educational process. This requires a broader understanding of the influence diversity can have on the curricular, co-curricular, and interpersonal experience of a developing college student (Denson & Chang, 2009). If diversity is not embedded into the educational mission of the institution, its value is negated as an integral part of the educational mission (Alger, 1997). Diversity must be a catalyst embedded in all facets of the institution. Furthermore, as competition for resources in a university environment increases, those strategic initiatives that are identified as “mission-driven” will be funded. This reality heightens the need for diversity to be embedded in the institutional culture and realized as a primary value or

strategic priority. This is not an easy task and most institutional leaders are searching for an understanding of key components and strategies that will help effectively institutionalize diversity as it reflects to the mission of the institution.

In some cases, the combination of marketplace competition and an increasingly diverse student body demographic demands an inclusive, organizational culture. For others, institutionalizing diversity is a higher learning value and the quest to provide a richer educational environment is the driving force. In many colleges and universities, these motives are not mutually exclusive. As post-secondary institutions continue to struggle with the most effective way to advance diversity in the institution, there is a predominant need for organizational change strategies related to diversity.

Scholars have explored transformational theories related to connecting the academy to engaged diversity work. Strategies for anchoring diversity as a core value or relating it to the inner workings of an institution are in demand (Chun & Evans, 2008). Academic leaders understand the importance of implementing diversity initiatives that are embedded into the institution as a whole (Wade-Golden & Matlock, 2007). This realization heightens the need for new research-based implementation strategies to propel diversity initiatives on college campuses. In the past 10 years, higher education leaders have created task forces and commissions focused on diversity work. These efforts have resulted in individualized initiatives such as increased resources for underrepresented students, new multicultural programs, and broad based cultural events, to name a few. The literature, however, notes that diversity must be rooted in the infrastructure of an institution rather than limited to isolated initiatives that symbolize an agenda item that

has the potential to be trivialized (Brayboy, 2003). Institutionalizing diversity should be viewed as a process rather than an outcome (Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005).

One of the challenges facing institutional leaders is the lack of information available regarding best practices in diversity. Higher education leaders are seeking new ways to understand the complexities of diversity work and moreover gain insight into successful implementation strategies. Of further importance is the exploration of specific strategies used by a benchmark institution to institutionalize diversity. Exploration into how academic leaders have been able to embed diversity into the mission-driven practices of the institution will add to the practical resources available to those seeking new ideas on this topic.

The literature reflects limited information regarding the tactical strategies and best practices in implementing diversity initiatives on college campuses. While researchers have explored the role of specific components of an academic community such as curriculum development, recruiting and retaining faculty and staff, student recruitment practices, and how to bring cultural awareness to a campus community, limited information is available about how to weave diversity into the fabric of an institution that it is rooted in every facet of institutional programs and process. As researchers have considered the myriad of variables associated with actualizing diversity on a college campus, sporadic assertions have been revealed. This study attempts to merge the concept of imbedded diversity practices with strategic, practical identified initiatives to help institutional leaders begin the process of transforming Academia.

### **Significance of the Research**

A case study of New Jersey college and universities conducted by Knox in 2005 highlighted specific strategies for increased inclusion such as effective policy development, programs, student recruitment efforts, and faculty/staff representation. This study was significant in understanding the impact of an institutionalized diversity effort in the New Jersey area. The growing need for strategic diversity practices in higher education, however, demands a broader understanding of those institutions that have been successful in this endeavor. By understanding successful practices and the leadership strategies employed to make change at other institutions, we can better comprehend how to apply those concepts to other institutions of higher education.

### **Purpose Statement**

This purpose of this study is to identify highly actualized diversity initiatives and practices that can be replicated at other institutions meeting the sample criterion demographic.

### **Research Questions**

4. How is the institution as a whole involved in diversity work?
5. How are White students impacted by diversity initiatives?
6. How is diversity work encouraged and rewarded at the institution?

### **Definition of Key Term**

Diversity: The definition of diversity is broad in many contexts. For the purpose of this study, the definition of diversity is confined to racial identity or non-white persons in higher education.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

This study is limited to examining diversity work related to the four major domestic ethnic groups: African American, American Indian, Asian American, and Latino/Hispanic American. The study will focus on one institution in the Midwest and the results will be limited to the conditions and parameters associated with this specific organization. In addition, the researcher works in the field of institutional diversity in higher education and has extensive experience and knowledge of the field.

## **Chapter II**

### **Review of the Literature**

The origination of diversity in higher education is often contextualized by court cases rooted in affirmative action issues. The University of California v. Bakke and Hopwood v. Texas cases in 1978 exemplify this point by offering differing opinions about the need for racial diversity as a consideration in University admission practices. Both cases have contrasting viewpoints about how racial diversity impacts the furthering of global education in an institution of higher education. The Bakke case reinforced the need for racial diversity to be connected to the advancement of diversity education while the Hopwood case ruling stated that ethnicity considerations were not prudent in the formation of a diverse educational environment (Pursley, 2003-2004). While the courts have continually struggled with the affirmative side of diversity as a condition for admission practices, administrators are also working to advance the overall educational experience for students in an increasingly global society.

As practitioners search for an appropriate response to the need to globalize post-secondary education, a myriad of variables confound the solution. Increasing the number of underrepresented students enrolled reveals a larger task involving preparing a University environment to be receptive in becoming a diverse community (Chang, 2002).

### **Diversity in Higher Education**

#### **Defining Diversity**

What is diversity and how does it impact the educational process in higher education? The broad answer to this question provides some of the confusion for those

responsible for implementing responsive diversity programs (Levinson, 2003). In the 2003 Higher Learning Commission Handbook of Accreditation, the commission statement on diversity considers diversity a variable term with provisions for institutions to define it according to the constituents they seek to serve. In its broadest definition, it might seem that diversity could be construed as a word that applies to “all” rather than a term that could be used to build inclusivity and educate the majority about groups and individuals that are truly underrepresented and often experience bias and hate (Wentling, 2011). Rose Mary Wentling notes:

No single definition can capture the broad range of differences diversity includes, the evolutionary nature of the process it represents, and the far-reaching impact it has on individuals and organizations.

(<http://vocserve.berkeley.edu/CW82/Diversity.html>).”

Researchers and administrators do agree, however, that diversity is an educational concept and an embedded institutional component that is necessary in higher education.

### **Benefits of Diversity in Higher Education**

As the United States continues to diversify so does the need for a workforce that can respond to these changing demographics (Smith & Schonfeld, 2000). This requires the identification of priorities and the subsequent distribution of resources on college campuses. Since tightening fiscal realities force administrators to make mission-centered choices, the role of diversity as a fixture of the learning environment is an influencing factor (Gurin, 2002).



In a report entitled *New Research on the Benefits of Diversity in College and Beyond: An Empirical Analysis*, Patricia Gurin (2002) makes this case for diversity as a priority in higher education:

A racially and ethnically diverse university student body has far-ranging and significant benefits for all students, non-minorities and minorities alike. Students learn better in such an environment and are better prepared to become active participants in our pluralistic, democratic society once they leave school. In fact, patterns of racial segregation and separation historically rooted in our national life can be broken by diversity experiences in higher education.

(<http://www.diversityweb.org/digest/sp99/benefits.html>)

A multicultural learning community in terms of experiences in and out of the classroom is a critical component for an adequate academic experience. To achieve this, a racially diverse student body is necessary (Gurin, 2002). An institution that articulates a commitment to diversity is more likely to be believed by its students when the student demographic is multicultural (Smith & Schonfeld, 2000).

Other researchers extend the impact by suggesting that student retention, academic development, and contentment with the collegiate experience is influenced by diversity work (Smith, 2009). As college students continue to pursue personal growth and development, their experiences with others help shape who they are as individuals. (Gurin, 2002). Students who have the opportunity to learn how to interact with a pluralistic community are better prepared to interact with the broader, global society when they graduate (Powers, 2004).

In 1998, a statement endorsed by over 50 institutions of higher education and published in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* entitled “On the Importance of Diversity in Education” reinforced the need for diversity in higher education.

. . . the diversity we seek, and the future of the nation, do require that colleges and universities continue to be able to reach out and make a conscious effort to build healthy and diverse learning environments appropriate for their missions. The success of higher education and the strength of our democracy depend on it. (p. A48)

In 2005, Milem, Chang, and Antonio conducted a study that further reinforced previous points and further advanced that a diverse campus environment better equips students to be successful in a society that is becoming more global in nature. Milem et al. indicated that the richness of discussion and critical thinking that should take place in higher education is amplified by a more diverse campus composite. Furthermore, a multicultural campus environment often pushes White students outside of their learned comfort zone, thus stimulating intellectual and social development. Three critical conclusions drawn from their research include:

1. Individuals who are educated in diverse settings are far more likely to work and live in racially and ethnically diverse environments after they graduate.
2. Individuals who study and discuss issues related to race and ethnicity in their academic courses and interact with a diverse set of peers in college are better prepared for life in an increasingly complex and diverse society.

3. Increasing the compositional diversity of the student body is essential to create the kind of learning environment described here. (Michael, 2007)

### **Evidence of Embedded Diversity in Higher Education**

In a 2007 article entitled, *Toward a Diversity-Competent Institution*, Steve O. Michael outlines 14 aspects of diversity excellence found in exemplary institutions of higher education. A summary of the 14 competencies is as follows:

1. **Mission Statement:** Diversity is central to the mission of the institution and this statement serves as a tool to validate it as a purpose and central driving force.
2. **Diversity Definition:** Diversity is defined in such a way that clearly connects societal issues of privilege and oppression to the role that institution plays in providing perpetuity to the educational process.
3. **Leadership Commitment:** Leadership of the institution is working to embed diversity in all aspects of the organizational process. This is evidenced in all choices that are made and the general functioning of the institution.
4. **Structure:** Institutions designate a senior leader to guide diversity work and this individual is a part of the top management team of the institution.
5. **Diversity Plan:** An active plan to actualize diversity work that is inclusive of the entire community is in place and is embraced by the all.
6. **Diversity Model:** Institutions seek and adopt a visionary model that helps to guide widespread diversity work. This is a best practice initiative that provides direction and benchmarks for success.

7. Assessment and Progress Report: Diversity work is data driven and both failure and success is known by all.
8. Accountability and Rewards: High functioning institutions connect assessment to the carrot and stick approach to individual and departmental progress to specific performance measures.
9. Visible Diversity: Evidence of an institutionalized diversity effort is manifested in the community itself. In this case, faculty, staff, and students are diverse and the community is polycultural in demographic composition.
10. Academic Diversity: Curriculum in a diversity rich institution is rooted in multicultural competencies. The educational experience prepares students to be successful in a globalized work world.
11. Healthy Tension: A diversity enriched higher education community encourages healthy discord and sees societal differences as an opportunity to engage in conversation that enlightens individual perspectives and values.
12. Contributions to Society: Diversity competent institutions understand their role in developing individuals as sources for bettering society as a whole.
13. Pervasive Ethos: A diversity laden environment seeks to hold diversity as an institutional value rather than an obligation to specific interest groups or appropriateness to societal norms.
14. Diversity Celebration: Enjoying the fruits of cultural connections is a regular part of the daily happenings at institutions that embrace diversity. Diversity is what they do and who they are.

All of these traits are symbolic in the way that they communicate a true commitment to diversity as an institutional value and embedded thread of multiculturalism.

### **Institutional Mission**

It may seem evident that diversity is a critical component of a rich, educational experience for college students, however, the specific factors that indicate an institution is fully embracing multiculturalism in the learning process need to be explored. A fully actualized institution of higher learning must tie diversity to the educational mission of the institution (Alger, 1997). Even student leaders agree as communicated by Madeleine McKenna, president of the Associated Students of the University of Washington:

I don't know how an organization can run without a mission statement. It's what guides the organization in its work. It's also a tool we can use to communicate to the student body in a very succinct way what we're all about, and what we do for students (Schweppe, 2011, para. 5).

McKenna was not directly addressing the topic of diversity in the preceding statement, however, her point is the mission of a college or university serves as a driver for the work that has to be accomplished. It also provides a roadmap for what will be funded. Diversity is complex and a concept that can be fraught with questions and controversy. If it is to be embraced by the whole, it must be held up as a primary objective. Tying it to the organizational mission is a main step in this process. Research indicates that immersing students in diversity related discussions and experiences is a catalyst for civic engagement that follows them into the work world. This serves as a call

for action for institutions of higher education to connect diversity with the core mission or purpose of existence (Hurtado, 2007).

Organizations seek to build a global education for their students and the issue of how to accomplish this continues to be a question for faculty, staff, and administrators. A wide range of studies have been conducted about the value of connecting diversity to the central focus of an academic institution. Strategies for anchoring diversity as a core value or relating it to the inner workings of an institution are in demand (Chun & Evans, 2008). Academic leaders understand the importance of implementing diversity initiatives that are imbedded into the institution as a whole (Wade-Golden & Matlock, 2007). The increased demand for diversity as a mainstay of the collegiate experience has led to administrators searching for the right combination of initiatives to achieve this goal.

### **Enrollment Management Practices**

As institutions continually evaluate their campus climate to ascertain signs of diversity as an embedded organizational value, enrollment practices become a point of consideration. Pressure from business and even the military for an educated workforce that bears resemblance to the demographic composition of our country has contributed to an accelerated need to attract diverse students to higher education (Siegel, 2006). A diverse student composition is widely considered central to creating a learning atmosphere that opens minds and expands traditional thinking (Gurin, 2002).

Attracting diverse students to college is not an easy task. A 2002 study by Laurel R. Davis revealed success strategies to advance diversity at 60 colleges and universities across the United States. One strategy, related to admission practices, was to utilize a

holistic approach to evaluating a prospective student of color. In addition, diverse staff should be involved with the evaluation practice of these students to provide a contextual difference in the process. It is critical for diverse admission staff to be involved in the recruitment of underrepresented students. A similar article by Knox (2005) involved a case study of the New Jersey University system that revealed a comprehensive approach for admission staff to consider each student and their respective gifts with attention to academic, student involvement, and personal commitment experiences as factors for admission. This flexible admission process has yielded a 25% increase in students of color. This study emphasized the need for inclusion to be reinforced by policy development, cultural programs, student recruitment, and faculty and staff of color representation.

Other factors related to an increase in diversity in the student body composition include increased funding for students of color who may not be able to afford a college education, summer academic experience to help students who are underprepared (commonly known as a bridge program), and intrusive academic assistance for underrepresented students to ensure their success and transition into the collegiate environment. Focusing on a singular aspect of diversity negates the importance of creating an infrastructure that fully embraces diversity as a core value of the institution. Faculty must be prepared to meet the needs of a diverse campus culture and the community as a whole must be ready to manage what can be an environment with conflict and discord (Chang, 2002).

## **Diverse Faculty**

Current literature has demonstrated the importance of hiring diverse faculty in an effort to increase the impact of diversity work on college campuses. Demographic trends of domestically diverse students likely to attend post-secondary education by 2015 will result in 80% of the class to be underrepresented. This reality beckons a need for increased faculty of color to be involved in the educational process. A diverse faculty enhances the quality of the educational experience and is necessary to ensure that new ideas and approaches to teaching are included (Turner, 2002).

A 2002 study conducted by Anthony Antonio considers the pedagogical approach of faculty of color and their focus as they provide classroom instruction for students. This study found that underrepresented faculty emphasize social development associated with respect for others and prompt students to consider the societal issues connected with what is right and wrong. Faculty of color also value and include co-curricular experiences to help actualize their curriculum. Further, the data provides a correlation between these values and the faculty's implied desire to provide an education that will influence systemic change; as such, students are encouraged to be civically engaged and to use their classroom experience to impact society as a whole.

Recruiting and retaining faculty of color continues to be a major concern for institutions of higher education. A 1999 study conducted by Turner, Myers, and Creswell discusses the lack of representation of faculty of color and the roadblocks to success in the Academy. Of particular significance is the identification of a hostile climate as it



pertains to race relations. Faculty of color noted the following as factors influencing their experience:

1. Absence of role models and the feeling that they are alone in their experience.
2. Burden of responsibilities related to their role as an underrepresented member of the community.
3. Degradation of research interests when related to issues of diversity.
4. Feeling put upon when the faculty member is the only person of color in the department.
5. Rigid hiring guidelines that do not consider diversity contributions to the community and focus solely on publications and research.
6. Qualifications for promotion that solely honors scholarly work and doesn't recognize role modeling for underrepresented students and student engagement.

Underrepresented faculty in the Turner et al. study, expressed concerns about the need to provide service to the University community and how this ultimately compromised their ability to progress in the tenure process. The feeling of being tokenized contributes to a hostile climate that is not conducive to the recruitment or retention of faculty of color (Aguirre & Martinez, 2002).

The 2002 Davis study emphasized strategies to increase the number of diverse faculty and staff employees. Assertive efforts include mandating hiring pools to contain diverse applicants, ethnicity as a factor in hiring, and providing rewards for those managers that hire employees of color. A campus culture that is inclusive and respectful

of all is necessary in order to advance diversity at all levels. To truly imbed diversity into the Academy, faculty and curricular involvement is essential (Brayboy, 2003).

In a 2003 study, Brayboy interviewed untenured faculty of color in an effort to gain insight into the expectations of new faculty involvement in advancing diversity in higher education. Interviewed faculty of color indicated that they felt White faculty were not expected to play the same role as faculty of color in the curricular advancement of diversity education. They also discussed how the role they play as mentor, recruiter, and teacher of diversity related issues/topics is often not valued and, in fact, may work against their quest to become tenured or promoted. Institutions of higher education often rely on faculty of color to do diversity work leaving the rest of the institution free of responsibility. These findings do not support an environment that is conducive to high morale, career success, and retention of new faculty of color.

The higher education community is challenged to understand how policies and strategic plans that are focused on diversity may inadvertently ostracize diverse populations. In a 2007 study, Iverson used Critical Race Theory (CRT) to explain how people of color are marginalized in higher education. Critical Race Theory explores the impact of racism and power, and poses the idea that White people are only supportive of positive race related movement when it benefits the Majority. As institutions strive to use strategic planning to build an inclusive community, they may in fact be perpetuating a state of inaccessibility to faculty and staff of color. How organizations function and the way in which policy development is handled may hinder the progress of diversity work in higher education. Iverson (2007) applied CRT to existing diversity plans to provide an

introspection into thematic influences of language and policy implementation. For example, words such as “high achieving,” “high profile,” “high performing,” and “promising” as applied to people of color infers that there is not equal access for all. In addition, people of color are often considered in need of special assistance or extra support in order to succeed. This limits the advancement of diverse individuals and creates a negative image of diversity on college campuses.

Inviting faculty of color to the leadership table and engaging them in leadership roles will bolster diversity initiatives and encourage participatory leadership (Aguirre & Martinez, 2002). The literature suggests that those community members who are tapped for their expertise and involved in leadership will likely feel valued and experience positive morale. College and universities who are dedicated to advancing diversity as an institutionalized value must consider faculty of color as more than a tool, strategy, or demographic number.

### **Diversity and the Curriculum**

An institution that has demonstrable evidence of a commitment to diversity, including a curriculum connection, is more likely to reinforce a multicultural climate for students (Mayhew & Grunwald, 2006). Primary indicators include diversity components evidenced in the curricular and co-curricular experiences offered to students. Infusing diversity into the classroom experiences helps all students gain a broader understanding of the world and sheds light on the importance of citizenship and greater societal issues surrounding social inequities. This is even more important for institutions that are

predominantly White in student and faculty/staff composition (Sciame-Giesecke, Roden, & Parkison, 2009).

Hans Herbert Kogler (2011) noted: “In order to provide the highest quality education for today’s students, we need to understand especially the ways in which multicultural courses support cognitive, and not just moral or social, development in students” (p. 3). He suggests that incorporating diversity into the curriculum provides students with a greater capacity to learn about themselves and others. Kogler’s research suggests that students who experience classroom learning that is rooted in multicultural education have greater conscious intellectual thinking and reasoning skills. This is achieved by extending the understanding of multiculturalism to the point that a student can actively use this new learning to imagine the experience of someone who comes from a different culture or background leading to a greater depth of understanding and realization of differences.

Further supporting Kogler’s (2011) theory, a study involving 4,403 college students who were enrolled in courses that involved diversity material showed a significant increase in cognitive development. Furthermore, students communicated a higher level of concern for citizenship and understanding of how bias and prejudice impacts society as a whole (Sciame-Giesecke et al., 2009). Similarly, a study conducted by Patricia Marin (2000) states how polycultural classrooms provide a multifaceted learning environment, thus creating an opportunity for students to connect on issues in varying ways that brings the curriculum to life in a more substantial fashion.

Faculty continue to be key in stimulating discussion and facilitating learning, but a multicultural classroom composition brings to life different perspectives and multi-racial differences that stimulate global introspection. Diversity as a topic is not necessary for learning to be enhanced. Rather, a classroom environment that includes differing viewpoints challenges traditional thought processes and allows for more growth and development. Marin's (2000) research concludes that a higher level of thinking results from a wider variety of shared thoughts and experiences. Students involved in the study also relayed the growth they experienced in their interpersonal skills as they had the opportunity to work with multicultural students. Regarding the essential nature of diversity in the classroom, one of Marin's faculty member participants commented: "I need the diversity in class to have people share their experiences." Overall this study emphasized the enriched educational benefits of diversity components incorporated in the classroom. Specifically, a curriculum based in multiculturalism that engages a diverse student classroom is of great benefit to both faculty member and students alike. It is also important to note that students of color recognize the institution's commitment to diversity when it is part of the classroom experience (Mayhew & Grunwald, 2006). How this should be accomplished remains a question that many institutions continue to contemplate. A focus group conducted at Hamilton College revealed that students felt that diversity should be a mainstay in every classroom rather than a part of a singular course or focus topic (Gold, Winter 01). Research emphasizes the importance of diversity infused in the curricular experience for students but it is not the only factor of an institutionalized approach to diversity in higher education.

### **Diversity and Co-Curricular Experiences**

Students need an opportunity to interact with individuals and groups that will help them solidify their attitudes and values about relationships and social identity issues. This should include multicultural dimensions to offer new perspectives that will help shape individual belief structures (Guri, 2002). In 2006, Misra and McMahon developed a model for increasing retention of underrepresented business students that included leadership development, community service, family involvement, and mentoring as four of seven pillars of success. They contend that creating a connection to the institution and a sense of “family” promotes retention of underrepresented students. An argument can be made that these factors contribute to a campus climate that is favorable for multiculturalism and inclusivity. Student interaction outside the classroom that results from involvement in groups and organizations leads to an increased self-awareness and understanding of individuals with different backgrounds and ethnic heritage. In addition, culturally specific student organizations add to the learning environment by providing an immediate avenue of involvement for multicultural students.

White students also gain from the opportunity to experience different cultures and become involved with activities that provide new insight about ethnic rituals and celebrations (Smith & Schonfeld, 2000). Salisbury and Goodman’s 2009 study indicated students who had the opportunity to connect with diverse students through educational experiences, co-curricular activities, and other programs became more proficient at interacting with people from other cultures. The researchers concluded that living and learning in a diverse environment was not enough. Instead, intentional learning

experiences were needed to foster advanced growth and development. A cross-curricular experience such as group work or service-learning is a prime example of an activity that would prompt deeper connectivity between students and prompt personal contemplation and understanding. Graham Badley (2007) noted that post-secondary educational institutions should stimulate dialogue among all and provide avenues for individuality to be honored. Badley views diversity in higher education and the learning process as an interconnected entity with curricular and co-curricular learning. “Part of the role of higher education in this context is that it should encourage students to critique the status quo, to examine those aspects of our history, institutions and traditions which continue to obstruct individual growth and social improvement” (Badley, 2007, p. 783). Denson and Chang (2009) revealed that student self-awareness and interpersonal cultural competencies were directly linked with opportunities for multicultural involvement. Students attending institutions with greater diversity in their student demographic reported greater involvement in diversity programs (Kezar, 2008).

### **Campus Leadership in Advancing Diversity**

#### **Political Issues**

Institutions that have a more favorable campus culture related to diversity are not afraid to identify racist behavior. Further, they embrace diversity and affirmative action issues and their commitment is unrelated to a legal mandate to do so. A positive diversity climate is also directly related to the number of students, faculty, and staff of color on campus. It is critical for senior leadership of an institution to be involved in insisting that diversity work is a priority (Davis, 2002).

A study conducted by Adrianna Kezar in 2008 addresses the potential roadblocks that leaders face as they work to advance the diversity agenda. Presidents were faced with the challenge of shifting campus culture and often felt disadvantaged with the politics connected to this task. Politics pressure came from specific ethnic groups who brought forward specific campus community issues related to race. Campus leaders in this study characterized politics as pressure or resistance felt from predominately White constituents or a single group of color. It could have also included intergroup conflict between groups about the diversity focus. Faculty were identified as providing roadblocks to transforming the curriculum to include diversity and hiring underrepresented faculty. The study outlined how campuses became more accomplished in advancing the diversity agenda; predominately White groups are identified as providing the most resistance. Kezar suggests that presidents must be cognizant of the varied political pressure that may present itself during the process of organizational change focused on diversity. Kezar suggested strategies to help presidents as they face political pressure related to embedding diversity in the campus environment including:

1. Develop coalitions and advocates.
2. Take the political pulse regularly.
3. Anticipate resistance.
4. Use data to neutralize politics and rationalize the process.
5. Create public relations campaigns and showcase success.
6. Capitalize on controversy for learning and unearth interest groups.



In this study, Presidents interviewed in this study agreed that creating a vast group of allies from both on and off-campus provides a backbone of support for navigating the political challenges associated with diversity work. A common practice used to accomplish this was the formation of a commission used to inform the president about issues and concerns related to diversity on campus. This group assisted with information gathering that helped campus leadership consider political issues that may arise on campus. Providing evidence of the institution's commitment to diversity was an important way to celebrate campus-wide achievements. This may be in the form of cultural programs, marketing documents, and other outreach pieces. Presidents agreed that engaging in dialogue with students could be especially powerful in surviving the political waters that emerge with diversity. Overall, leaders must regularly survey a wide variety of internal and external constituents to help ascertain how individuals and groups are fairing. Conflict that may arise from pursuing a campus wide diversity agenda also serves as an opportunity to involve various constituents in problem solving dialogue. It is important that presidents embrace potentially threatening, political moments as away to help the institution grow and develop.

### **Presidential Involvement**

Kezar, Eckel, Contreras-McGavin, and Quaye's 2008 study provided valuable insight into strategies employed by top leaders who endeavor to embed diversity in the Academy. Not surprisingly, campus diversity was identified as one of many items on the list of issues to address for a University president. Diversity in and of itself brings the possibility of political realities that can task a president from both external and internal

constituents. The researchers noted that involving a wide variety of institutional community members in diversity work is critical but this does not negate the importance of the president serving as a conduit for engaged leadership. The president is the point person for weaving diversity into the fabric of the institution.

Six leadership strategies employed by college Presidents emerged from this study:

1. Presidential involvement in hiring and supporting the “right people,” which includes being personally involved in hiring faculty of color.
2. Mentoring faculty of color and setting up an intergenerational mentoring network.
3. Creating partnerships with faculty to transform the teaching and learning environment.
4. Supporting student affairs staff and creating safe havens.
5. Interacting and learning from students.
6. Creating external networks and obtaining board support.

These strategies all employ a relationship building focus as a means to advance diversity in the campus agenda. This study emphasized the importance of interpersonal connectivity as identified by college presidents as a means of avoiding conflict and building bridges with those committed to diversity. Strong leadership centers on the investment of time and energy in people. This is represented by time spent engaging in dialogue, providing support, and involving people of color in institutional process development. Diversity cannot be advanced by bestowing the responsibility on designated offices or areas such as a Diversity Office or Multicultural Affairs Department.

These offices may serve as an important point of contact for underrepresented students but an integrated approach demands involvement from broader internal and external entities.

### **Transformational Aspects of Diversity in Higher Education**

#### **Organizational Change**

The call for institutions of higher education to provide a global perspective for students requires systemic change that challenges pre-existing infrastructure that germinates from the pillars of tradition from which these organizations were founded. This provides expected friction as the Academy strives to deconstruct the racial barriers that obstruct progress of the multicultural experience. In order to provide a workforce that is competitive in an international marketplace, higher education must keep pace by providing a well-rounded educational experience that is connected to diversity competencies (Vaira, 2004).

Williams (2006) focused on the elements required to provide practical implementation strategies with regard to organizational change and diversity. Williams discusses how the complex nature of institutions of higher education offer all community members the opportunity to help shape the culture of the organization, thus providing a challenging backdrop for organizational change. This dynamic of collective organizational investment is a factor in the struggle to actualize transformational diversity efforts. Williams notes how the university community can call for a change in the demographic of the student body but presidential leadership is key in advancing the effort to attract more students of color. In addition, other key institutional leaders must be on

board. This will enable an institutionalized approach to ensuring diversity is central to the basic operations of each organizational area.

Diversity planning efforts are not enough without measures to assess progress. Resources must also be allocated to move forward planning efforts. Leadership directs efforts with statements that diversity is a priority and this helps to spark buy-in from front-line employees. Embedding diversity in the institution require long-term planning and patience to obtain the kind of culture shift that is required in this type of work (Williams, 2006).

The combination of strong leadership and “in the trenches” initiatives are an integral part of the process of internalizing diversity and multiculturalism at an organizational level (Knox, 2005). Institutionalizing diversity requires evolving and involving systemic change. Brayboy (2003) describes:

To advance the agenda of diversity, institutions that truly value diversity must move toward considering wholesale changes in their underlying structures and day-to-day activities, especially if they are truly committed to refocusing the historical legacies of institutional, epistemological, and societal racisms that pervade colleges and universities. (p. 74)

Kezar (2008) proposes a model for organizational change related to institutionalizing diversity that includes three phases: Phase I - Mobilization Stage, Phase II - Implementation Stage, and Phase III - Institutionalization Stage. This model begins with the premise that the first phase is focused on comprehending the change that is needed. Phase II involves actualizing the change through specific behavioral and

practical initiatives. Phase III is characterized by the assumption that people involved in the organization are embodying the concepts as a regular everyday occurrence.

Investing in the people who serve as a catalyst for innovation and transformative initiatives is critical when pursuing organizational change in higher education. As resources become more scarce, building collaborative partnerships in and outside of institutions is a skillful approach to maximizing the actualization of new ideas (Shults, 2008). The process of institutionalizing diversity or creating an inclusive institutional climate that maximizes the educational experience requires an intertwined effort that far exceeds a single initiative to increase the enrollment of underrepresented students. For many institutions, institutionalizing diversity clashes with internalized ways of operating, rooted in institutional memory and historical ways of operating. This beckons the need to re-discuss and, in some cases, reframe the institution's purpose. To move the diversity agenda forward, discussions that center on purpose and how the educational process should be manifested provide a clearer avenue for organizational change. In many cases, offering support for faculty to re-design courses or graduation requirements may be part of the process (Chang, 2002).

### **Organizational Infrastructure**

Smith (2009) posited that changing demographics of our society has led to the certainty of a multicultural learning environment in higher education. This intensifies the need for infrastructure to be at the core of what drives institutional purpose. Seven key points that reinforce Smith's theory include:

1. Increasing the recruitment and retention of underrepresented faculty.

2. Diversifying the curriculum, networking with internal and external communities of color.
3. Affirmative decision making on institutional policy.
4. Ease in recruiting new diverse students.
5. Enhancing administrative leadership.
6. Serving as role models for all community members who are striving to keep pace with a global society.

All of these conditions support other research findings about infrastructure necessary to imbed diversity into the University from a systemic approach. These efforts have the propensity to challenge the historical understanding of power and equity, and may be necessary as colleges and universities move forward in a global society. As important as diversity is noted in the literature, there remains an unresolved question of how to best integrate it into the total campus experience. Aguirre and Martinez (2002) used two frameworks to demonstrate the interrelationship between diversity and institutions of higher education. Specifically, they considered the connection between the role of institutional leaders and the implementation of diversity in the Academy. Findings conclude that the culture and environment of higher education impacts the advancement of diversity as a transformational element. Institutions that incorporate diversity into the framework of the organization are more likely to be successful in institutionalizing it as part of the culture.

Other researchers agree that the most effective way of institutionalizing diversity is to provide an internalized approach. Brayboy (2003) concluded that institutionalizing

diversity must be rooted in the infrastructure of an institution rather than limited to isolated initiatives that symbolize an agenda item that has the potential to be trivialized. Many campuses have faced this challenge as they have reacted to needs of diverse populations rather than considering diversity as a value or an institutional priority (Aguirre, 2009).

Williams (2008) discusses the importance of a systemic focus when leading a transformational diversity effort on college campuses. Common structural pieces consistent with diversity plans from across the country include recruiting more people of color to be a part of the educational community, providing more opportunities for education and awareness including a curricular requirement for students, providing a point person that has executive status and can ensure the campus is meeting diversity goals, and investing in initiatives that will build an inclusive learning community. The challenge to creating this type of culture shift is investment from leadership and other campus community members in the change process. This includes assessment measures, fiscal resources, and a sincere interest in actualizing diversity efforts. Williams also notes diversity planning efforts must be connected and spearheaded by varied offices and areas on campus. Specifically, one department or administrator cannot shoulder the burden of planning and implementation. This all leads to an embedded, structural approach to diversity efforts.

As diversity is central to a quality educational experience in higher education, it is incumbent upon academic leaders to seek new ways to institutionalize this effort. Further, institutions that incorporate diversity into the framework of the organization are more

likely to be successful in institutionalizing it as part of the culture (Aguirre, 2009). This is the process of merging institutional values with everyday practices. In the end, perhaps the most arguable point is the importance of linking quality and diversity and in fact, intertwining the two when exacting organizational change (Denson & Chang, 2009). Research demonstrates that diversity is a top priority for institutions of higher education. The concept of institutionalizing diversity becomes one of the constant variables that hinge upon strong leadership and front-line commitment of all faculty and staff. Future research will only help institutional leaders wrangle the concept of institutionalizing diversity and, in the end, create a higher quality educational experience for students and the future leaders of our world.



## **Chapter III**

### **Methodology**

#### **Tradition of Inquiry**

##### **Qualitative Method**

In an effort to pursue best practice diversity work that has been actualized in higher education, I have selected a qualitative method for this study. Qualitative research delves into an issue or matter that impacts people by framing it with a premise that provides connectivity to a theory or information from the literature. Learning about people and the inner-workings of their environment helps the researcher glean inclinations that paint broad strokes that lead to deeper interpretation (Creswell, 2007, p. 37).

Diversity is a complex topic and successful implementation of institutionalized strategies are directly tied to variables associated with institutional context. Qualitative research is utilized as a means to better comprehend the relationship between the experience of an individual or group and the impact of environmental influences (Creswell, 2007, p. 40). To remain true to the tenants of this qualitative approach I will strive to understand and represent the perspectives of the participants and be cognizant of how my own experiences will impact the final analysis.

##### **Case Study**

The methodology for this study will involve a critical case study approach to highlight an institution of higher education that demonstrates exceptional diversity practices. A case study approach delves into a specific situation or occurrence that is

often practical in nature (Merriam, 1998). Case study as a qualitative tool has historical roots in many disciplines but is prevalent in the social sciences (Creswell, 2007 p. 73). Case studies provide an avenue to reveal a story that is rich and descriptive and explains the rationale of what is happening in a specific situation (Neale & Boyce, 2006).

Identifying a model institution with regard to diversity work and then studying it as a singular example will provide practical examples of how to best institutionalize diversity in an institution of higher education. The identified institution must serve as a model that is distinctive in its approaches to the subject (Merriam, 1998). While each college or university presents a unique learning environment, specific examples of successful institutionalized practices will likely contribute to a broader field of knowledge in this field.

### **Researcher Reflexivity**

As a researcher, I identify that my professional experience and connection with higher education and diversity work shapes my role in the study. Specifically, I have served in an administrative role working with student services and diversity for 22 years. My current administrative role positions me to focus on how diversity can be advanced on a college campus. This has inspired me to look deeper into what practices will help promote the diversity agenda in higher education. I have also authored a book and served as a consultant, speaker, and trainer about diversity education. This background allows me to approach the study with a sincere interest to seek solutions to this important work.

### **Sampling**

There is no prescribed process for sample selection given each research endeavor is unique in its own right (Curtis, Gesler, Smith, & Washburn, 2000). The theoretical background of the problem provides a starting point for the sample selection (Yin, 1994). Curtis et al. (2000) illustrates a study that identifies places to study based upon their reputation relevant to the research problem. An additional consideration noted was the ease in proximity to the site. This study will identify a sample site based upon its reputation for excellence in diversity work and the convenience in location to the researcher.

Sample selection will begin by consulting with a renowned diversity researcher who will assist with the identification of the sample based upon the reputation of the identified institution. This individual will be a researcher who has demonstrated expertise in identifying factors that help embed diversity into the culture of an institution of higher education. Qualifications of this researcher include evidence of numerous published articles in refereed journals about this topic. This researcher will be asked to identify three benchmark institutions that are leaders in institutionalized diversity work. In an effort to narrow the sample for comparison purposes, the sample will be boundaried to public colleges and universities that are Predominantly White Institutions of higher learning. Predominantly White Institutions will be defined as those institutions that are not listed as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) or Hispanic Serving Institutions by the U.S. Department of Education and are not identified as Tribal Colleges by The Carnegie Foundation.

The areas that are generated from the literature are used to measure excellence in diversity work and provide a framework for the selection of a sample with an exemplary reputation in this field. Other considerations for the sample include the size of the institution (10,000-20,000 in size); demonstrated excellence in admission practices; safe, welcoming environments for students of color; faculty/staff mentoring programs; excellence in recruiting a diverse employee base; transformative curriculum development; and a commitment to co-curricular learning opportunities that are diverse in content. The selection of the primary institution for the sample will also depend upon the interest and willingness of the institution to participate in the study.

In order to ensure confidentiality, the institution selected will not be identified by name in the study. Specific characteristics of the institution including size, general geographic location, and type of institution will be included. Key stakeholders who can provide in-depth qualitative information regarding current diversity programs and practices will be asked to participate in the study. Potential participants include: Senior Diversity Officer, President or Provost, Diversity Practitioner (for example, African American Affairs Director or Assistant Director, Staff working with the Senior Diversity Officer, etc.) as identified by the Senior Diversity Officer, Faculty Member as identified by the President or Provost, and the Student Government President. These stakeholders were selected purposefully to provide a broad base of understanding of institutional commitment. To understand the impact of diversity in higher education, it is essential to look at the critical role that diversity plays in the educational environment of a college or university. This requires a broader understanding of the influence it can have on the

curricular, co-curricular, and interpersonal experience of a developing college student (Denson & Chang, 2009). Diversity must be a driver and rooted in all facets of the institution. The opportunity to interview a variety of representatives from the institution is likely to provide a better understanding of how and why diversity work is critical at the institution.

Participants will be asked in advance to agree to participate in the study and will be informed that all responses will remain confidential. Each participant will be asked to sign a letter of informed consent that will outline all facets of confidentiality and use of gathered data.

## **Procedures**

### **Data Collection**

**Interviews.** In an effort to honor best practices in case study research, the following guidelines recommended by Creswell (2007) will be used for data collection purposes:

1. Selected interviewees being mindful of a directed sampling approach.
2. Conclude that personal interviews are the most effective choice for the research project.
3. Use a digital recorder for interviews.
4. Design interview questions that are appropriate for each individual interviewee. Given the varying institutional role of each participant, the interview will consist of eight to thirteen questions and will last approximately 60 minutes.

5. Interview questions were sent to three Diversity leaders in higher education in December of 2010 as a pilot test.
6. The interviews will take place in private offices at the identified institution.
7. This study will have IRB approval from Minnesota State Mankato and the sample institution. Interviewees will sign a consent form for IRB and an overview of the interview process will be discussed.
8. The interviewees will be offered a copy of the transcribed interviews and be given the opportunity to withdraw information from the final report if desired.

Questions were vetted by professionals recognized as experts in practical diversity work in institutions of higher education. All interviews will be recorded in their entirety. Interviews will be transcribed by a professional transcriptionist. The research study information will include transcribed interviews, information from review of the artifacts, and other field notes. Interviews allow or exploration of concepts that will be used in analysis and provide rich detail that will provide insight into the research topic (Creswell, 2007).

### **External Document Review**

Preparatory work will be done to review institutional artifacts such as enrollment numbers, admission guidelines, current programs and services, review of the mission statement and public reports about diversity, etc. This will help with preparation for each interview and provide a higher quality result in the interview process. Further review of these artifacts following the collection of responses from the participants will enable the researcher to triangulate data and ensure trustworthiness (Erlandson, 1993). This will

allow the researcher to verify the comments made by participants and support the claims that are made about the institution (Marin, 2000; Turner, 2002).

### **Ethical Considerations**

Confidentiality and informed consent are the main ethical concerns associated with this study. Participants will be asked to sign an informed consent document and copies of this form (see Appendix B) will be retained in the researcher's locked files in a secured office for a minimum of 7 years. Data will only be accessible to the researcher and members of her dissertation committee. Electronic data and hard copies will be destroyed 7 years after completion of the dissertation.

Participants' responses will be kept strictly confidential. Responses to open-ended questions will be coded for categorical themes and paraphrased in any presentation of findings to protect privacy and confidentiality. There were no identified risks associated with this study. This study received approval on February 14, 2011, from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects at Minnesota State University Mankato and the study will also be submitted to the IRB at the sample institution (see Appendix D).

### **Verification**

A professional transcriptionist will transcribe the digital files from the individual interviews. Responses will be clarified by providing each interviewee with a copy of the information gained from the interview for their approval. First, transcriptions of the digitally recorded interviews were required. Following best practice in transcription as outlined by the Minnesota Historical Society Oral History Office:

All original transcripts should be audited by the interviewer (principal investigator) and an external auditor to ensure that the transcript accurately reflects the narrator's words and meaning. Generally, this series of interviews done in conjunction with this project, should be edited by the principal investigator to ensure a consistent editorial style. Most importantly, each interview should be tracked through the process, from the original interview to the transfer to the audio-visual collections. (2008, p. 2).

The digital file will be transcribed by a professional transcriptionist and will be sent to the interviewee for review. The interviewee will provide clarification on responses to adhere to appropriate member checking procedures (see Appendix B Confidentiality Form: Transcriptionist - Confidentiality Form and Appendix E).

### **Field Issues**

Two digital recording devices will be used for each interview. Each will be equipped with new batteries and will be tested in advance of the interviews. If an interviewee is unable to participate on the day of the scheduled site visit, a telephone interview will be arranged.

### **Data Analysis**

Adhering to the data analysis process outlines by Creswell (2007), the following steps will be followed in the data analysis process:

1. Create and organize files for data.
2. Read through text, making margin notes, form initial codes.
3. Describe the case and its context.



4. Use categorical aggregation to establish themes or patterns.
5. Use direct interpretation.
6. Develop naturalistic generalizations.
7. Present in-depth picture of the case using narrative, tables, and figures.

Following the collection of data, all interviews will be transcribed into workable files. In order to process the data collected and test the results according to the measures identified in the literature review, a structured analysis coding process will be utilized based upon the following categories:

- A commitment to diversity incorporated into the institutional mission of the institution.
- Diversity is considered by major areas of the institution (Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Central Administration, Admissions, etc.) as central to the work of that area.
- Diversity is integrated into the generalized curriculum of the institution.
- Co-curricular program and activities include diversity as a regular part of the experiences offered to the University community.
- White students are clearly involved in diversity and eager to engage in opportunities related to the diversity learning process.
- The University community celebrates success related to diversity education and initiatives.
- The University community is encouraged and rewarded for engaging in diversity work.

Organizing data into main thematic categories allows the researcher to glean an understanding of significant happenings to provide deeper insight into the research question (Creswell, 2007). Hsieh and Shannon (2005) describe this as an inductive approach to coding that involves extracting emerging themes from the data and assigning appropriate categories to this content. Summary statements and specific ideas from the data in this study will be gathered to provide evidence of the practices of institutionalized diversity.

### **Data Reporting**

Stake (1995) provides the following guidelines for reporting qualitative content analysis:

1. Describe the scenic details of the interview experience.
2. Provide an overview of the study.
3. Describe the research situation and variables that influenced context.
4. Outline major points.
5. Provide further detail about relative issues that were explored.
6. Present over arching points related to the understanding of the data.
7. End with vignette.

As I am describing the results of this study, I will begin by outlining the purpose and details of the methodology utilized. I will continue by providing information about the topic of the study: Factors Influencing the Institutionalization of Diversity in Higher Education. I will go on to describe the sample participants and the results of the

interviews. The final piece of information provided will be the (Kezar et al., 2008) conclusion and recommendations of the study.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Results**

#### **Case Descriptions and Themes**

A critical case study was used for this study in an effort to learn about the evolution of diversity at a mid-west institution of higher education. The experiences, involvement, and passion of the participants provided rich detail about the diversity experience at the institution. The Chief Diversity Officer at the institution selected the participants based upon the potential participant roles outlined in the approved Institutional Research Board application. Approximately sixty minutes of time was scheduled for each interview.

This purpose of this study was to identify highly actualized diversity initiatives and practices that can be replicated at other institutions meeting the sample criterion demographic. There are several studies about diversity work on college campuses that focus on a specific component such as the curricular or co-curricular experience. This study attempts to look at the holistic approach to embedding diversity into the foundation of an institution of higher learning.

The data gathered from each of the five interviews is written in narrative form and begins with a description of the participant. Following the introduction, a summary of the interview with relevant direct quotes is provided. This data is organized in the following themes:

- A commitment to diversity incorporated into the institutional mission of the institution.

- Diversity is considered by major departments or programs of the institution (Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Central Administration, Admissions, etc.) as central to the work of that area.
- Diversity is integrated into the generalized curriculum of the institution.
- Co-curricular program and activities include diversity as a part of the experiences offered to the University community.
- White students are clearly involved in diversity and eager to engage in opportunities related to the diversity learning process.
- The University community celebrates success related to diversity education and initiatives.
- The University community is encouraged and rewarded for engaging in diversity work.

In order to protect the anonymity of the participants, the researcher chose pseudonyms for each participant and the University was not referred to by name or location.

### **Diversity from Carly Glynn's Perspective**

#### *Introduction of Participant*

Carly is a junior and has served as a student leader during her time at the University. She is currently the student government President and has been involved in student senate for 3 years.

*A commitment to diversity incorporated into the institutional mission of the institution.*

When Carly discussed how diversity is incorporated into the mission of the institution, she was clear that there was an inclusive approach to how all people were treated on campus. She stated: “I think diversity on our campus means talking to people with different perspectives, or racial, ethnic - any kind of cultural backgrounds that are different from the typical student.”

She went on to say that the institution had made strides in the past 5-6 years to work intentionally on the idea of inclusivity. This has been evidenced in the diverse program offerings that communicate a commitment to diversity.

. . . I think the community really understands that diversity doesn't mean one particular thing but there is a whole slew of different students and backgrounds and perspectives that we really look at when we talk about diversity inclusion. Having kind of a broad mission statement when it comes to diversity makes us kind of strive to do that a lot more.

*Diversity is considered by major areas of the institution (Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Central Administration, Admissions, etc.) as central to the work of that area.*

Carly described an institutional investment in diversity that is visible to students and the entire University community. She referenced programs that engaged the campus community such as the Diversity Dialogues program that involves professors from departments on campus on topics such as African Americans in politics. She emphasized the impact that these programs have on students:

They come to these dialogues because they want to see their favorite professors and they end up staying for another thing – sooner or later we have students being open to all these different issues and doing things in a different way.

Carly also described a University-wide program that encourages outstanding work in diversity and prompts new initiatives from across campus. She shared an example of one College within the institution that started a book club that encourages faculty to read books from different backgrounds and come together for discussions.

Carly shared that diversity is visible in the offices and organizations that are dedicated to this work such as the Diversity Organization Coalition, the Campus Climate Office, a diversity center for students, the PRIDE center, the Multi-Cultural Student Services office. These offices are housed in Student Affairs and spearhead diversity services for the campus community.

Table 1

*Diversity Offices*

## Office

Affirmative Action

Campus Climate and Diversity

Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning/Inclusive Excellence

Disability Resource Services

International Education

McNair Scholars Program

Multicultural Student Services

Pride Center

Research Center for Cultural Diversity and Community Renewal

Student Support Services

Upward Bound

When discussing an overall feeling about diversity on campus, Carly noted the following:

We definitely have an attitude here when it comes to diversity and when it comes to a lot of other things too. I think because it has been included in search and screen committees, it has been included in student senate, it has been included in faculty everything, board meetings and all that kind of stuff. I think that it has become a topic that we are not really afraid to talk about as much anymore, kind of University wide scale.

Carly expressed a feeling that the campus had “ramped up” their efforts to make diversity a focal point. In her words: “like intolerance is something that we aren’t going



to tolerate – frankly.” In Carly’s role as the President of the Student Association, she is deeply involved in student issues and concerns. She feels that students are extremely engaged and motivated to bring issues to the forefront. She also noted that senior administration is always willing to discuss issues when they arise. She described this as an “open door” approach. She believes that the student voice is heard and responded to and that is instrumental in building an inclusive environment.

*Diversity is integrated into the generalized curriculum of the institution.*

Carly spoke definitively about the way in which diversity is included in the curricular experience for students. She described a general education requirement for students designed to provide an overview of diversity and multiculturalism. Carly cited departments on campus that offer a course that satisfies this requirement. She enthusiastically referenced a course taught by diversity staff and felt it was an opportunity for students to be in a safe environment and engage in high level discussion about diversity on campus.

Carly commented on the impact that diverse faculty members have on the curricular experience for students:

I have had several professors – it’s not the material, they don’t have – they are not teaching anything different than the next professor, but their perspective gives you such a different angle – and that is really helpful when you are trying to – I think college is not just about learning material but it’s about teaching you to think differently. So I think a lot of our professors come from different backgrounds or those that come from more traditional backgrounds are very open to social justice

issues and are very conscious of that and so that's something we talk about a lot in classes. I have many professors who are white and they are very, very adamant about including social justice in their curriculum and we don't read – I have an English class right now and we don't read predominately white-based authors, we are reading a lot of Hmong-American books.

*Co-curricular program and activities include diversity as a regular part of the experiences offered to the University community.*

With a great deal of energy, Carly expounded upon the diversity opportunities embedded in the out-of-class experience for students. During her involvement in Student Senate, at the University, Carly is proud of all of the diversity organizations available to students.

Table 2

*Diverse Student Organizations*

## Organizations

Anime Club

ALANA (Asian Latina African Native American Women)

ASO (Asian Student Organization)

BSU (Black Student Unity)

Chinese Club

CSSA (Chinese Students and Scholars Association)

DOC (Diversity Organization Coalition)

Hillel

H.O.P.E. (Hmong Organization Promoting Education)

Human Diversity Organization

LASO (Latin American Student Organization)

NASA (Native American Student Association)

Rainbow Unity

RASO (Returning Adult Student Organization)

Spanish Club

VSA (Vietnamese Student Association)

Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies

Women's Studies Student Association

Carly remarked about the structure that Student Senate has in place to provide a voice for diversity and to address social justice issues. She explains that the Student Senate has eight seats dedicated to specific diversity areas. Carly further states that the diversity senators are not elected but rather appointed by the Student Government

President based upon the recommendation of the organization they represent. She also notes that the senate has a board of directors that includes a social justice director. Carly proudly explains that the social justice director serves as a conduit for all diversity issues.

In addition to the diversity senator seats, Carly discussed the Diversity Organization Coalition that serves as a representative body of all student diversity groups on campus. She describes this group as “a very tight knit community” and reinforces that they work together cooperatively.

*White students are clearly involved in diversity and eager to engage in opportunities related to the diversity learning process.*

Carly speaks in a positive tone about her own experience as a student with regard to how diversity is incorporated into the campus experience. She expresses that many White students at the University are from small towns and attended small high schools and have not had the opportunity to interact with diverse people. She goes on to state that the academic experience provides avenues to interact with diverse faculty and engage in conversation about diversity and this provides a global perspective and even prompts students to become involved in diversity issues.

Carly expounds upon this as follows:

My experiences in classes have been really positive in that regard. For instance, in the last 2 years our students have participated in the White Privilege Conference. We have a lot of students go to that –of all races, colors, sizes and they come back from that and they have a really kind of different perception of the world. When I first heard about the White Privilege Conference, I had a lot of

discussions with our graduate advisor at the time. To me something like that seemed very, very non-inclusive and something that a lot of students were taken aback by and didn't necessarily want to be involved in. It was kind of this very aggressive experience that I had and I guess after last year I kind of wanted to avoid talking about it. It's a very different attitude that I had whereas when I came into college I was all about everybody and loving everyone and diversity. My parents are very open and honest. It was just kind of a really interesting experience for me. Now that I have kind of had a lot more interaction with not only students from the different organizations but on the administrative side (talking to some of the people from the Campus Climate office), it's become a lot easier to talk about those things when you form those relationships. I think that is what some of the other students feel too. I think it's difficult to talk about some of those issues because I think just the nature of diversity and history is really hard for a lot of students who don't come from an easy background. So I think forming a lot of those relationships is what is nice about our campus. We are a little bit smaller and a lot more tight knit. We are very community based. So I think having those relationships makes it a lot easier to talk about it and I guess that has kind of been my experience.

*The University community celebrates success related to diversity education and initiatives.*

There were no significant findings for the code in this interview.

*The University community is encouraged and rewarded for engaging in diversity work.*

There were no significant findings for the code in this interview.

### **Diversity from Briana Wall's Perspective**

#### *Introduction of Participant*

Briana Wall is a full-time staff member at the University working on diversity initiatives. Her office is in the Student Affairs division. Briana was a student at the institution before being hired full-time.

*A commitment to diversity incorporated into the institutional mission of the institution.*

Consistent with Carly's perception of how diversity is incorporated in the mission of the institution, Briana described the institution as taking an inclusive approach when defining it. She described the institution as a "model institution" with regard to how each individual is valued and involved. In her words: "Through our initiatives – again I feel like our campus is kind of leading the way with some of our sister institutions, even within our system."

*Diversity is considered by major areas of the institution (Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Central Administration, Admissions, etc.) as central to the work of that area.*

Briana commented on the effective collaboration that occurs between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs. She was excited and optimistic when she said that this kind of cross divisional connection was something that she felt would be essential to continue. Briana noted there are three professional staff responsible for recruiting diverse students and that one of the positions was a new addition to the staff. She also stated that

the Admission Director conveyed to the staff that all staff were responsible for recruiting all students.

Briana remarks:

And I think finally for once I feel like other people besides the multicultural faculty and staff are stepping up and saying hey hold on – we’ve got a problem here. Let’s come to the table and figure out what the solution will be so when the next time it happens, we’ve all recognized that there’s going to be a next time – so that’s progress.

*Diversity is integrated into the generalized curriculum of the institution.*

When asked about how diversity is embedded in the curriculum, Briana highlighted the work of the Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning. She mentioned that a large number of faculty incorporate an aspect of diversity into general education courses. She also described a course that she co-teaches that includes a cultural focus.

Briana confides:

I don’t feel we are 100% there. There are 1 or probably 3 credits that are required in our gen ed curriculum. Is that enough? No, but I do think again we have people in place that are trying to address curriculum issues and again with our CATL being a huge part of the academic curriculum, I think from a professional development standpoint our faculty have resources available to maybe switch up the curriculum and make it more inclusive.

Briana remarked that a senior administrator who recently left for a new position emphasized the need to involve diversity as a mainstay in the curriculum. She went on to say that the administrator encouraged faculty “to understand that this is a shift that we need to take in our pedagogy in order for our students, all of our students, not just multi-cultural, for all of our students to be able to benefit from the curriculum.

*Co-curricular program and activities include diversity as a regular part of the experiences offered to the University community.*

As Briana considered how diversity is incorporated into the co-curricular aspects of the student experience, the first thing she mentioned was athletics. Specifically, she identified athletics as a growth area in this regard. She discussed the need to provide perspective and understanding of diversity for student-athletes so that they are better prepared to engage in dialogue with people of different backgrounds. She suggested that encouraging coaches to become invested in providing sensitivity and awareness training is sometimes a challenge. She added that the nature of athletics lends itself to encourage an unbreakable exterior and that expressing a commitment to certain values is not always the norm in the athletic community.

Delving deeper into the co-curricular side, Briana addresses the dynamics of multicultural and non-multicultural student organizations. She laments, “We need to figure some things out.” She continues by saying that students involved in multicultural student organizations are sometimes frustrated about the attention given to issues they may raise.



Our multicultural students, a lot of those organizations are housed in our office but sometimes I think the students think that “my issue is everybody else’s issue all the time. So it’s like trying to reprogram the brain to help them understand ‘yes, this is your issue and you want people to understand your issues and create some allies’ but if you are constantly pushing people against the wall they become numb. They don’t want to be involved, don’t want to hear anything about the racial issues that you have going on or how bad your experience is on this campus. So we try to create this balancing act – how can we get our non-multicultural students to be allies and to understand the cause we all need to fight – within our multicultural students, helping them to understand that hold on for a second and the way you come across everybody is not going to be perceptive to your thought process.

Briana remarks that the multicultural student organizations have become more inclusive of majority students and have grown in how they perceive the actions of others. She says they also understand that they can remain mission centered and allow others to become members.

*White students are clearly involved in diversity and eager to engage in opportunities related to the diversity learning process.*

Briana discusses how the entire University community addresses diversity issues. She identifies race and dialogue about racial issues as complex and sometimes “controversial.” Briana also admits how challenging it is for the community to engage in conversation about race. She goes on to say that the University community continues to

grow in this area. She also stated that some situations occurred during the fall semester that provided new avenues of discussion. The nature of this study did not afford the opportunity to delve further into what had happened in the fall so I do not have examples to illustrate this.

*The University community celebrates success related to diversity education and initiatives.*

There were no significant findings for the code in this interview.

*The University community is encouraged and rewarded for engaging in diversity work.*

Briana was unsure if faculty received incentives or rewards for engaging diversity work but she did relate that there were no tangible rewards for staff. Briana manages a department and she added that she includes diversity as an expectation in the employee evaluation process. She explained that she approaches individual goal setting with each employee in a manner that includes diversity as a means to provide development on a personal and professional level. She remarked that her staff works together to set diversity goals as a department. She emphasized her personal commitment as follows: “But for me there is no incentive but your own thing, being committed to the mission of the University.”

### **Diversity from Dr. Samantha Carr’s Perspective**

#### *Introduction of Participant*

Dr. Samantha Carr serves as the Assistant Chancellor and Dean of Students at the institution. She has a large portfolio of administrative responsibility that includes an Assistant Dean of Students, Associate Dean for Diversity, and 18 different departments

or areas focusing on student life. Some of these departments include: Housing, Intercollegiate Athletics, Student Health Service, the Student Union, Recreational Sports, and seven different diversity offices.

*A commitment to diversity incorporated into the institutional mission of the institution.*

Dr. Carr began by describing how diversity is seen as a value and priority of the institution. She offered that every employee in the Student Affairs division is expected to set a goal that relates to diversity on an individual or departmental basis. Dr. Carr stated that diversity messaging is visible in recruitment materials, publications such as Student Affairs thank you cards, and is conveyed verbally to the University community. She remarked that the institutional philosophy emphasizes opportunities for continued growth and development

*Diversity is considered by major areas of the institution (Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Central Administration, Admissions, etc.) as central to the work of that area.*

Dr. Carr proudly described a newly created Campus Climate and Diversity area that serves as a coordinating body for diversity initiatives on campus. She discussed the importance of these areas working together and that this organizational change was critical to advancing diversity. Dr. Carr acknowledged that there is a natural divide between Academic and Student Affairs and that Student Affairs is sometimes seen as less important in the University arena. She follows up by saying that the newly created structure has yielded outstanding partnerships related to diversity work between the Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning, Academic and Student Affairs.

Dr. Carr explained that diversity is a part of the culture in a variety of ways. For example, she noted an online mini-course about Hmong culture that is available to the entire community and provides introspection for personal growth. Dr. Carr described a special mentoring program for underrepresented students serving as a collaborative program between Academic and Student Affairs that targets sophomore, underrepresented students. She went on to say that the program was designed as a retention program and was supported at the system level and by senior administration at the institution.

She discussed at length the efforts to recruit Hmong and Latino students and the value added benefits of having TRIO Programs on campus to assist with access and opportunity for first generation and underrepresented students. She went on to say that TRIO was a new program on campus that provides programs and services that further educational success. Dr. Carr was proud of the outstanding collaboration that occurs between Academic and Student Affairs on diversity-related educational initiatives.

*Diversity is integrated into the generalized curriculum of the institution.*

Dr. Carr identified integrating diversity into the generalized curriculum as a possible growth area for the institution. She also commented that it is currently embedded into the curriculum offered in the Liberal Education program. She went on to say that a diversity-related course is a graduation requirement for students. Dr. Carr was proud of the fact that a faculty member has release time in the new Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning and will be working on this endeavor. She commented that faculty are open to incorporating diversity but are interested in assistance on how to make

it happen. She also shared that it is automatically embedded into a leadership course that she teaches.

*Co-curricular program and activities include diversity as a regular part of the experiences offered to the University community.*

When asked about the co-curricular programs and activities related to diversity, Dr. Carr discussed the importance of cultural celebrations. She admitted that these types of programs do not cut to the core of “unconscious biases” but do offer the opportunity for diverse student groups to celebrate who and what they are. She also talked about a diversity dialogue program that provides opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to come together and learn about diversity outside of the classroom. Dr. Carr related her understanding of the constant variable that is offered with a changing institutional community.

She comments: “We are always infusing new people in – they are coming in at different stages of their journey of understanding . . .” Dr. Carr described an optional program aligned with the first year experience course that offers students with an opportunity to read about different cultures. She admitted that the majority of students didn’t take advantage of this program but acknowledged the importance of including it in a menu of co-curricular options.

*White students are clearly involved in diversity and eager to engage in opportunities related to the diversity learning process.*

There were no significant findings for the code in this interview.

*The University community celebrates success related to diversity education and initiatives.*

There were no significant findings for the code in this interview.

*The University community is encouraged and rewarded for engaging in diversity work.*

Dr. Carr reported that grants are available at the system level for individuals interested in advancing diversity. She also noted that international grants are available each semester for faculty and staff that are interested in learning more about different cultures and involving students in this learning process. She indicated that there had not been as much advancement in this area as others.

### **Diversity from Carolyn Alan's Perspective**

#### *Introduction of Participant*

Carolyn Alan serves as the senior diversity officer for the institution and oversees several diversity areas including Campus Climate, Disability Resources, LGBT Services, Multicultural Services, TRIO Programs, etc. Carolyn reports to Dr. Carr who is the Assistant Chancellor and Dean of Students at the institution.

*A commitment to diversity incorporated into the institutional mission of the institution.*

Carolyn stated that the institution has inclusive approach when embedding diversity into the mission of the institution. She acknowledged that the general feeling is that diversity is focused on race. She went on to say that since the demographic student composition does not mirror the racial profile of the state, a push remains to increase the number of underrepresented students enrolled. She added that this provides a disconnect for some people with regard to the approach to inclusivity.

Carolyn is clear about the goals as they work to institutionalize diversity as mission centered work:

. . . it's one thing to use the services but the other thing to embrace this inclusive excellence and really promote – that is kind of our next step is to really promote this embracing of it, not just accepting it, not just tolerating it, but to understand why we feel like we feel that inclusive excellence is definitely the way to go.

Carolyn expounded upon how diversity as a concept and value is considered as a responsibility:

I think that part of it is making diversity something that people care about – you can't make people care about it – but hopefully you are doing things that make it rise to the level where people are paying more attention.

*Diversity is considered by major areas of the institution (Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Central Administration, Admissions, etc.) as central to the work of that area.*

Carolyn talked about some of the systemic initiatives in place and in the planning stages that will further the process of institutionalizing diversity on campus. She explained that a goal of the university is that diversity will be “the first thought” during policy construction, the hiring process for new employees, or when working with a student on any issue or concern. She admitted that this is a growing process and that is hasn't been fully actualized by the entire community. She described it as follows: “People know that politically they should at least not bash it – you've got folks who don't do that but they are not thinking a lot about it either.”

Carolyn spoke about visible signs that diversity is progressing on campus. For example, she detailed how the diversity webpage had been retooled to promote inclusivity and include what is valued, explain new initiatives, and to help other community members know what they can do. She also highlighted a Friday diversity series that serves as an educational opportunity for the community. She had just come from a capacity filled room and said that the topic had been on FERPA. She also identified that there was potential for other topics that would help the community with diverse initiatives.

Carolyn went into detail about five work groups comprised of faculty and staff who are working on a variety of diversity components. She explained that they are tackling things such as programming, assessment, marketing, strategic planning, etc.

Carolyn discussed the administrative support for including diversity as a requirement in position descriptions even to the point that positions won't be listed if it isn't included in the position description. She reinforced that in Student Affairs, this was a directive given by the Dean of Students. Carolyn commented about this change:

So it's been a huge shift for our campus and it did take some people aback. Like they refused to put it in there – well then you won't be hiring. You can do that?

Yes, we can do that. We decided as a policy, as a campus this is important to us.

On the Academic side of the house, Carolyn applauded the faculty who are open to considering how to incorporate diversity into their classes. Carolyn identified the coordinator of Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning as someone who has worked



hard to advance diversity. She also acknowledged the Chancellor as someone who has been visibly supportive of diversity on campus.

Carolyn did confide that she sometimes wonders if everyone on campus is truly on board with diversity as an everyday institutional component. She summarizes: “I wouldn’t necessarily say that if you stopped anybody out here in the hallway that they would know. And that is concerning on several levels but it also makes the work that much harder to do.”

*Diversity is integrated into the generalized curriculum of the institution.*

When talking about how diversity is embedded into the curriculum, Carolyn was proud of a new academic statement that would be included in course evaluations. She described the statement as a work in progress but hopes that it will involve a question that would address varied learning styles and diverse ways of addressing course materials. She said there would likely be some resistance but is anticipating it will be discussed at the faculty senate level in the coming year.

Carolyn articulated the need for senior academic leadership to require that all faculty intertwine diversity in the classroom culture. She added that institutional incentive grants for retooling the curriculum would assist with this process. As an example of this, she mentioned that the College of Business has already instituted small grants for curricular redesign focused on diversity excellence.

*Co-curricular program and activities include diversity as a regular part of the experiences offered to the University community.*

With a great deal of zeal and pride, Carolyn elaborated on the long menu of programs and activities focused on diversity. She described a “signature program” that is planned in the fall and spring and a host of events planned and sponsored by diverse student organizations. She shared feedback received from other campuses as follows: “People are like wow!, when they come from other institutions and come here to do their graduate work and they had another undergraduate experience they are amazed at, for this size of a campus, what we have to offer.”

Carolyn emphasized the importance of collaboration and noted that the departments she supervises have excelled at partnering with other institutions. She noted that the increase in programs and events sometimes leads to challenges with coordination and scheduling. In her words, “Those are good problems to have.”

*White students are clearly involved in diversity and eager to engage in opportunities related to the diversity learning process.*

There were no significant findings for the code in this interview.

*The University community celebrates success related to diversity education and initiatives.*

There were no significant findings for the code in this interview.

*The University community is encouraged and rewarded for engaging in diversity work.*

Carolyn identified some special grants and system level funding that is dedicated to new diversity initiatives. She enthusiastically added that she is planning on applying for additional grants that can serve as catalyst funding to encourage continued diversity work on campus. She added that she would like for a faculty member to receive release

time to oversee a fund of this nature. She believes that a diversity resource fund would bolster the diversity efforts of the Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning.

### **Diversity from Dr. Nell Sledden's Perspective**

#### *Introduction of Participant*

Dr. Nell Sledden serves as the chair of the Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and is part of the staff that serves in the Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning.

#### *A commitment to diversity incorporated into the institutional mission of the institution.*

Dr. Sledden described a University-wide initiative that promotes inclusivity. She went on to say that while the initiative is broad for institutional purposes, she address diversity from a social justice perspective. She added that it is most likely that faculty and staff who are connected to diversity would approach it in this way. Dr. Sledden identified that the institution has been involved in diversity work that focused on race for several years.

#### *Diversity is considered by major areas of the institution (Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Central Administration, Admissions, etc.) as central to the work of that area.*

Dr. Sledden reported that a variety of institutional stakeholders were invested in diversity but that the coordination of these undertakings was a challenge and this sometimes prohibited effective collaboration. Dr. Sledden cited an example that involved two different people assigned to conduct a campus climate study and neither one knew that the project had been assigned to the other.

Dr. Sledden indicated that a condition for diversity to progress is that senior administrative leadership must provide authentic support. She remarked that this has to be more than just “lip service” in an annual speech to the university community. She added that the Chief Diversity Officer does not have a direct line to the faculty and that expectations must come from the Chancellor or Provost.

Dr. Sledden referred to a large number of people who are very committed to diversity. She remarks:

There are people who are passionate about the work and talk about it as ‘the work’ and everybody throws that phrase around because it’s part of who you are, it’s part of your identity, it’s part of what you do, it’s part of your job and you see it as part of your job and I think that is everything to do with success that we have had. To be very honest about it, most of those folks are on the Student Affairs side of the house.

Dr. Sledden indicated some groups of faculty across campus are fully engaged in campus diversity issues and reach across invisible lines to initiate collaborative initiatives. She went on to say that the literature she has read emphasizes the need for student services staff and faculty working together and that senior leadership must support and encourage this.

*Diversity is integrated into the generalized curriculum of the institution.*

Dr. Sledden explained that one of the ways diversity is embedded in the curriculum is through a system-wide required cultural diversity course that is explicitly supposed to focus on United States born racial minorities and southeast Asian refugees.

She said that when the requirement was instituted, there were nine to ten courses available and that number has now grown to more than twenty.

Dr. Sledden further commented that there are discipline specific courses that center around diversity but that widespread involvement of diversity in unrelated courses is still a work in progress. She shared that in her role in the Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning and tapping into her discipline expertise, she has offered workshops for faculty interested in new information on this topic. She mentioned that the entire Physics department attended and that specific interest was also expressed from the College of Business.

Dr. Sledden highlighted the Sociology department and noted that they had recently hired a Hmong American Anthropologist and that some of the faculty in the English department had integrated diversity related literature into their courses. Dr. Sledden shared that many departments have an isolated course but have not fully integrated diversity into every course. In her words:

But I think in a lot of departments it is this one course, it's not an infusion, it's not a both and model, it's a "here's the course" and often it's an elective – You can see places where it is critically needed . . .

One strategy that she has offered is to connect assignments or projects between courses or departments. She continues by saying that she has received an enthusiastic response from other campuses but the idea has not thrived on her own. She adds that course load (four per semester) does not incentivize faculty to take on the additional work that would be required to retrofit course curriculum.

*Co-curricular program and activities include diversity as a regular part of the experiences offered to the University community.*

When asked about how diversity is approached from a co-curricular perspective, Dr. Sledden indicated it was well connected. She went on to say that in some cases, the classroom experience is not specifically integrated to the campus programs and events.

She explains:

I think we are really missing a golden opportunity here to enhance student learning and student understanding by not being more explicit in the connections between those two things. . . . this is actually the 1<sup>st</sup> year that I had difficulty finding opportunities for my colleagues who wanted to read materials related to one of the people we were bringing to campus. A diversity-centered person that we were bringing and this is the first year that I have had – and only not because we weren't bringing anybody but because they hadn't written any books – gee.

Could you write a book before you come?

She also noted that some departments have a close working relationship with diversity offices responsible for the planning of these types of diversity experiences.

*White students are clearly involved in diversity and eager to engage in opportunities related to the diversity learning process.*

Dr. Sledden cites research that indicates that all students experience growth and development when diversity is at the core of the course teachings. She goes on to say that providing evidence of that gain is a challenge. Further she contends that most faculty are lacking experience and knowledge of how to provide work that incorporates diversity.

She states: “and sometimes they are surprised when you bring that up to them, oh by golly you are right.” In her own experience, she offers that disengaged behavior exhibited by students has served as an impetus to make changes in course delivery. She adds that her first degree was in teacher education and this helped her develop effective teaching pedagogy. She provides this illustrative idea: “I keep saying for these initiatives that the t-shirt I want is Diversity Makes You Smarter and could we have the footnote here and the reference list on the back.”

*The University community celebrates success related to diversity education and initiatives.*

There were no significant findings for the code in this interview.

*The University community is encouraged and rewarded for engaging in diversity work.*

Dr. Sledden reported the only incentive for faculty to engage in diversity work was the credit given for service in promotion and tenure applications. She clearly stated that this did not serve as an incentive and that most new faculty are encouraged not to focus on service. Dr. Sledden added that the steep course load made it difficult to take on added responsibilities or volunteer to do work outside the direct scope of the faculty position. She summarizes:

So there’s actually a lot of disincentives to do it. There are an astonishingly large number of people who do an awful lot of work but a lot of them are on the Student Affairs side of the house. It’s part of their job and they consider it part of their job.

### Themes

In the analysis of five structured interviews, I identified six themes that illustrated institutionalized diversity efforts at the sample institution. The seven themes were:

- A commitment to diversity incorporated into the institutional mission of the institution.
- Diversity is considered by major areas of the institution (Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Central Administration, Admissions, etc.) as central to the work of that area.
- Diversity is integrated into the generalized curriculum of the institution.
- Co-curricular program and activities include diversity as a regular part of the experiences offered to the University community.
- Leadership.
- The University community is encouraged and rewarded for engaging in diversity work.

*A commitment to diversity incorporated into the institutional mission of the institution.*

All five of the participants described an institutional commitment to inclusivity and provided specific examples that spoke to it as a campus value. Carly explained that the institution had made strides in the past 5-6 years to work intentionally on the idea of inclusivity. This has been evidenced in the diverse program offerings that communicate a commitment to diversity. Dr. Sledden echoed this when discussing a campus-wide initiative that promotes inclusivity. Briana referred to the institution as a “model institution” for how individuals embrace diversity. She went on to say that the campus serves as a role model for others in the system. Dr. Carr suggested that diversity is



treated as a value at the institution and signs of this are visible in publications, programs, and organizational structure. Carly summarized the idea of an inclusive approach to diversity as follows: “. . . I think the community really understands that diversity doesn’t mean one particular thing but there is a whole slew of different students and backgrounds and perspectives that we really look at when we talk about diversity inclusion.”

Carolyn added that a next step in this work is to actualize diversity as a concept that is expected rather than tolerated.

*Diversity is considered by major areas of the institution (Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Central Administration, Admissions, etc.) as central to the work of that area.*

Each of the participants provided examples of how the institution was invested in diversity. From a student perspective, Carly cited examples of programs and student organizations that engaged the community in diversity-related topics. Through her leadership role in Student Government, she was also aware of a University-wide effort to promote new initiatives related to inclusivity. Each of the five participants mentioned this program. Other telling signs referenced by Carly were the offices and organizations that held the responsibility of promoting diversity programs and services. Dr. Carr also referenced the new organizational structure that houses these offices as a visible sign that the institution is invested in diversity as a campus value and priority. She reinforced the synergy and effective collaboration that this fosters.

All of the participants noted that progress was being made across campus with regard to diversity initiatives. Carolyn used examples such as a new website that promotes inclusivity and explains how and why diversity is valued. She also highlighted

institutional work groups that are tackling diversity initiatives from several angles. Dr. Carr showcased online educational programs available to the entire community that are culture specific. She described a unique mentoring program for underrepresented students spearheaded by Academic and Student Affairs in an effort to increase retention. Briana applauded cross-divisional work between Student and Academic Affairs and suggested that this was something that would need to continue. Briana states: “And I think finally for once I feel like other people besides the multicultural faculty and staff are stepping up and saying hey hold on – we’ve got a problem here . . .” Two of the participants noted that creating institutional investment is a process of continual growth and development. Carolyn asserted that the ultimate goal is for diversity to permeate all policies and processes and that this in and of itself will take time. Dr. Sledden added that many people are committed to diversity but that coordination of these efforts is sometimes a challenge.

*Diversity is integrated into the generalized curriculum of the institution.*

Four out of five of the participants highlighted the work of the Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning with regard to advancing diversity in the curriculum. Briana emphasized that a large number of faculty incorporate diversity into general education courses. Dr. Carr added that a diversity-related course is a requirement for graduation. Dr. Sledden noted that when the requirement was instituted, there were nine to ten courses available and that number has now grown to more than twenty. Carly goes further to say that she has experienced diversity in many classes that are not earmarked as diversity courses. In her words:

I have had several professors – it’s not the material, they don’t have – they are not teaching anything different than the next professor, but their perspective gives you such a different angle – and that is really helpful when you are trying to – I think college is not just about learning material, but it’s about teaching you to think differently.

Three of the participants also commented that they teach courses and that diversity is automatically intertwined in their course.

Three of the five participants suggested that embedding diversity into the curriculum remains a growth area for the institution. Briana stated:

I don’t feel we are 100% there. There are 1 or probably 3 credits that are required in our gen ed curriculum. Is that enough? No, but I do think again we have people in place that are trying to address curriculum issues and again with our CATL being a huge part of the academic curriculum, I think from a professional development standpoint our faculty have resources available to maybe switch up the curriculum and make it more inclusive.

Dr. Sledden further commented that there are singular courses that focus around diversity but that diversity is not infused into the overall course menu offered at the institution. In her words:

But I think in a lot of departments it is this one course, it’s not an infusion, it’s not a both and model, it’s a “here’s the course” and often it’s an elective – You can see places where it is critically needed . . .

Dr. Carr added that many faculty are open to incorporating diversity but are seeking resources to actualize this. Dr. Sledden indicated that in her role in the Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning and tapping into her discipline expertise, she has offered workshops for faculty interested in new information on this topic.

*Co-Curricular Program and Activities Include Diversity as a Regular Part of the Experiences Offered to the University Community.*

Four out of the five participants made special mention of the multicultural student organizations and the plethora of events and activities that are planned each year. Carly added that the Diversity Organization Coalition represents these organizations and is a collaborative, outreach group. Carolyn added that each year, there is an extensive offering of diversity programs and activities. She proudly states:

People are like wow!, when they come from other institutions and come here to do their graduate work and they had another undergraduate experience they are amazed at, for this size of a campus, what we have to offer.

Dr. Sledden indicated out-of-class diversity experiences are well developed, but that in some cases the classroom experience is not well connected.

Along with the positive impact of diverse programs, Briana commented on the tension that sometimes surfaces between multicultural and non-multicultural student organizations:

Our multicultural students, a lot of those organizations are housed in our office but sometimes I think the students think that “my issue is everybody else’s issue all the time” and so it’s like trying to re-program the brain to help them

understand “yes, this is your issue and you want people to understand your issues and create some allies” but if you are constantly pushing people against the wall they become numb.

Dr. Carr noted that cultural celebrations are critical but do not specifically address “unconscious biases.”

### *Leadership*

Three of the participants commented on the importance of institutional leadership showing support for and active involvement in diversity work on campus. Each person expressed varying opinions about how this is manifested on campus. For example, Carolyn acknowledged visible support for diversity shown by the Chancellor of the University. Briana expressed appreciation for the administrative decision-making that ensured appropriate personnel were in place to advance the diversity agenda. As a result, she has seen more institutional accountability. Briana went on to say that new office space provided for diversity provided a visible presence for diversity in an academic building. She also provided evidence of work on policy changes that would require new position descriptions to include diversity as a requirement for the job. Dr. Sledden highlighted the literature that indicates senior leadership must support and encourage faculty and staff to work in concert on diversity initiatives. She also notes that top administrators must lend authentic support to make an impact. She adds:

There are people who are passionate about the work and talk about it as “the work” and everybody throws that phrase around because it’s part of who you are, it’s part of your identity, it’s part of what you do, it’s part of your job and you see it

as part of your job and I think that is everything to do with success that we have had – and to be very honest about it, most of those folks are on the Student Affairs side of the house.

Two of the participants discussed the symbolism that exists given diversity and the Chief Diversity Officer reports to Student Affairs. Dr. Sledden remarked that because of this the Chief Diversity officer does not have a direct line to the faculty. Carolyn acknowledged the support she receives from her supervisor (Dean of Students) but identified some reluctance to collaborate on the faculty side because of the reporting line structure. She added that it would be helpful to have a directive to the faculty from academic leadership to embed diversity in course curriculum.

*The University community is encouraged and rewarded for engaging in diversity work.*

Participants provided examples of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards provided for University community members who engage in diversity work. There was, however, some conflicting information about this topic. For example, Carolyn identified some special system level funding that is provided for work connected to new diversity initiatives. She also communicated goals to apply for additional grants that would incentivize diversity work on campus. Dr. Carr reported that grants are available at the system level for individuals interested in advancing diversity. Dr. Sledden also mentioned these grants as a vehicle for faculty to learn more about other cultures and become educated about pedagogical approaches to incorporating this into classroom learning.

On the other hand, Dr. Sledden noted that the primary incentive for faculty to become involved was connected to the promotion and tenure process. In this case, she likened this to a disincentive because new faculty are compelled to focus on research and are, in fact, not to focus on service. She also noted the heavy course load requirement adding to the need to prioritize work initiatives. She summarizes:

So there's actually a lot of disincentives to do it. There are an astonishingly large number of people who do an awful lot of work but a lot of them are on the Student Affairs side of the house. It's part of their job and they consider it part of their job.

Four out of five participants indicated the rewards that come intrinsically from engaging in diversity work. Briana said that she evaluates her staff on their involvement with diversity and that her employees are engaged in personal goal setting on this topic. She remarked that her staff works together to set departmental goals for diversity as well. It was clear that her department has embodied diversity as a personal and group value.

Each of the participants spoke from the heart about the value of diversity and how it enriches their experience at the institution. They also had goals of how to further involvement from others. Carolyn spoke about plans to apply for additional incentive grants to encourage others to get involved. Briana summarized her viewpoint about the intrinsic value of embracing diversity in the workplace: "But for me there is no incentive but your own thing, being committed to the mission of the University."

Providing tangible rewards and incentives was identified as a growth area by the participants. At the same time, they all conveyed a passion, a love, and a desire to continue furthering the campus mission of inclusivity.



## Chapter V

### Conclusions, Recommendations, and Methodological Issues

#### Conclusions

This study provided data that highlights best practices for institutionalizing diversity at a public institution of higher education in the Midwest. The information gleaned from this study provides context for administrators, practitioners, and faculty who are working to weave diversity into the fabric of their institution. This is illustrated in the research questions:

*1. How is the institution as a whole involved in diversity work?*

The participants in this study each represented a different facet of the institution including a student, Student Affairs staff member, senior administrator, and faculty members. This offered perspective of how major constituent groups felt about diversity at the institution. All of the participants communicated a sense of institutional involvement in diversity. Several examples were given that illustrated this ranging from programs and events to curriculum development. In addition, each participant expressed a genuine interest and investment in moving forward on an inclusive, diverse learning and working environment.

The organizational structure at the institution was cited as a symbolic example representing the importance of diversity as a priority for the entire campus. Dr. Carr commented that the structure brought together diversity-focused offices and this was an intentional decision to spark collaborative efforts that would strengthen diversity on campus. Carly also mentioned the importance of the diversity offices and the positive

impact this had on students. Briana went on to say that the decision to place diversity offices in a prominent academic building sent a positive message to the campus community. The conscious decision to organize and house diversity offices in this way further illustrates diversity as a campus priority and the expectation that the entire university will be connected to it as an everyday initiative.

All of the participants noted that progress was being made across campus with regard to diversity initiatives. Each participant provided evidence of this such as a new website, institutional work groups tackling online educational programs, a mentoring program for underrepresented students. It was clear that diversity efforts were not approached from an isolated department or single area on campus but rather embraced by many constituent groups. Briana applauded cross-divisional work between Student and Academic Affairs and was eager for this to continue. The participants were clear in their understanding of the goals for diversity on campus and what it would take to accomplish these. For example, Carolyn said that the ultimate goal is for diversity to permeate all policies and processes. The sampling of work underway and the goals communicated demonstrate a holistic approach to advancing diversity on campus.

From an academic perspective, four out of five participants emphasized the work of the Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning. Evidence of academic involvement included a required diversity course for graduation and diversity incorporated into everyday courses. In addition, Briana discussed the large number of general education courses that specifically involve diversity and Dr. Sledden noted that diversity course offerings had more than doubled since she began working with Center

for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning. Perhaps most telling, is the classroom experienced by Carly:

I have had several professors – it's not the material, they don't have – they are not teaching anything different than the next professor, but their perspective gives you such a different angle – and that is really helpful when you are trying to – I think college is not just about learning material – but it's about teaching you to think differently.

All of the participants communicated a need for continued growth and development in this area but were proud of the progress that had been made. The energy, ideas, and goals for the future related to curricular development send a message of commitment and investment that is promising. It also reflected diversity as a priority for faculty and the classroom experience.

To illustrate the co-curricular investment by the institution, four out five participants referenced multicultural student organizations and numerous events and activities available to the campus community. Carolyn proudly stated: “People are like wow!, when they come from other institutions and come here to do their graduate work and they had another undergraduate experience they are amazed at, for this size of a campus, what we have to offer.” It was clear that diversity is embraced by the community in and out of the classroom and that a broad spectrum of people and organizations are working to this end.

Of significance was the accolades given by three of the participants for the involvement of institutional leadership in advancing the diversity agenda. For example,

Carolyn noted the support shown by the Chancellor of the University. Briana acknowledged the administration for placing appropriate staffing in roles that would support diversity work on campus. In addition, she mentioned policy work that incorporated diversity as a mainstreamed requirement for all open positions.

All of the participants indicated strengths and opportunities for improvement and this also reflected a sense of attachment and investment in diversity on campus. One of the participants referenced “the choir” when referring to exuberant champions for diversity on campus but, nevertheless, it was clear that diversity efforts resonated from faculty, staff, and students at the institution.

*2. How are White students impacted by diversity initiatives?*

All of the participants provided several examples of programs, classroom experiences, and other outreach initiatives that engaged the entire campus community in diversity. These initiatives provide a multifaceted experience for all students, especially those students who have had little experience with diverse populations. As a White student, Carly described her own experience with diversity on campus:

In the last 2 years our students have participated in the White Privilege Conference. We have a lot of students go to that –of all races, colors, sizes and they come back from that and they have a really kind of different perception of the world. When I first heard about the White Privilege Conference, I had a lot of discussions with our graduate advisor at the time. To me something like that seemed very, very non-inclusive and something that a lot of students were taken aback by and didn’t necessarily want to be involved in. It was kind of this very

aggressive experience that I had and I guess after last year I kind of wanted to avoid talking about it. It's a very different attitude that I had whereas when I came into college I was all about everybody and loving everyone and diversity. My parents are very open and honest. It was just kind of a really interesting experience for me. Now that I have kind of had a lot more interaction with not only students from the different organizations but on the administrative side (talking to some of the people from the Campus Climate office), it's become a lot easier to talk about those things when you form those relationships. I think that is what some of the other students feel too. I think it's difficult to talk about some of those issues because I think just the nature of diversity and history is really hard for a lot of students who don't come from an easy background. So I think forming a lot of those relationships is what is nice about our campus. We are a little bit smaller and a lot more tight knit. We are very community based. So I think having those relationships makes it a lot easier to talk about it and I guess that has kind of been my experience.

Carly identified that many students attending the University have had little opportunity to interact with or learn about diversity cultures. She articulated the impact that faculty have in promoting an understanding of diversity and encouraging students to take initiative on their own to become involved. Experiences inside and outside of the classroom expose students to new perspectives, viewpoints, and cultural backgrounds. Carly also discussed the leadership roles that diverse student organizations had in Student Government. This provides the dominant culture with an understanding of sensitivity to

others and the comprehension that diverse individuals can and should be in leadership roles.

Three of the participants mentioned situations on campus that provided opportunity for discussions about race. Without going into detail, they indicated that these issues were challenging but that the institution had approached them as a learning opportunity. This is a sign of a campus that is committed to open dialogue about challenging topics and a sign of investment in promoting inclusivity. There is no better place for challenging discussions and perspectives than a college environment. A multicultural environment does not ensure racial issues will not occur. Rather, as in the case of this institution, it provides avenues for discussion and learning. Four of the participants mentioned issues that provided opportunity for this kind of experience. White students were provided with an opportunity to learn about the impact of racial discourse as a result of an environment that supports diversity and multiculturalism.

*3. How is diversity work encouraged and rewarded at the institution?*

Data provided from the participants primarily identified intrinsic rewards as encouragement for engaging in diversity work. An exception was noted by two of the participants who highlighted grants for faculty engaged in diversity work offered at the system level. Dr. Sledden indicated course offerings meeting the diversity requirement had more than doubled since inception. This indicates that faculty are embracing diversity on the curricular side. A correlation between grants offered, recognition, or personal satisfaction may be contributing factors. Dr. Sledden said that service credit was given to faculty in the promotion and tenure process but expressed that new faculty

are expected to focus on research. She added that the heavy course load does not assist faculty in engaging in work outside of their discipline. In her words:

So there's actually a lot of disincentives to do it. There are an astonishingly large number of people who do an awful lot of work but a lot of them are on the Student Affairs side of the house. It's part of their job and they consider it part of their job.

An opportunity for engaging faculty early in their career exists if the promotion and tenure process were to include involvement in diversity as a factor.

From a staff perspective, it was clear that diversity is a value and is something embraced as part of the regular work environment. For example, Briana described how she includes diversity as a work expectation for her staff. She went on to say that staff set individual and group goals related to advancing diversity. It is impressive that this is woven into the fabric of the work environment. She communicated how it impacts her as follows: "But for me there is no incentive but your own thing, being committed to the mission of the University." One could argue that this environment has fostered the sense that personal commitment and satisfaction is a compelling incentive.

All of the participants were exuberant about their commitment to diversity and about the personal rewards they have gained from being involved in diversity on campus. While four out of five participants expressed a need to expand in this area, it was clear that they all felt passionately about their personal investment and they had several examples of other faculty and staff who shared their commitment. Three of the five participants discussed an interest in expanding monetary incentives for faculty and staff.

Carolyn communicated goals for the future that included expanding faculty development grants. Since diversity is tied to deep feelings that are often connected to personal values, perhaps extrinsic rewards are not as compelling as internal satisfaction.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the data and the themes that emerged from the study, the following recommendations are presented for consideration.

#### **Recommendation 1: A commitment to diversity incorporated into the institutional mission and purpose of the institution.**

Communicating that diversity is an essential tenet of the institution is essential in providing a framework of purpose for the University community. In this way, diversity is not viewed as a singular program or initiative but rather a value that is connected to all aspects of the educational experience. Recommendations for accomplishing this include:

- Provide a clear mission statement that reflects diversity as a value of the institution.
- Incorporate diversity as an expectation in messages and speeches by top administrators to the University community about funding, institutional initiatives, programs, and services.
- Clearly define what diversity means to the campus and articulate this without hesitation in publications, the website, marketing pieces, and other written materials.
- Ensure that the mission is actualized in budgetary decisions, policies, practices, and programmatic focus.



The importance of diversity viewed as a community expectation was communicated by all of the participants in this study. Dr. Carr reinforced the impact of this by suggesting that diversity as an institutional value is observed in publications, programs and organizational structure. Ensuring that diversity is mission centered begins by articulating it in the mission and purpose of the institution.

**Recommendation 2: A clear emphasis is given to recruiting a diverse student composition.**

If colleges and universities seek to provide an enriching educational experience that prepares students to enter a global work world, an understanding of diversity is essential. This comes from the opportunity to learn from others and become immersed in a rich, learning environment that provides varying perspectives and thought provoking opportunities. Diversifying the student composition requires financial commitment and leadership that is willing to tackle policies and process. In most cases, it will not come without challenge and resistance. The following includes recommendations for accomplishing this critical task:

- Employ a student enrollment system that evaluates the whole student when considering eligibility to become a part of the community. This includes eliminating or de-emphasizing test scores, reviewing complimentary experiences, considering life situations, ascertaining personal commitment and potential, etc.
- Involve diverse staff in the student recruitment and admission process.

- Provide funding alternatives such as scholarships for underrepresented students who are in need.
- Create a summer bridge experience to provide academic resources that will help to prepare diverse students who are underprepared for the rigor of a collegiate experience.
- Initiate a plan to “cohort hire” a group of diverse faculty, staff, and administrators. This concentrated effort will provide an instant support network for new diverse employees and provide a bolus of diverse employees at the institution.

**Recommendation 3: A clear emphasis is given to recruiting a diverse employee composition.**

Providing a learning environment that is infused with multiculturalism and global perspectives requires a faculty that is both diverse and committed to multicultural perspectives. This is not to say that the sole responsibility for fostering a multicultural perspective lies with diverse faculty. The institution must be wholly committed to including diversity in the curriculum. A diverse faculty helps to drive this effort and serves as a catalyst for new thinking and retooling of historical practices. Similarly, diverse staff and administration help to further the diversity effort. The final goal is that the total educational experience will embody diversity as a value. The need for a broader understanding of diversity and “champions” to advance the diversity agenda is a common thread that is just below the surface of the data gathered in this study. The following comprises recommendations for the recruitment and retention of diverse employees:

- Evaluate the current hiring process to ensure that a commitment to diversity is held as an employment requirement.
- Where appropriate, ensure that specific diversity experiences are honored as special expertise. For example, a Tribal Elder who does not hold a doctorate could be considered for a Native language professorial position.
- Initiate a cohort hiring process that would seek to hire a group of diverse employees in a given time period. This would provide immediate cross-departmental diversity for the institution and an instant support group for the new diverse employees.
- Provide a specific mentoring and support program for new diverse employees. This should include a mentor matching system that would assign a seasoned faculty/staff member with a new hire, opportunities for on and off-campus networking, and departmental programs focused on transition for new faculty/staff members.
- Substantially honor involvement in diversity in the promotion and tenure process in a category with similar weight to research and publications.
- Ensure that diverse employees are not tokenized or exploited. For example, one diverse staff member is asked to serve on every search committee to provide diverse representation.
- Reward managers who hire diverse employees. For example, provide 50% of the position funding for departments who hire a diverse employee.

- Require a work and learning environment that is supportive and inclusive of all. This could be manifested in expectation setting, accountability measures, and policy development practices.
- Involve diverse faculty and staff in leadership roles. Leadership should purposefully involve diverse faculty in new initiatives that help them become involved in policy development, provide professional development experiences, and connect them to the institution in a meaningful way.

**Recommendation 4: Integrate diversity into the generalized curriculum of the institution.**

The classroom is central to the educational experience for students in higher education. An institution dedicated to preparing students for a global work-world must require that diversity is integrated into the curriculum of all courses. This is clearly an enormous task that necessitates faculty who are dedicated to diversity as a value and core component of the educational experience. All students benefit when they are exposed to varying perspectives, challenged to understand global dynamics, and encouraged to learn how to work effectively with people from different backgrounds. Recommendations for infusing diversity into the curriculum are as follows:

- Require that every course include diversity as an aspect of the course focus or be considered in terms of pedagogical approach.
- Provide faculty development grants to enable faculty to retool their curriculum to include diversity.

- Provide workshops and special educational sessions for faculty including information about the value of incorporating diversity (including how it supports the intellectual development of students). Further provide strategies for implementation.
- Involve faculty in promoting the involvement of diversity in the curriculum. Use course release time and financial rewards to incentivize this.
- Provide rewards and recognition for faculty who integrate diversity in their courses.

All of the participants in this study reinforced the importance of involving diversity in the curriculum. From a student perspective, Carly said the following:

I have had several professors – it's not the material, they don't have – they are not teaching anything different than the next professor, but their perspective gives you such a different angle – and that is really helpful when you are trying to – I think college is not just about learning material-but it's about teaching you to think differently.

Four out of five participants in this study emphasized the importance of providing resources for faculty as they endeavor to make course curriculum changes. In each case, the Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning was mentioned as a critical resource. Investing in curriculum re-design and providing resources for faculty to learn more about pedagogical approaches to diversity is an integral part of making progress in this area.

**Recommendation 5: Involve diversity as a mainstay of co-curricular programs and activities.**

Co-curricular involvement opportunities that embody multiculturalism provide all students with experiences that broaden perspectives, enhance understanding, and lead to future civic engagement, particularly in social justice issues. Underrepresented students benefit from the opportunity to connect with other students like them and this helps to build a cultural family base and combat potential feelings of isolation. In addition, underrepresented students who become connected to the institution in leadership opportunities and other involvement will be more likely to remain enrolled. These students will also have a greater opportunity to connect with faculty and staff who can serve as mentors and provide specialized resources. White students benefit by engaging in new experiences that provide exposure to new perspectives, cultural awareness opportunities, and multicultural learning. All this rich learning leads to an inclusive environment that promotes self-awareness and global understanding. Co-curricular diversity initiatives should connect with curricular learning to provide deep educational growth and development. Each of the participants in this study provided information that shaped the following recommendations:

- Provide resources and support to encourage the growth and development of multicultural and special interest organizations.
- Create an infrastructure that connects diverse student organizations and encourages a governing council for these groups.

- Provide a mechanism within student government to ensure that diverse students are appropriately represented and have a voice in decision-making.
- Provide resources to encourage the development of multicultural programs and events that connect with curricular learning.
- Encourage faculty to serve as advisors of diverse student organizations.
- Create collaborative programs that interface with classroom learning and course curriculum and serve as educational opportunities for the entire campus community.
- Create self-paced, on-line, cultural education programs that serve as educational tools for the campus community to promote awareness of diversity and multiculturalism.

**Recommendation 6: Create a system of rewards, recognition, and celebration for faculty, staff, and students who engage in diversity work.**

Systemic change requires dedicated time and resources. The added variable of a value-laden initiative such as diversity requires special attention and focus. Providing rewards and recognition is one way to entice community members to become engaged in diversity work. The ultimate goal is to create an environment that appreciates an intrinsic system for rewards related to diversity work. The reality is that extrinsic rewards will likely spark increased interest and motivation to become involved. The following represents recommendations related to instituting a system of rewards and recognition for faculty, staff, and students who engage in diversity work:

- Provide specialized grants and monetary awards to faculty and staff who create diversity related initiatives or produce new diversity focused courses, programs, or events.
- Tie diversity work to performance evaluations and provide additional compensation to those employees who excel in multicultural initiatives.
- Create awards that recognize those individuals who pioneer new diversity initiatives.
- Provide release time for faculty who engage in course redesign connected to diversity or serve as an advisor to diverse student organizations.
- Give additional credit for faculty who engage in diversity work (serving as a mentor, advisor, champion for diversity) in the promotion and tenure process.
- Provide special funding to students who create new diversity programs or events.
- Work with donors and friends of the University to create special recognition programs that include one-time or on-going funding for diversity-related initiatives.
- Use the University website, newsletters, publications sent to alumni and donors, etc. to honor diversity work and the champions responsible.
- Highlight diversity work and those responsible at special speeches to the community such as opening convocation, Foundation board meetings, system-wide reports, etc.



**Recommendation 7: The leadership of the institution must provide direction and support to fully integrate diversity into the campus culture.**

Participants in this study agree that strong leadership is essential in furthering the diversity agenda. Specifically, the President and his/her cabinet must be at the forefront of these efforts. Institutional leaders are faced with many challenges when trying to embed diversity into the campus culture. Connecting with a wide variety of individuals and organizations is an important part of building support and avoiding resistance. Senior administrators must provide financial resources, vocal support, affirmative decision-making, and directives when appropriate to fully advance the diversity agenda. Information gathered from this study garners the following recommendations:

- Institutional leaders must lead a concerted effort to increase the number of diverse faculty, staff, and students on campus. Further, a support network should be in place to provide mentoring and encouragement.
- Senior administrators should develop internal and external groups to serve as advisors and allies for diversity work.
- Institutional leaders must regularly connect with diverse student leadership and student government leaders to gain their support and learn more about issues and concerns connected to the diversity experience.
- Senior leadership should engage with faculty and faculty leadership to encourage curricular development connected with diversity.
- A regular assessment process should be in place to accurately measure progress and success.

- Appropriate infrastructure must be provided to ensure diversity can be actualized. This includes funding, diversity-related offices, policy development, etc.
- A Senior diversity officer must be in place and should serve on the President's cabinet to provide advice and direction for campus diversity efforts.
- All Vice Presidents, Deans, and other campus leaders should be held accountable for meeting diversity standards and expectations.

Participants in this study emphasized the importance of supportive leadership when advancing diversity work on campus. Dr. Sledden stated: “you have to have leadership that understands and values it.”

### **Methodological Issues**

A critical case study was used for this study in an effort to learn about the evolution of diversity at a Midwest institution of higher education. The experiences, involvement, and passion of the participants provided rich detail about the diversity experience at the institution. The Chief Diversity Officer at the institution selected the participants based upon the potential participant roles outlined in the approved Institutional Research Board application. Approximately 60 minutes of time was scheduled for each interview.

As outlined in Chapter 3 and demonstrated in the Appendix, the interview questions varied slightly depending upon the institutional role of the participant to be interviewed. This offered an interesting challenge when analyzing the research and using the predetermined codes. For example, the question: “How do white students benefit?”

was not asked of each participant. Through the course of the participants answering all of the questions and in combination with the provided artifacts, information that adds to the body of knowledge about this question was learned.

This was not the case for the code labeled as “The University community celebrates success related to diversity education and initiatives.” There was not a direct question connected to this code and information from other questions did not result in feedback related to this code. This code was not at the core of the research study so I do not feel it severely impedes the research results.

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**APPENDICES****APPENDIX A****ORGANIZATION PERMISSION**

Hello Ms. Stewart,

I am a doctoral student at Minnesota State University, Mankato and I am doing my research on the factors that influence the institutionalization of diversity in institutions of higher education. I have contacted some leading researchers in the field and asked them for recommendations of public institutions (10,000 - 20,000 in size) that are predominantly White and serve as a model with regard to diversity work. Your institution was recommended to me by two independent researchers as an institution that would be ideal for my study.

I am wondering if it would be possible to conduct a case study at your institution. The initial contact with stakeholders would take place through an open-ended survey delivered through Survey Monkey. The survey was developed to glean more information about specific diversity elements relative to imbedded diversity practices as identified in the literature. I would like to follow-up the survey with interviews with everyone who took part. I am interested in sending this survey to you, the President or Provost, and a Diversity staff member, faculty member and student of your choice. I would not disclose the name of your institution in the study.

If you have any questions or need more information, please just let me know.

Thank you for considering my request.

Kelly

Kelly S. Meier  
Senior Director for Institutional Diversity  
Minnesota State University, Mankato  
Institutional Diversity  
Morris Hall 265  
Mankato, MN 56001  
507.389.5268

**APPENDIX B****INFORMED CONSENT FORM****CONSENT INFORMATION FOR INTERVIEWS**

**Project Title:** Factors Influencing the Institutionalization of Diversity in Higher Education.

**Purpose:** This research will investigate the factors influencing the institutionalization at the Sample Institution. You are invited to participate in this research because your institution has been identified as a role model in diversity work and you have been selected as a key stakeholder in this endeavor.

**Confidentiality:** Participation is confidential and voluntary. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential and not connected to you or your institution in any way other than non-identifying, aggregate demographic data. With your permission, I will be recording the interview. Data will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's secured office accessible only to the researcher and members of her dissertation committee. Hard copies will be destroyed three years after completion of the dissertation.

**Risks:** This portion of the study involves a face-to-face interview that will include questions to follow-up on answers you gave to the electronic survey. Risks to your physical, emotional, social, professional, or financial well-being are considered to be less than minimal. You have the option to skip questions you choose. You may quit at anytime without repercussions. Participation or nonparticipation will not impact your relationship with Minnesota State University, Mankato or The sample institution.

**Benefits:** You will receive no compensation or direct benefits for completing the survey, but the results of the study may provide insight into diversity work in higher education that will add to the body of knowledge and possibly provide practical examples that may be implemented at other institutions of higher education.

**Contact Information:** If you have any questions about the research, please contact Kelly Meier, Senior Director of Institutional Diversity, Minnesota State University, Mankato via email at [Kelly.meier@mnsu.edu](mailto:Kelly.meier@mnsu.edu) or her advisor, Dr. Ginger Zierdt, Doctoral

Advisor in the Department of Educational Leadership, Minnesota State University, Mankato via email at ginger.zierdt@mnsu.edu. If you have questions about the treatment of human subjects, contact the Institutional Research Board (IRB) Administrator at 507-389-2321. This study was approved by the Minnesota State Mankato IRB on (PENDING).

**Freedom to Withdraw:** You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigator, Minnesota State University, Mankato, or your institution. Your decision will not result in any loss or benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

**Consent, Right to Receive a Copy:** You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

\_\_\_\_\_ Check if you agree to be audiotaped during the interview

Signature of Participant:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Research Participant	Date
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**Name and phone number of investigator(s):**

Kelly S. Meier, Principal Investigator                      Office: 507.389.5268

Dr. Ginger L. Zierdt, Secondary Investigator              Office: 507.389.2431

## APPENDIX C

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

*Questions (for the Senior Diversity Officer, President/Provost, and Diversity Practitioner):*

1. How does your institution define diversity?
2. How is this communicated to the University community?
3. How is diversity imbedded in the curriculum?
4. How is diversity integrated in the co-curricular experiences for students?
5. What incentives are offered to faculty and staff who undertake new diversity initiatives?
6. What have your institution done to recruit and retain a diverse student body?
7. How have your diversity efforts impacted the enrollment of racially diverse students?
8. What challenges have you encountered as you have worked to institutionalize diversity on your campus?
9. What funding is allocated to diversity efforts on your campus?
10. Is this funding part of the base budget for the institution?
11. What is your long-range plan for diversity?
12. To what do you attribute your success (in being identified as a benchmark school for institutionalized diversity)?
13. What artifacts can you offer that provide evidence of your success?

*Questions (for the Faculty Member):*

1. How does your institution define diversity?(Stake 1995)
2. How is this communicated to the University community?
3. How is diversity imbedded in the curriculum?
4. How is diversity integrated in the co-curricular experiences for students?
5. What incentives are offered to faculty who undertake new diversity initiatives?
6. What departments have best embraced diversity as an integral part of the curriculum?
7. How do the White students benefit from the emphasis your institution has placed on diversity?
8. What challenges has your campus encountered with regard to institutionalize diversity on your campus?
9. To what do you attribute your success (in being identified as a benchmark school for institutionalized diversity)?
10. What artifacts can you offer that provide evidence of your success?

*Questions (for the Student Government President):*

1. How does your institution define diversity?
2. How is this communicated to the University community?
3. How is diversity included in the classes you take?
4. How is diversity integrated in the co-curricular experiences for students?
5. How do the White students benefit from the emphasis your institution has placed on diversity?
6. Please give me an example of something you have learned from your exposure to diversity on campus?
7. To what do you attribute your success (in being identified as a benchmark school for institutionalized diversity)?
8. What artifacts can you offer that provide evidence of your success?

## APPENDIX D

### INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



#### Institutional Review Board

#### Application

#### I. General Information

- a. Principal Investigator** Kelly S. Meier, Doctoral Student/Senior Director  
for Institutional Diversity  
Department: Educational Leadership  
Address: Wigley Administration Building  
Phone Number: 507.389.5268  
E-mail Address: [Kelly.meier@mnsu.edu](mailto:Kelly.meier@mnsu.edu)
- b. Secondary Investigator** Dr. Ginger Zierdt, Educational Leadership  
Department: Educational Leadership  
Address: 228Armstrong Hall 328  
Phone Number: 507.389.2431  
E-mail Address: [ginger.zierdt@mnsu.edu](mailto:ginger.zierdt@mnsu.edu)
- c. IRB Contact for Proposal** Kelly S. Meier
- d. Project Title**  
Factors Influencing the Institutionalization of Diversity in Higher Education
- e. Proposed Study Dates**  
December, 1, 2011 – May 28, 2012
- f. Location of project**  
The study will take place at .

**g. Source of Funding**

Professional development funds of the secondary investigator

**II. General Purpose of the Research Project**

This study provides an in-depth look at a benchmark institution that serves as a role model for best practices in diversity work. The intent of the study is to provide an opportunity to learn from leaders in the field who will provide greater insight for professionals who are striving to make transformational change with regard to diversity work. Educational leaders who are interested in making long-term transformational change in higher education can benefit from understanding what exceptional institutions are doing to improve institutionalized diversity practices. This study will provide an understanding of institutionalized diversity practices and the first-hand experience of those responsible for implementation within a critical case study. Practitioners and institutional leaders in higher education will benefit from the results of this study. The researcher will examine what specific initiatives and practices will lead to an institutionalized approach to diversity in an institution of higher education. While every institution is unique, this qualitative study attempts to provide practical ideas and leadership advice that will enable practitioners to consider new approaches that may assist in diversifying their campus environment.

**III. Project Description****What are you going to do?**

The methodology for this study will involve a critical case study approach to highlight an institution of higher education that demonstrates exceptional diversity practices. The sample institution has agreed to participate in this study. Key stakeholders at the institution will be interviewed using the attached interview questions.

**How will data be obtained?**

The researcher will interview five key stakeholders to gather data about best practice diversity work at the identified institution.

**What will happen to subjects and the data they provide?**

Selected participants will be interviewed with questions that explore how diversity is actualized at their institution. Participants are not required to answer each question. Participants will be invited to review the transcription of their interviews and provide verification of the information. Following the collection of data, all information will be transcribed and sorted according to categories identified from the literature. Data provided by each participant will be reviewed independently and collectively. In



order to process the data collected and test the results according to the measures identified in the literature review, a structured analysis coding process will be utilized. This concentration of data will help to identify potential themes and other emerging concepts related to the success of the implementation of diversity in the identified institution.

### **How will subjects be selected or recruited?**

The study will involve five participants including: Senior Diversity Officer, Provost, Diversity Staff Member, Faculty, and the Student Government President. These stakeholders were selected to provide a broad base of understanding of institutional commitment. The Senior Diversity Officer at the sample institution has agreed to invite participation from the stakeholders listed above. Participants will be asked to agree to participate in the study and will be informed that all responses will remain confidential.

### **Risks**

The topic is focused on institutional initiatives that promote embedded diversity work in higher education. All identifying information gained from the interviews will remain confidential. Risks to participants are considered minimal.

### **Benefits**

Participants will receive no compensation or direct benefits for completing the survey, but the results of the study may provide helpful and practical information for other institutions that are working to advance diversity in higher education.

## **IV. Description of Subjects**

- a. Ages of subject** – The stakeholders in this study include faculty, staff, or administrators and one student leader. The professionals are likely to be entry level to senior level faculty/staff. The student leader is the Student Government President and is likely to be an upper class student who will be over the age of eighteen.
- b. Number of subjects** – The study will involve five participants including: Senior Diversity Officer, Provost, Diversity Staff Member, Faculty, and the Student Government President.

## **V. Protection of Subjects' Rights**

**How will the subjects be informed of the intent of the study, potential risks to them, and their rights regarding participation?**

Consent forms for interviews will be sent in advance and collected before the interview begins. The attached Consent form will be presented to each interviewee in advance of their interview for their signature. All data will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's (Kelly Meier) secured office accessible only to the researcher and members of her dissertation committee for seven years.

**How and where will consent documents be maintained?**

A copy of the Consent Information will be retained in the researchers' (Kelly Meier) locked files in a secured office for seven years. It is also attached to this IRB application.

**How will privacy, confidentiality, and/or anonymity be protected?**

While anonymity will not be afforded for participants, confidentiality of all responses will be maintained. Pseudonyms will be used for the interviewees and a list will be maintained by the principal investigator that links the names of the participants to their pseudonym. This list will be kept in a locked cabinet within the office of the principal and maintained for 7 years before the list is destroyed. Interviews will be approximately one hour in length and will be recorded. Interviews will be transcribed during the 90 days following the interviews. A professional transcriber will transcribe the interviews. Data will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's (Kelly Meier) secured office accessible only to the researcher and members of her dissertation committee for a minimum of three years. Electronic data and hard copies will be destroyed three years after completion of the dissertation. Responses to interview questions will be coded for categorical themes and paraphrased in any presentation of findings to protect privacy and confidentiality.

In making this application, I certify that I have read and understand the Policies and Procedures for Projects that Involve Human Subjects, and that I intend to comply with the letter and spirit of the University Policy. Changes in the protocol will be submitted to the IRB for approval prior to these changes being put into practice. Informed consent/assent records of the participants will be kept for at least three years after the completion of the research.

Dated Signatures of Principal and Student Investigators:

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**APPENDIX E****CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT – TRANSCRIPTIONIST**

I \_\_\_\_\_, hereby agree that I will  
(name of transcriptionist)

maintain confidentiality of all tape-recorded interviews that I have been contracted to transcribe for the following research project: Factors Influencing the Institutionalization of Diversity in Higher Education.

This means that I will not discuss nor share any tape-recorded nor transcribed data with any individuals other than the researcher, Kelly S. Meier, or her supervisor, Dr. Ginger L. Zierdt. When the transcriptions are complete, I will return all audio tapes to the researcher and will transfer all electronic files to the researcher. Upon confirmation of receipt of these files by the researcher, I will destroy the originals.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of transcriptionist)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

