CAMPUS CLIMATE RESEARCH: From Conceptualization to Implementation to Diversity Plan

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Our public universities have advanced the notion that in educating college students for the world they will inhabit, it is necessary to bring people together from diverse parts of society and to educate them in that context. Far from being optional or merely enriching, it is the very essence of what we mean by a liberal or humanistic education.

Lee C. Bollinger  
President, Columbia University  
Former President, University of Michigan  
Chronicle of Higher Education, June 1, 2007
Diversity on college campuses is associated with:

(a) greater learning,
(b) increased interpersonal competencies,
(c) greater self-confidence among students,
(d) fewer irrational prejudices,
(e) greater gains in critical thinking, and
(f) greater involvement in civic and community service.

(Antonio, 2001; Chang, 1996; Gurin, 1999; Hurtado, 2001; Smith et al., 1997)
1. Conceptualization
2. Campus Context
3. Implementation
4. Distribution of Findings
5. Diversity Planning
CONCEPTUALIZATION
Sue (1995) pointed out that organizations can be categorized in one of three ways with regard to the valuing of diversity:

- “Monocultural” (e.g., Eurocentric, androcentric, monolingual, heterosexist values, and a view of minorities as “tokens”) through

- “Nondiscriminatory” (a nonsystemic, fragmented approach to diversity intended to meet legal standards for nondiscrimination and avoid lawsuits) to

- “Multicultural” (e.g., actively valuing diversity in its many forms in a manner that permeates all aspects of the institution).
According to Grieger (1996), institutions of higher education that are “multicultural”

(a) are composed of faculty, staff and students that are representative of the diversity found in the population;

(b) express a valuing of diversity in public statements of commitment, vision, mission, processes, structures, policies, service delivery, and allocation of resources;

(c) act in accordance with their positive public statements; and

(d) value and reward multicultural competencies, including

• diversity-positive attitudes,
• knowledge about salient aspects of diverse groups, and
• skills in interacting with and serving diverse groups effectively, sensitively, and respectfully.
Identity Characteristics:
Race/Ethnicity, Gender, Age, Sexual Orientation, Disability, Religion, National & Geographic Origin, Language Use, Socio-Economic Status, First Generation, Veteran/Military, Political Ideology.

Core Areas:
1. Recruitment & Retention
2. Campus Climate
3. Curriculum & Instruction
4. Research & Inquiry
5. Intergroup Relations & Discourse
6. Faculty/Student/Staff/Leadership Development & Success
7. Nondiscrimination
8. Institutional Advancement
9. External Relations
10. Strategic Planning & Accountability

Stakeholders:
Faculty
Students
Staff
Administrators
Others

Worthington (in press)
DEFINITION OF CAMPUS CLIMATE

1. A multidimensional construct, subject to and shaped by the policies, practices, and behaviors of those within and external to colleges and universities.

2. Attitudes, perceptions, behaviors, and expectations regarding issues of diversity.

3. External forces in the larger society impact institutions, and individuals within them, when it comes to the climate. Specifically, government policy and socio-historical context are two external forces influencing the institutional context for diversity.

Source: Hurtado, et al., 1998; 1999
DIMENSIONS OF CLIMATE

Four climate-related factors internal to and within the control of individual colleges and universities:

1. An Institution’s History and Legacy of Inclusion or Exclusion,

2. Compositional or Structural Diversity,

3. The Psychological Dimension of the Climate,

4. The Behavioral Dimension of the Climate, and

5. Diversity Leadership.**

Adapted from Hurtado et al., 1998; 1999
TARGETS OF CLIMATE INQUIRY

1. Analysis of compositional diversity by group based on institutional data (Institutional Compositional Diversity, ICD);

2. Equity analysis based on institutional data (Institutional Equity Analysis, IEA);

3. Perceptions of critical mass and satisfaction with compositional diversity by group (Perceptions of Critical Mass, PCM);

4. Perceptions of equity within and across the institution (Perceptions of Institutional Equity, PIE).

Source: Worthington (forthcoming)
TARGETS OF CLIMATE INQUIRY

5. Personal, internal experiences and satisfaction with the general climate at the university, and within different units of the institution (General Campus Climate, GCC);

6. Personal, internal experiences and satisfaction with the campus-wide diversity-related climate, and within different units of the institution (Diversity Campus Climate, DCC);

7. Perceptions of the climate for underrepresented group members (Perceived Campus Climate, PCC);

8. Perceptions of social and contextual inclusivity (Perceptions Campus Inclusivity, PCI);

Source: Worthington (forthcoming)
9. Perceptions of the institutional commitment to a positive, inclusive diversity climate, and necessary changes (Institutional Commitment and Change Efforts, ICCE);

10. Self-reported diversity-related competencies among students, faculty, staff, and administrators (Diversity-related Competencies, DRC);

11. Meaningful interpersonal contact with individuals belonging to different identity groups (Meaningful Interpersonal Contact, MIC);

Source: Worthington (forthcoming)
12. Perceptions and experiences of official university responses to complaints regarding bias-related events on campus (Official University Responses, OUR);

13. Perceived need(s) and recommendations for specific courses of action to improve/enhance the climate for diversity for specific groups related to specific issues (Recommended Action Steps, (RAS);

14. Experiences of psychological well-being/distress (Psychological Well-being, PWB);

Source: Worthington (forthcoming)
CAMPUS CONTEXT
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CAMPUS CONTEXT FOR DIVERSITY

• Both Distant History and Recent History
• History of Exclusion and Discrimination
• Past Diversity and Inclusion Efforts
  – Successes, partial successes, near misses, and failures
IMPLEMENTATION
10 Steps to Designing a Campus Diversity Evaluation

1. Define the purpose
2. Determine the audience
3. Assemble the evaluation team
4. Identify the context
5. Target the topic
6. Formulate the questions
7. Obtain the data
8. Assess the data
9. Analyze the data
10. Report the findings

Source: Garcia et al. (2001)
DISTRIBUTION OF FINDINGS
What outcomes do you expect to find after conducting a comprehensive campus climate study?
Harper and Hurtado (2007):
3 thematic clusters of finds from analysis of 15 years of institutional research on campus racial climate

1. Differential Perceptions of Campus Climate by Race

2. Minority Student Reports of Prejudicial Treatment and Racist Campus Environments

3. Benefits Associated with Campus Climates that Facilitate Cross-Racial Engagement
Harper and Hurtado (2007): 9 themes from multi-campus qualitative investigation

1. Cross-race consensus regarding institutional negligence.
2. Race as a four-letter word and avoidable topic.
3. Self-reports of racial segregation.
5. White student overestimation of minority student satisfaction.
Harper and Hurtado (2007): 9 themes from multi-campus qualitative investigation

6. Reputational legacies for racism of the institutions.

7. The pervasiveness of whiteness in space, curricula, and activities.

8. The consciousness-powerlessness paradox among racial/ethnic minority staff.

9. The unexplored qualitative realities of race in institutional assessment.
Racial Microaggressions and Campus Racial Climate

Themes:

1. Racial Microaggressions in the Classroom
   - Invisibility
   - Omitted, distorted, stereotyped in curriculum
   - Low expectations by faculty
   - Discrimination in study group formation
   - Assumptions about affirmative action and athletic scholarships

Source: Solorzano et al. (2000)
Racial Microaggressions and Campus Racial Climate

Themes:

2. Racial Microaggressions Outside the Classroom
   - Made to feel out of place in specific locations (e.g., business school, science building, library study areas)
   - Discouraging high achievement areas of study

3. Racial Microaggressions in Social Spaces
   - More overt racist incidents
   - Police surveillance and harassment
   - Policy double standards

Source: Solorzano et al. (2000)
STRATEGIC PLANNING
What will you do with the data and findings after your comprehensive campus climate study is completed?
Positive Campus Climate

(a) The inclusion of students, faculty, and administrators from a diversity of backgrounds.

(b) A curriculum that reflects the historical and contemporary experiences of people from a diversity of backgrounds.

(c) Programs that support the recruitment, retention and graduation of all students equitably.

(d) A college/university mission that reinforces the institution’s commitment to pluralism.
THANK YOU