

cultural diversity of our campuses compromises the educational experience of all students. We must provide environments that enrich the lives of students by deepening their appreciation of racial, ethnic, and cultural differences and challenging their prejudices. Not until we begin to change the profiles of student affairs staffs will we begin to realize the goal of egalitarian campuses that model for majority and minority students, faculty, and administrative staff, the value and benefits of diversity.

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The Role of Student Affairs in Fostering Cultural Diversity in Higher Education

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The authors examine the role of chief student personnel officers in fostering cultural diversity, and present results of a survey assessing the approaches CSAOs have taken.

The very essence of a campus is reflected in its cultural context and, more specifically, in its academic culture. The question of how that culture should reflect the presence of increasing numbers of minority students has assumed great importance on American campuses. When minority students meet low expectations, stereotypes, and racism, they are less likely to achieve their full potential. These barriers to success can be fostered unintentionally or can be encouraged by faculty and staff who are naive, insensitive, and inflexible. AU segments of the campus must be brought together to address racism and the ignorance of minorities and their respective cultures which produces racism. Mainstreaming, while an admirable goal, must allow for diversity.

This article examines the role of chief student personnel officers in fostering cultural diversity. To assess approaches to cultural diversity taken by personnel officers on campus, we surveyed 187 colleges and universities in Region IV-E of NASPA. We asked student personnel administrators to identify who on campus should have responsibility for insuring cultural diversity. The findings

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of the survey and the conclusions drawn from these data are presented in the final section of this article.

Focusing attention on cultural diversity on college campuses is necessary because the present generation of United States college and university students lacks a historical perspective on race relations in this country. Born shortly before the celebrated Bakke case of "reverse discrimination," most of these students are accustomed to an action-reaction approach to race relations. Many institutions now prefer, however, to formulate policies on cultural diversity to prevent racial incidents on campus rather than deal with them after they occur. Unfortunately, many students view attempts to incorporate minority students into campus life as reverse discrimination.

But charges of reverse discrimination, as Andrzejewski (1985) has explained, are actually a form of blaming the victim, "since feelings of anger, hostility, and fear are directed not at those in power who create and maintain discriminatory practices but at members of the groups who have been excluded from power." Charges of reverse discrimination are likely to arise "whenever any woman, disabled person, or person of color is able to secure a resource that had previously been denied to any such person." Thus, the charge actually serves "to distract attention from the fact that the power structure of the white male club remains intact." Evidence of this fact is that "the overwhelming majority of desirable and powerful positions in all of our major institutions are still held by white males" (p. 33). Clearly, campus racism is symptomatic of the larger social problem of racism in all institutions of American society.

In addition, attention to cultural diversity on college campuses is required because there is very little sustained social interaction between whites and blacks in American society. Blacks and whites might work together, but in all things purely social, to paraphrase Booker T. Washington, they are often as separate as the fingers on a hand. There is too little evidence of the mutual progress that Washington wanted the black and white races to achieve. This lack of social interaction can contribute to racial tension on campus. While incidents of campus racism often go unreported by black students who feel isolated and alienated on predominantly white campuses, reports of overt racism continue to increase. The University of Michigan, Columbia University, and the University of Massachusetts are but a few of the institutions having earned front page headlines because of violent campus racial incidents.

Incidents of racism increase as numbers of black students increase on the nation's campuses. Edwards (1987) writes of the increased number of blacks matriculating on predominantly white campuses: "A generation ago, the majority of black kids ... went to black colleges and universities. Today more than 75% of all black college students attend white schools." There, she says, they are "often isolated and suspicious in an environment that seems too large, too white, and too impersonal." The situation is complicated because "white kids are also suspicious," for many of them "went to predominantly white schools in the suburbs, where they had little or minimal contact with blacks." As a result, "often they don't know how to act when confronted with blacks in the day-to-day living situations of college. Too often they bring stereotypes and preconceived notions to their dealings with members of minority groups" (p. 188).

Faculty at predominantly white institutions often promote these stereotypes and negative notions with ignorance of and disdain for the traditions, cultural nuances, and language styles of blacks and other minority students. Moreover, many college and university professors and administrators may not communicate with black students enough to know of the instances of campus racism they encounter. Altken (1986) reports of a meeting at Smith College that revealed how campus racism works: "Blacks talked about the everyday realities that afflict minority students all around the country: the housing squabbles, the patronizing warnings from professors to avoid 'demanding' majors, the verbal hassling, the graffiti." In addition, "at colleges in or near a black neighborhood, black students--particularly men--may spend their entire college career under suspicion from campus security" (p. 59).

The effect of these experiences may be seen in college statistics: "Black enrollment nationwide, which rose 246% between 1967 and 1976, has gone up only 6% since 1980, less than other ethnic groups, and the black dropout rate is now twice that of others. On many campuses, blacks now number less than 2% of the population" (Altken, 1986, pp. 59, 61). Campus racism can impose real life restrictions on black students who, while on campus, may lose sight of the rich diversity of their culture. Because of these and other campus conditions, addressing campus racism requires recognition, not fear, of cultural diversity.

RECOGNITION OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN ADDRESSING CAMPUS RACISM

Recognizing cultural diversity in higher education requires programs, activities, and attitudes that acknowledge as positive, group differences based on ethnic and racial experiences. The academic affairs unit should emphasize cultural diversity on campus by giving it a permanent place in campus curricula. Such efforts can have a lasting effect on faculty, students, and staff. "Rutledge (1982) suggests "the institutions that are committed to wiping out racism should analyze the following very closely: number of black personnel; number of black students; curriculum relative to black history, contributions, and culture; and the attitudes, but more importantly, the practices and behaviors of professors and administrators" (p. 111).

Clearly, a recognition of and respect for cultural diversity should exist in all areas of university life. Presidential leadership is paramount if this is to be the case. Sedlacek and Brooks (1973) suggest that "even informal leadership can enhance chances for institutional success. National leadership in higher education can also assist campuses in achieving cultural diversity. Edwards (1987) reports, "On a national level, the American Council on Education ... [has published] a handbook describing tactics schools can use to lower tensions, boost minority enrollment and graduation rates, and hire more minority faculty and administrators" (p. 188).

The unit on campus, however, that has immediate responsibility for the quality and content of student life is student affairs. For significant change to take place, therefore, student affairs directors and particularly chief student personnel officers must seize the initiative in sensitizing the campus to cultural diversity. Their primary roles are facilitation and advocacy.

Student personnel officers can facilitate cultural diversity in a number of ways. Student affairs directors must make sure, first of all, that their staffs are prepared to deal with minority students in enlightened and appropriate ways. One way to achieve cultural sensitivity is to offer workshops for student affairs personnel using *cultural shock*. Merta, Stringham, and Ponterotto (1988) have reported on interactions of university counselor trainees with culturally diverse individuals using cultural shock to achieve multicultural training: "We believe that if counselor trainees can be made to experience some degree of culture shock, they will gain insight into the daily frustrations experienced by many people in U.S. society" (p. 242). Such insight can be valuable to any personnel who have frequent contact with students.

Student personnel officers can also call on many resource persons to create awareness of the realities of racism and cultural provincialism. For instance, Dr. Charles King of the Urban Crisis Center in Atlanta, Georgia, is an excellent resource person who can enable members of the majority community to understand what it is like to be a member of the minority community. Typically, he fosters this awareness by conducting highly intensive workshops on the nature and manifestations of racism. Dr. King, a former member of the Wittenberg University faculty, offers his workshop sessions to members of both the academic and corporate communities with great success. In addition, members of black fraternities and sororities are an often unexplored resource. They stand ready to assist college and university personnel in understanding a rich and varied black culture. Their presentations can infuse faculty and staff with a more complete historical perspective on nonwestern culture and the roles of blacks in its development.

Personnel officers can also sponsor mentorship programs matching faculty and staff mentors with minority students. These programs can be invaluable in promoting cross-cultural awareness in- both mentors and students. Because most campuses will not have enough minority faculty and staff to supply a sufficient number of mentors other. faculty and staff may also serve. The mentors must realize that minorities are not deficient, just different. And the differences argue for understanding, not rejection. O'Brien (1988) reported that Dr. Charles Willie offers three principles for mentoring minorities. First, mentors must understand and respect cultural differences: minority students are "unlike the majority" and must be supported to maintain "who they are." Second, because minority students deal with culture shock as well as the usual requirements of academic life, "there is a time differential," for although "minorities can do anything the majority can do ... they may take a little longer, and they may need more help." Finally, the support of a mentor can be crucial to a student's success: mentors must "make it possible for students to achieve success by risking failure"; mentors must "serve, sacrifice [and] suffer" with these students (p. 15).

In student affairs as in other units of colleges and universities, institutions must promote the visibility of minority staff and faculty. Too often, as Kanter (1977) contends, women and minorities are found in jobs or situations that are low profile, behind the scenes, or without visible merit. Since minorities are often denied appointments to faculty or significant administrative ranks, they are less liable to be found in positions influencing the organizational culture. If are cultural diversity is to be achieved on campus, however, minorities must be

involved in activities that are extraordinary, visible, and relevant. If given the opportunity, minority faculty, staff, and students can develop potential by participating in various high profile activities that will embellish organizational efforts. The major assumption here is that the more all people in an organization are empowered, the more the effectiveness of the organization is enhanced.

It is likely that the underrepresentation of women and minorities in higher education results partially from inaccessibility to the seats of power. Social connections, for instance, represent a major source of empowerment. Because minority persons typically have been excluded from the "living rooms" of the power elites in the academic world, few are exposed to this source of access and promotion. Student personnel officers, therefore, must join other units on campus in actively seeking out talented minorities for high-visibility positions.

While cultural diversity and its significance in campus life have long been debated, too little is known of the parts various departments on campus may play in achieving it. To assess the present understanding chief student personnel officers have of their part in this endeavor, we devised a two-part questionnaire. The first examined their responses to questions about implementing cultural diversity, and the second gathered data on the respondents and their institutions. Significantly, we found that although the vast majority of respondents (89%) reported their institutions have cultural diversity programming, less than half (only 40%) viewed their departments as critical in advancing cultural diversity on campus. In fact, only slightly more (45%) viewed academic affairs as having the critical role in programming multicultural sensitivity on campus. A disappointing 30% believed that a task force should be the chief advocate of cultural diversity on campus, while only 25% believed that the vice president should have this role. Clearly, many student affairs units, according to the results of our survey, are not yet ready to assume responsibility for aggressive leadership in this area.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this research involved a survey carried out during the fall of 1988. Surveys were mailed to the vice presidents of student affairs in 187 colleges and universities in Region IV-E of NASPA. A transmittal letter, a brief abstract, and the survey instrument were included in the initial and follow-up mailings. Approximately 78% (N=146) of the region's institutions responded. Comparative analysis of the surveys revealed how chief student personnel administrators regard their role in cultural diversity programming.

RESULTS

The survey was intended for chief student personnel officers only. However, 15% (n=22) of those responding represented a fairly wide range of student personnel administrators, including directors of admissions, student activities, and minority affairs. Five percent (n=7) of the respondents represented community colleges; 25% (n=36) represented public 4-year colleges or universities; 60% (n=88) represented private 4-year colleges or universities; 7% (n=10) represented public graduate research institutions; and 3% (n=4) represented some other type of institution (private graduate research, technical institute, etc.). Deans of student affairs or student life were the largest group

Table I
Institutional Sponsorship of Sensitivity or Cultural Diversity Programming

Question	Yes	No	Unaware	Not Applicable
Does the institution sponsor any type of sensitivity or cultural diversity course or programming?	89%	10%	1%	0%
Does your department sponsor any programming?	87%	13%	0%	0%
Are there community outreach programs that address cultural diversity?	72%	11%	17%	0%

Y=Yes; N=No; U=Unaware; N/A=Not Applicable

responding-70% (n = 102), followed by vice chancellors or vice presidents of student affairs-15% (n=22). The remaining 15% represented the wide cross section of student personnel administrators mentioned above. The mean size institution was 5000 FTE. Fifty-five percent of the respondents were male, 45% female. Fifty percent held a doctorate, whereas 7% had earned only a bachelor's degree. The mean salary was \$43,000, while the mean number of years spent at a current assignment was 6. 1. Respondents had spent a mean number of 13.9 years in the student affairs area. One hundred percent were employed full-time. Forty percent indicated a racial incident had occurred on campus during the 1987-88 academic year; 67% reported attending training or seminars on campus racism or cultural diversity during the same year. Overall, respondents indicated that cultural diversity was a major issue, as illustrated in Table 1.

As we have noted, 89% of the respondents stated that their respective institutions sponsor sensitivity or cultural diversity courses or programming. Eighty-seven percent also indicated that their student affairs departments sponsor similar programming. Additionally, 72% were aware of community outreach programs that address this issue. Strong support for cultural diversity programs is evident in the data, both institutionwide and in student affairs units. Wide disagreement exists, however, with regard to who should be the advocate for cultural diversity on the campus. The predominant choice was task force (30%), closely followed by vice president (25%), and the "other" category (20%). Only 14% of respondents indicated that the president should assume this role (see Table 2). An interesting finding of the study suggests that while student affairs professionals view their departments as critical to cultural diversity on the campus, academic affairs (perhaps addressing curriculum) was seen as slightly more important, 40% to 45% respectively. Student government and the "other" category (including all) were far behind as choices (see Table 3).

SUMMARY

Cultural diversity is a significant issue on all college and university campuses. The role of chief student personnel officers may be pivotal in the willingness to view objectively the role of cultural diversity, to interpret cultural diversity in the context of institutional missions, and to encourage the allocation of resources (human and capital) on campuses. According to current demographic projections, 53 major cities in the United States will, by the year 2000, have

Table 2
Who Is/Should Be the Advocate for Cultural Diversity on Campus?

Role	Percentage
President	14%
Vice President	25%
Task Force	30%
Board	11%
Other (including all)	20%

Table 3
Who Should Assume the Responsibility of Developing or Coordinating Cultural Diversity Programming?

Office	Percentage
Student Affairs	40%
Academic Affairs	45%
Student Government	10%
Other (including all)	5%

majority. populations composed of those currently designated ethnic minorities: blacks, Hispanics, Asians, etc. If these predictions are accurate, we most certainly will see an increased demand for culturally relevant programs and curricula. Demands from a work force that may approach 70% black and Hispanic in some areas will also pressure the academy to embrace new and different programming in its mushrooming continuing education and nondegree efforts.

How the academy responds may be directly related to the readiness of its first-line administrators to recognize the legitimacy of diverse mores and language styles, to respect other traditions, and to be sensitive to the needs, time-lines, and aspirations of a population that is not deficient, just different.

In our view, student affairs must seize the initiative in bringing about appropriate change on campus to accommodate the need for increased awareness of cultural diversity. NASPA is addressing some of these issues in seminars, workshops, and invitational conferences. Whether this effort alone will be enough is uncertain. Certainly, the notion of an inflexible academic culture is in direct conflict with the most conservative definition of cultural diversity.

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