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# Creating a Climate to Realize Institutional Diversification Goals: A Phenomenological Study of Campus Diversification Best Practices

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CREATING A CLIMATE TO REALIZE INSTITUTIONAL  
DIVERSIFICATION GOALS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF  
CAMPUS DIVERSIFICATION BEST PRACTICES

by

S. N. Ross Canning

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2018

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by

S. N. Ross Canning

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my mother, Mildred E. Canning, for her life-long endeavors and lived examples to learn about the world and its cultures, to think critically, to always speak one's mind, and to leave the world a bit better than we found it; and to my father, D. Lester Canning, who is the first intercultural sojourner I ever knew and who inspired me from boyhood to learn about other cultures.

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Creating a Climate to Realize Institutional Diversification Goals:  
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Abstract

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2018

This study investigates the diversification plans and goals of four university or college campuses in California examining the insight and perspectives of their respective administrators. Diversification of the institution has been adopted as a strategic plan or mission goal. The investigation analyzes the strides made toward the goal by investigating the efforts of the institutions in the intercultural training of current staff and faculty. Where best practices for diversification of the institution at every level exist, I will review what is being done and contrast those findings with institutions where a diversification goal exists, but training programs for staff members fall short of industry and scholarly recommendations. An initial literature review shows few works dedicated to staff training in the intercultural arena for such institutions. My final goal is to identify best practices when they exist and examine the gaps in training that institutions may face.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Affirmative Action was adopted in the 1960s with the intent of reversing decades of institutional and societal racism and exclusion of minorities from White-controlled education, business, and government. Among other things, the new laws pried open the doors of opportunity at institutions of higher education so more ethnic minority people and international students would have a chance to earn a degree. However, the progress made in the 1960s and 1970s began to unravel in the 1980s and 1990s as an increasing number of news articles and legal challenges were filed against enrollment diversification policies that undermined support for Affirmative Action. Racial tension and incidents of violence increased on campuses as claims of reverse discrimination overturned equal opportunity admission policies. This resulted in lower employment and tenure rates for educators and staff from underrepresented groups causing students of color to starve for adequate numbers of role models and mentors (Contreras-McGavin, 2009; Henley, Powell, & Poats, 1992). Race and discrimination became virtually taboo topics of conversation as faculties and administrations chose political correctness first, and later racial colorblindness in what would become with the election of the first Black president, a supposedly “post-racial America.”

While the work in the Civil Rights Era and Affirmative Action began to force open the doors of academia and commerce, changes in both business and academic cultures have been grudgingly slow. Nonetheless, the increasingly globalized economy that was powered at first in California by the industrial aerospace, early film, and music

industries, now rushes to supply the juggernauts of technology, entertainment, and electronic media industries. The call is constant for higher education to turn out graduates that can operate in a multicultural world market. Additionally, accreditation agencies for higher education also routinely admonish colleges and universities to dedicate themselves to become a microcosm of the populations on their doorsteps and prepare their graduates to function in an intercultural workforce at home and abroad.

### **The Problem**

Despite three or more decades of budding diversification efforts, most institutions of higher education in California, as well as across the nation, continue to struggle with the transformation of their campus communities and leadership as they slowly move to educate an interculturally competent workforce. Their boards of trustees, faculties, administrations, staffs, and to a lesser degree, their student bodies, often fail to reflect the diversity found in the communities just outside of their gates. The fact that remains challenging, according to Shorette (2016), “is that white Americans, who make up the majority of college administrators and faculty, are far less likely than members of other racial and ethnic groups to believe that discrimination exists today” (para. 14). Colleges and universities are notoriously slow to change course, and the reins of power are only grudgingly finding paths into more diverse hands.

The diversification of higher education campuses has shifted foci multiple times since Affirmative Action first forced open many doors in academe in the middle 1960s.

Since then, the motivation for change has swung among the following:

- diversification to follow Affirmative Action (because laws required it);
- diversification through minority or underrepresented student admission quotas (because diversity was recognized as being beneficial to all students);
- diversification of faculty and staff through intentional hiring practice

modification (because student body diversity outpaced that of faculty and staff);

- internationalization of the curriculum to address differences in learning styles and ethnocentric perspectives (because diverse backgrounds espoused different ways of knowing and disclosed cultural bias); and
- identifying methods to transform campus climates to favor openness and actively support diversity, equity, and inclusion (because despite all the above, administrations and faculties remain stubbornly White, male, and mired in the status quo).

There are countless scholarly papers, books, and reports written about the reasons for and need to diversify student bodies, the faculties who teach and mentor diverse learners, and the curricula and methods that faculties use in diverse classrooms. All of these are necessary to help transform institutions into the models of diversity that they seek.

However, these changes do not touch everyone on campus. One large segment of the campus community that is overlooked is the career staff members who run the institution outside the classroom. The last bullet point above is the subject of this study.

I worked for over a decade in higher education from the community college to the Ivy League, ending up working with university administration at a moderately sized private liberal arts university. I noticed a disconnect between the adopted strategic plan goal to become more diverse yet found little attention was being directed to my fellow staff and me about what role(s) we should play in helping to transform the institution. As Humphreys (1999) noted in her discussion of diversity planning:

It is clear in the research that simply recruiting a more diverse student body without attending to other aspects of campus diversity, including such issues as intergroup relations, curricular change, faculty and staff professional development, and diversifying faculty and staff, can result in difficulties for traditionally underrepresented students and can minimize the potential positive educational outcomes that a diverse environment can bring to all students. (para. 2)

Many institutional plans for diversification follow the predominant academic publications that focus on the classroom, curriculum, and admission diversification research and

strategies. Only a small percentage of scholarly writing, mostly among doctoral dissertations and related articles, like the one above, espouse the need for a more inclusive plan to accomplish the transformation of the campus community into a culture that supports diversity.

To this end, I reviewed the public materials of four institutions of higher education and, utilizing a phenomenological study methodology, interviewed one administrator from each institution. I compared their common diversification goals, which allowed me to identify similarities and differences among their implementation plans. Ultimately this comparison made it possible for me to form some recommendations for best practices and potential pitfalls in the work of forging diversity, equity, and inclusivity in institutions of higher education.

### **The Questions**

How can staff support and create a welcoming environment for diversification to take root and thrive; and, what is being done to develop the career staff and faculty to do more than tolerate diversity? The purpose of this research is to:

- review the institutional efforts and initiatives to create campus cultures of inclusion and diversity;
- identify programs or training that target existing employees specifically to develop/ improve/ or sustain a culture of diversity and inclusivity; and
- identify best practices and note possible gaps in the implementation of strategic diversification and inclusion plans at institutions of higher learning.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study joins a handful of research that identified a gap in the diversity and inclusivity implementation planning in which a large segment of a campus community—the staff—has been virtually ignored regarding training and education that are necessary for the campus climate to change. Universities and colleges recognize the need to change

but have focused largely on increasing numerical diversity without first preparing campuses to be welcoming supportive environments for diversification to take root and thrive. This research is intended to shed light on the best practices and note gaps in implementation that can inform campus diversification training in the future. Burkhardt and Ting (2016) commented,

Quite different from suggesting the inevitability of conflict, disruption, or a paradise lost, the prospect of greater equity, greater inclusion, and greater opportunity in our society is inspiring. If this hope is secured, it will mean that leaders of our colleges and universities and our system of higher education in the United States recognized the importance of our roles in shaping the way we respond to the social, cultural, and economic changes in our future. This more promising prospect is quite clearly possible, but it is not inevitable. It would require a transformation in our institutions that goes beyond the accommodation of difference that is the best we have so far accomplished. (p. 228)

### **Format of Thesis**

This thesis consists of the following chapters: Chapter 2 focuses on clarifying some of the main terms, concepts, and theories involved in this research discussion and shows how they are interrelated. There is also a presentation of the primary academic literature about my topic of staff intercultural competency training. Chapter 3 describes the methods of the study: (a) the selection of research subjects; (b) a documents study of four universities; (c) interviews with an administrator from each of the universities; and (d) a description of the phenomenological method that I used to analyze the data for relevant themes and later discussion. Chapter 4 is the results chapter in which I discuss the data analysis of the four institutions and interviews. Finally, Chapter 5 is the discussion of findings, insights, and conclusion of the study outcomes followed by recommendations for future use of the material and possible further research.

## Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Almost all the literature reviewed focused on the diversification of academe by a numeric increase of underrepresented students, faculty, and staff or through the diversification/internationalization of the curriculum (Moses, 1994; Pasque, Ortega, Burkhardt, & Ting, 2016; Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2014; Smith, 2009). The necessity of focused training for existing employees was overlooked in most scholarly literature as a necessary step toward improving the campus climate (Contreras-McGavin, 2009; McRae-Yates, 2009; Wilson, 2007) and achieving the stated strategic plan goal of diversification found at each of the institutions under review in this study.

This chapter will review the academic literature about diversity, equity, and inclusivity of all members of the campus community and outline the theoretical frames by which I will analyze the document study and interviews I have undertaken, viewed through a phenomenological approach.

### Campus Climate

Campus climate has become a hot topic in academia, and its improvement is the principal area of concern at many institutions in conjunction with diversity and inclusivity. Henley et al. (1992) stated that the “influx of large numbers of [African American, Hispanic, and Asian American students do] not ensure a culturally diverse campus, which depends not only on the increased numbers *but also on the campus’ receptivity and responsiveness* [emphasis added] to the students and their needs” (p. 4). Colorblindness on campus has been described by Bonilla-Silva (as cited by Contreras-McGavin, 2009) as an

intentional or unintentional way for institutions to circumvent Affirmative Action and equal opportunity movements with “approaches to perpetuate oppression and white privilege under the guise of racial awareness and sensitivity” (p. 14). According to Henley et al. (1992), negative campus climate has often been the result of feelings of isolation that stems in part from a “lack of culturally enriching activities and/or cultural awareness” (p. 4) between the minority students and the majority faculty/staff/student bodies.

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity**

Diversity, equity, and inclusion were terms that appeared in the literature with great frequency and were also present in the online materials, plans, and even office titles at some of the institutions reviewed in my document research. Dyer-Barr (2010) noted that

many predominantly White institutions (PWIs) have become more racially and ethnically diverse over the past several decades, and many seem to have embraced the ideals of diversity, equality, and inclusiveness, as is indicated by the inclusion of these terms as goals in their institutional mission statements. (p. 43)

What these terms mean and how they interconnect will be outlined below.

**Diversity.** Since 1978, diversity has often referred only to “racial representation,” following the Supreme Court decision (*Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*). In more recent times, diversity has shifted away from the difficult conversations about race and racism and come to include differences of all sorts including religious, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical ability, socioeconomic status, and cultural background (Contreras-McGavin, 2009; Henley et al., 1992). Burkhardt and Ting (2016) noted that there is infrequently a definition of diversity employed when strategic plans are written at many institutions, so it has been hard to gauge what kind of diversification is desired and when it has been achieved. Connerley and Pedersen (2005) referenced a



continuing debate among scholars on this very question of the definition of diversity. They drew noteworthy distinctions between diversity, which "focuses on differences," and multiculturalism, which "focuses on aspects of multiple cultures" (p. 3). They continued noting that "Regardless of how diversity is defined, the adjustments that employees will make within an organization depend on the organization's tolerance for ambiguity, the demand for conformity, and the value placed on diversity, cultural fit, and acculturation" (p. 3). When the tolerances and demands are over-emphasized, the result is no more than the status quo. Of even more concern, Burkhardt and Ting noted in a 2014 survey of 30 university administrators gathered at a conference in the Mid-west that "*diversity* [original emphasis] (by whatever definition) was no longer a strong concern for institutional leaders, governing boards, or even many student groups" (p. 225). This was consistent with Contreras-McGavin's (2009) assertion that "there is a disconnect between [a] college's rhetoric about diversity and its actions" (p. x) and that "there is power in not being able to see race and that color-blindness is not coincidental. By not recognizing embedded practices of racial marginalization, organizations are not responsible for changing these behaviors" (pp. 15-16).

**Equity.** According to the Association of American Colleges & Universities' Liberal Education and America's Promise (2015) guidebook for campus self-study, nearly half of all U.S. high school graduates in the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be students of color but only 9 percent of the students of Black, Latina/o, and Native American heritage will enter and graduate from college (p. 3). The enormous equity divide that has plagued American higher education stubbornly persists and colleges and universities have been called to task to make equity and inclusion a top priority in the

coming years. Kezar, Eckel, Contreras-McGavin, and Quaye (2008) provide a synopsis for the goals of college and university presidents regarding diversity initiatives from various authors and summarize it as “infusing attention to differences by race, sexual orientations, and gender; and creating greater equity and parity in the experience and outcomes of individuals from diverse backgrounds” (p. 70).

**Inclusivity.** Zepeda (2010) wrote about the importance of “inclusive learning environments” and their centrality in “maintaining a vibrant and rigorous intellectual climate” (p. 120). Neville, Spanierman, Khuri, De La Rosa, and Aber (2010) discussed “campus practices that promoted the adoption of more inclusive and less prejudicial racial attitudes and behaviors” (p. iii). Piedra (2010) said, “the most critical ingredient for change in a diverse society is inclusivity, not tolerance (p. 179). While diversity pertained to the presence of one or more marginalized groups at the table of higher education, and equity had to do with similarity in treatment in getting a seat at the table or access to the resources lain upon it, inclusion seemed to advocate having a respected voice at the table. Henley et al. (1992) noted the importance of inclusion in several sections of Chapter 1 of *Diversity, Disunity, and Campus Community* that advocated presence with a voice for all the constituency groups in the campus community.

Diversity, equity, and inclusivity can and should encompass all the above definitions among the people who work and study at a college or university because all these factors are part of what forms the campus culture. For this study, diversity will mean ethnic and cultural variation in the campus community; equity will mean parity in standing and access on campus, and inclusivity will function as an intentional request for every constituency’s presence—with a voice—at the campus community table.

## Diversification Strategies in Higher Education

Academic research and commentary are prolific regarding the need for diversification of the university or college campus in general and the struggle, according to Pope, Reynolds, Mueller, and McTighe Musil (2014), has been ongoing all the way back to the Reconstruction era following the U.S. Civil War (p. 2). Rudenstine (2001) noted that the struggle to offer education to marginalized people began long before the passage of Affirmative Action in the mid-1960s (p. 32). And Carter (2016) said that in academia, between the mid-1960s to the 1970s, “Diversity [became] one of the frameworks Americans used to deal with race in organizational life . . . [and the public sector used] Affirmative Action in hiring and admissions policies to compensate for historical exclusion and prevent further discrimination” (p. 207).

However, the academic literature focuses on the diversification of academe by increasing the number of underrepresented students/faculty/and staff or by the internationalization of the curriculum (Moses, 1994; Pasque, Ortega, Burkhardt, & Ting, 2016; Pope et al., 2014; Smith, 2009). Only sporadically does the literature promote the training of existing employees as an important action needed to successfully achieve campus diversification goals (McRae-Yates, 2009; Pope et al., 2014; Wilson, 2007).

McRae-Yates (2009) noted in her dissertation, *Institutionalizing Diversity: Transforming Higher Education*,

In order to achieve the goal—diversity across all levels of the organization—programs need to be implemented across the organization, with the understanding that it may take years to accomplish desired results. . . . The lack of institutionalized diversity is reflected by the lack of published literature in the area, especially in terms of guidelines, challenges, and successes. (pp. 31-32)

Kezar, Bertram Gallant, and Lester (2011) investigated Deborah Meyerson's tempered radicals which "are grassroots leaders . . . working to create change, operating from the bottom up, lacking formal authority and creating changes often outside the status quo" (p. 130). These leaders, they said, promote campus climate change, diversification and equity work, and other projects through their efforts to influence hiring committees, mentor student, and newly hired colleagues, or transform curricula through their participation on existing or newly formed committees and programs working within the structures of their institutions but without waiting for departmental leadership or upper administration to lead in these directions. College and university diversification initiatives need to be more than simple increases in the headcount of underrepresented minorities in the campus community.

### **Roadblocks to Diversification**

Globalization is not without its critics in the academy, and the argument for diversity is often countered by a claim that diversification will lead to a lowering of standards to matriculate students from a broader applicant pool. Moses (1994) quoted the former chancellor of the University of Wisconsin, saying that "we cannot have first-class universities without diverse student bodies and staffs. We have got to convince faculty members that what is at stake is the quality of the university, that you can't have excellence without diversity" (p. 11).

**Intercultural competency.** Adler (2008) commented that business and government promote the importance of diversification to tap into the variety of experiences, viewpoints, and skill sets that spark innovation in a multinational business world (p. 5). Intercultural competence is one of the new skills of paramount importance

needed to accomplish this transformation. Bennett and Bennett (2004) defined intercultural competence as

the ability to communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations and to relate appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts. Developing this kind of competence is usually a primary goal of diversity initiatives in organizations, where it is assumed to contribute to effective recruitment and retention of members of underrepresented groups, management of a diverse workforce, productivity of multicultural teams, marketing across cultures, and to the development of a climate of respect for diversity in the organization. (p. 149)

Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2014) promoted the importance to develop multicultural competence among professionals in higher education to implement multicultural initiatives in impactful ways that have a chance at institutional transformation over time. They stated that the few experts on most campuses in admissions, student affairs, residence hall staffs, and international programs would not be able to turn the tide on multicultural issues or change campus climates in every level on their own. Additionally, Pope et al. noted that one-method solutions would not work across the various types of institutions that range from “historically black colleges and universities, tribal colleges, women’s colleges, and institutions serving high numbers of Hispanic and Asian students” (p. 11). They indicated that strategic multicultural plans that address how campuses can address diversity in targeted ways for the various constituents within their unique contexts are necessary (p. 11).

### **From Strategic Plan to Implementation to Successful Diversification**

Kezar, Eckel, Contreras-McGavin, and Quaye (2008) reviewed implementation strategy literature by numerous scholars who noted strong support for vision and mission statements, developing strategic plan goals, establishing diversity councils and other taskforces or committees to bring diversity goals to the forefront of the campus climate

discussion (p. 72). They cautioned that the results of this planning, which tended to be from a small group of top administrators, with the possible assistance of a select group of advisors from among students or faculty, may have missed input from a good part of a campus community and rendered the implementation of the goals and plans more difficult without the organizational relationships to support the envisioned structure (pp. 72-73).

The literature is not unified on recommendations for campus diversification implementations. Kezar et al. (2008) offered the “web of support” as a model that shows the relationships among members of the institution that are united through the office of a chief officer of the school. Additionally, Kezar et al. discuss the option of unauthorized thought leaders taking the initiative on their own to influence change at the grassroots level through small acts of mentorship, committee influence to hire like-minded personnel, and curriculum change class by class, or through curriculum committee work.

### **Theoretical Frame**

The frameworks that inform this research were inspired by Kezar et al. (2008) and their study of college/university president roles in advancing campus diversity agendas and an examination of Deborah Meyerson’s frame by Kezar et al. (2011) that supports grassroots staff and faculty who work to create change regardless of upper administration support. In the examination of the chief executive officer roles that help promote strategic plans, Kezar et al. (2008) suggest building a web of support that

connects various individuals and activities [across the institution] that reinforce each other to construct a powerful . . . network of activities and people [resembling a spider’s orb web]. The ability of the web to work depends upon the interconnectedness of its various elements . . . [and] the importance of working with and empowering others. (p. 78)

The upper echelon leadership, according to the study by Kezar et al. (2008), often favor developing vision and mission statements, strategic planning goals, and establishing diversity councils and other taskforces or committees to bring diversity goals to the forefront of the campus climate discussions and transformation (p. 72). Kezar et al. discussed the “web of support” that is a version of a web diagram model with which to frame the successful diversification of the academy as it shows the relationships among various constituencies that may not be directly connected but which have ties through the executive office to forge diversification (p. 78). As McRae-Yates (2009) noted, the solution is a multipronged approach that includes administrators and staff members building from an understanding of the institution’s strategic mission and campus culture in order to develop change agents who can recruit staff and faculty who thereby create awareness, challenge processes, and align their positions with a new pool of employees who can develop cultural competency skills and expertise to improve future hiring-committee work, among others (pp. 25-26).

Interestingly, Kezar et al. (2008) warned of the trap of implementing campus change from only the upper administration because they often overlook or “ignore other organizational dimensions, such as the experiences of individuals affected, the interactions in the implementation process, and the importance of organizational culture, symbols and meaning making” (p. 73), which are needed to transform the campus climate. Dissertation studies like those of McRae-Yates (2009) and Wilson (2007) are among a handful of scholarly works that highlight specifically the absence of training for existing staff members and call leadership to look beyond the solutions of new hires, newly admitted students, or curriculum reform to more effectively render lasting campus

diversification (McRae-Yates, 2009, pp. 131-132; Wilson, 2007, pp. 247, 249). Kezar et al. (2008) also advocated training the student affairs staff, as well as administrators, and faculty.

In counterpoint to the framework that looks at the essential role of university executives, a frame by Deborah Meyerson, presented by Kezar et al. (2011), looked at the staff and faculty who “are grassroots leaders . . . working to create change, operating from the bottom up, lacking formal authority and creating changes often outside the status quo” (p. 130). These leaders, they contended, promote campus climate change, diversification and equity work, and other projects through their efforts to influence hiring committees, mentor student and newly hired colleagues, or transform curricula through their participation on existing or newly-formed committees and programs: working within the structures of their institutions but without waiting for departmental leadership or upper administration to lead in these directions.

The juxtaposition of these frameworks informed my study and analysis of the documents and my phenomenological study of the interview data from the four institutions that I chose to be a part of the study. Using these tools, I have identified some of the best practices for the overall diversification of the campus community and noted a collection of pitfalls or shortcomings that these frames were able to reveal with greater clarity.



### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

This research project combined a document study—collecting data from California higher education websites and published documents—with a phenomenological study of the lived experience of expert college or university administrators collected through recorded interviews. I was curious to hear from their lived experience of diversification initiatives why the institutional change was either going well or falling short from the perspective of a campus leader involved in the implementation process. The perspective of the lived phenomenon would bring a unique view of what was most important and meaningful in the implementation or where the implementation was causing extreme frustration in its lethargic realization in contrast to the documented reports found on the college and university websites and in the regional accreditation reports filed with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC).

My final goal was to identify best practices and examine the gaps in training that institutions faced to create and sustain diversity across all levels of the academy in line with published strategic planning goals and scholarly recommendations. The study was inspired by personal experience as an employee at such an institution and academic literature that identified a gap in strategic plan implementation initiatives that overlooked the training needs of existing staff and faculty in the diversification implementation projects.

## **Approach to Research**

The core methodology was to conduct a document study on four institutions to learn about their strategic plan diversification goals and implementation strategies. This method was followed up with a recorded interview of expert administrators at each institution to see how the diversification goals were being implemented on their respective campuses. The interviews investigate how a college or university administrator perceived the implementation of the institution's strategic plan goal calling for diversification among the existing staff members.

The phenomenological study methodology is especially suitable for this research because of the subjective nature of implementing a strategic plan goal, such as diversification, across an entire university community. Lester (1999) described the research method as an

[approach that] can be applied to single cases or to serendipitous or deliberately selected samples. While single-case studies are able to identify issues that illustrate discrepancies and system failures—and to illuminate or draw attention to 'different' situations—positive inferences are less easy to make without a small sample of participants. (p. 1)

**Phenomenological research method.** The phenomenological research method, according to Waters (2017), was “to describe a ‘lived experience’ of a phenomenon . . . ;” and unlike quantitative data analysis methods used in other research, the phenomenological research method should be “focused on meaning, the meaning of the experience, behaviour [sic], narrative, etc.” and to “view the participants as ‘co-researchers’” (p. 1). Waters stated that the researcher and participant review the analyses of the participant's

experience with them to confirm the proper interpretation of the meaning of their lived experience (p. 1).

*Data collection.* The nature of the data collected in this study was subjective, as it focused on the ease of navigation among various websites about key term prevalence including diversification, diversity, strategic plan, training, and staff. The data collected from the interviews about the human experience of implementation strategies that were necessarily variable across different institutions due to their dissimilar community compositions, campus climates, traditions, cultures, and the local definition—or lack thereof—of what diversity meant: all were unique to their settings.

*Data analysis.* The phenomenological study was analyzed utilizing an abstraction of the themes that presented themselves from the narratives of each of the interviewees when viewed within the entire context of the institutional story that the participant related during the interview. The participants' narratives were analyzed within the context of each campus's climate. The sentiments of the staff and faculty before and after the diversification plan was adopted were explored with each participant. I investigated the feelings the participants experienced about any changes that occurred on campus following implementation and explored his or her vision of the institution ten years into the future. The meanings interpreted from the narratives were checked with the participants for verification and confirmation and then subjected to a theme analysis to find the shared experiences that transcended institutions that were implementing diversification plan goals. When viewed alongside one another and contrasted against

the academic literature, best practices emerged, and gaps in the implementation plan were identified that might benefit from additional planning.

**Selection of research subjects.** The institutions selected for this study were all in California and spanned various sizes from small private liberal arts institutions to large public research universities. After a list of institutions was identified following the protocol outlined below under Expert Interviews (see page 31), invitations were sent to expert administrators who oversaw some key aspect of the implementation of the diversification program or who worked in some major capacity in diversifying the institution. In some instances, administrators were selected using network sampling by following up on recommendations from another department or institution that recommended their work.

### **Document Study**

The analysis of documents such as email messages, brochures, reports, and other printed material were used to compare and contrast information gleaned from the transcribed recordings of the four interviews and provided what Yin (2014) termed a “Convergence of Evidence” as a tapestry of information that painted a more colorful portrait of the phenomenological experience shared by the participants, (pp. 118-121). I also reviewed the accreditation reaffirmation reports for each of the finalist institutions which are available to the public on the website of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) and often on the college or university’s institutional research office website. WSCUC requires such

information to be accessible by the public and encourages its accredited association members to post it online for their campus communities.

**Strategic plan goal(s) regarding diversity and inclusivity.** Identification and selection of the institutions followed a broad Internet and localized website keyword search that seeks to identify those academies that adopted one or more strategic plan goals to increase or improve diversification across their campuses. After a preliminary study of the documents connected through the main university web pages, I reviewed the linked college or university websites, following such links from the strategic plan pages through a pattern of common departments or functions that participated in strategic goal implementation. A list of 12-15 institutions was identified based on meeting the diversification goal criterion and having enough of a web presence to make a deeper document study feasible. The criteria for feasibility pertained to the accessibility of pages that had lengthy commentary regarding their strategic plans and intention to diversify. A discussion of the findings appears in Chapter 4.

A preliminary search of the Internet for college and university public websites in California highlighting strategic plans which included diversification goals revealed many institutions that were focused on the internationalization of their curriculum, improvement of their campus climates, and diversification of their faculty, staff, and students. Some of the websites included universities and colleges with specific departments charged with the responsibility for planning and programming to help the diversification goals come to life. Few of the websites highlighted training for staff members specifically, as the Web pages followed the predictable treatment, also used in

most academic literature, in which the focus was placed on diversifying student bodies versus internationalizing the curriculum or faculties and staffs.

A thorough reading of the web pages was then conducted on the final list of institutions that participated in this study, noting the purpose of each web page, its relationship within the university's or college's website, and how accessible it was within the website architecture. For Alpha Institute, the first institution reviewed below in Chapter 4 Results, I carefully studied an out-of-printed copy of a public news release that I had discovered in 2012 when this institution first came into my research. I chose Alpha Institute because it had received a sizeable grant for diversification sponsored by a California grant foundation. According to that press release, the funds were used to "increase faculty diversity, transform curricular and co-curricular programs and improve academic success among underrepresented students." I utilized similar documents, when available from the other institutions in this study via their websites, to capture a snapshot of the colleges and their efforts of diversification.

### **Expert Interviews**

Selection of expert subjects was from among university or college administrators at institutions in California whose academy had a strategic goal to diversify the university/college campus, and either had active staff and/or faculty training programs or notably lacked specific training aimed at staff and faculty. Invitations to participate in this study went out to over a dozen institutions, and the final selection was based on the availability of the expert administrator for an interview and an attempt to maintain a balance among how institutions chose to incorporate intercultural diversity training and

those institutions that had not yet begun such training. Network sampling played a role as well when one institution highly recommended another institution with whom they had been consulting to develop their diversification goals and strategic plan.

University administrators were interviewed to learn about the initiatives underway at their institutions following the implementation of their strategic plan diversification goal. Marshall and Rossman (1999) and Yin (2014) indicated that interviews with well-informed interviewees, such as leading administrators in a college or university, were a useful method of analyzing the interplay between theory and practice to uncover innovations that might otherwise go unnoticed. Lester (1999) noted that “phenomenological methods are particularly effective at bringing to the fore the experiences and perceptions of individuals from their perspectives, and therefore at challenging structural or normative assumptions” (p. 1). This approach was helpful in collecting subjective data surrounding the many factors involved in implementing a strategic plan goal as broad and complex as the diversification of an academic institution.

**Interview method.** I conducted interviews in an open-ended format where each administrator was asked the same list of questions and allowed to answer them in free form, elaborating with follow-up questions as the interview progressed, to follow trains of thought and collect pertinent anecdotal data from the interviewees. The interview questions in this study were adapted from two previous studies that focused on the impact of personnel on the diversification of college and university campuses. McRae-Yates (2009) studied how her New England college was attempting to institutionalize diversity from the perspective of organizational change theory and noted the importance of

coordination of the effort from multiple areas of leadership and across divisions. Wilson (2007) wrote a study on the activities of senior student affairs officers at several institutions, which invited their commentary on the campus climate, what role each took to implement diversification through their divisions, and how they related to or augmented the institutional diversification goals. Both researchers identified the importance of and gaps in training executive level administrators, as well as staff members at various levels, to be successful in accomplishing the diversification goals (McRae-Yates, 2009, pp. 126-138; Wilson, 2007, pp. 240-243, 249-252, and 256). These two studies, while investigating different aspects of the diversification endeavor, related to my central question of identifying best practices and gaps in the training of existing staff members as an integral part of the diversification process. With the permission of the interviewee, I recorded the interviews on two digital recorders and took hand-written notes during the interview. The safeguard protocols on the electronic files and written notes and materials are discussed below.

**Interviewees.** I interviewed four administrators that worked in California institutions of higher education to shed light on the cultures within their institutions and ascertain the levels of cultural change that may or may not have begun following the implementation of their respective institution's strategic plan goal(s) of diversification. The administrators were each deeply involved in diversification efforts at their institutions and had a first-hand perspective of the changes to the campus climate of his or her institution. All interviewees were able to both theorize about the process of change



within their institution, as well as voice observations and opinions about the causes for success or challenges with the diversification processes at their institution.

**Safeguarding interview subjects from undue stress or harm.** Following the Institutional Review Board standards, my research protocol was reviewed and approved to interview human subjects with the stipulation that neither the institutions nor the administrators would be identified in this research report. The interviewees received an IRB-approved letter of invitation that explained the purpose of the study, the time commitment required, and the potential risk posed by their participation, which was no more than that faced in their everyday lives (see Appendix B below).

The interview questions and format posed less than minimal risk (that experienced in everyday life) because the information I sought was at the level and kind that was found in the WSCUC accreditation reports that were publicly available, per accrediting agency requirements, and the persons interviewed were questioned only about information in their areas of expertise or that which pertained to their daily work within their respective institutions. Interviewing administrators and/or campus leaders to get their perspective on campus diversification processes was important for the comparison and contrast exercise noted above, with the information gleaned from the document and webpage studies. To further protect the participants, I avoided questions about individuals at the institutions and inquired about the general tone of the campus climate and diversification processes at the institutions. All the interview subjects signed an Informed Consent form, which they received in advanced and about which they were given an opportunity to ask questions.

I transcribed the interviews and redacted identifying comments and names of specific staff, faculty, administrators, or student referenced by the interviewee, and expunged identifiable data from the transcriptions per IRB requirements. The participants were given the opportunity to review the content of their interview before the thesis was submitted to the University of the Pacific for publication. Additionally, all documents and recordings from the interviews are to be destroyed following the publication of this thesis report excepting the Informed Consent forms that I will retain for three years, per IRB requirements. Electronic interview data encrypted on a home personal computer will be deleted following the publication of the thesis. I informed all subjects that they could choose to withdraw their consent to participate at any time without penalty or duress. The participants were further protected by coding their interviews and discussion of each person with the pseudonyms Administrator Rho, Sigma, Tau, and Upsilon (after a random selection of consecutive Greek alphabet letters). The host institutions were likewise coded to avoid disclosure of the participants' identities utilizing four sequential Greek alphabet letters.

**Pretested questions.** An instructor at an institution in Toronto, Ontario, Canada who had experience as an international student and teacher was interviewed to pretest the interview questions. This allowed me to hone my interview process and present a consistent interview experience to the four Californian administrators. I was, therefore, able to collect useful data and solicit feedback from the interviewee following the interview experience to ascertain what portion of the interviews or questions did not

function well and adjust the final question panel before official research interviews began.

**Interview questions.** The interviews consisted of seven open-ended questions and an additional optional question that plumbed participant insights about their institutions and their experience with the diversification process, staff training, and general tenor of the campus both before the diversification efforts started and following their implementation. The follow-up question was an open-ended request for the interviewee to share his or her thoughts on any related topic that might have come to mind during the interview, about which I had not enquired, that the interviewee felt was important for this study (see Appendix C).

### **Limitations**

The limitations of this phenomenological study included a small number of institutions sampled and a limited number of personnel interviewed at institutions that shared a similarity in one area of consideration: a strategic plan goal of diversification. A phenomenological study seeks to distill the meaning and themes of the lived experience of the participants: its qualitative and subjective research methodology cannot render generalizable or quantifiable data points to be extrapolated for other institutions. However, it had the potential of rendering interesting themes that might inspire introspection and the beginnings of useful inquiry for others seeking to implement similar strategic plan goals.

## Chapter 4: Results

This chapter contains the document and phenomenological studies collected through interviews of administrators from each of the four California institutions of higher education included in this research. A synthesis of the interviews, the document study collected from the college or university websites, and the results from the categories and connections stemming from the prevailing themes will form the body of this chapter. Since confidentiality was guaranteed for each participant, neither institutional nor personal names were used.

### Document Study

This document study reviewed 15-25 web pages per university among the four institutions participating in the research. The main interest on all these sites was how prominently the college or university displayed its strategic plan, its goals detailing its interest in diversification or internationalization of the institution, and how the implementation of the goal(s) incorporated existing staff and faculty, if at all.

**Diversity and inclusion.** Common web pages that turned up on each website included the main landing page for offices of diversity, diversity and inclusion—or some similar department—the president’s office webpage, which often contained a link directly to the strategic plan, or institutional effectiveness. These web pages often linked to student affairs or human resources web pages as well. It was interesting to find that offices of diversity and inclusion, where they existed, were frequently only a few years old with newly appointed chief diversity officers or directors. These diversity officers

often reported directly to the chief executive officer, the chief academic officer, or were under deans and vice presidents of student affairs. The location of such websites in the institution's web-architecture was interesting in that it demonstrated the relative importance the institution placed on diversity and what level of administration wanted to be kept closely informed of its activities.

My document study of websites was mainly focused on clear descriptions of the Strategic Plan goal(s) for diversification (including attention to staff development), descriptions of offices of diversity and inclusion, where they existed, and evidence of diversification. The notable diversity web pages from each institute are explained below under their pseudonym for this study.

*Alpha Institute.* The website of this institution had fewer web pages about diversity and inclusion than the others at the time of this study. The general education in the undergraduate college was geared toward diversity and inclusion and came up most often in web searches, aside from information about the institute's majority minority student body. A keyword search of the website showed that "diversity" was greatly overshadowed by "community" on its web pages by around three-to-one instances. Alpha Institute had a diversity and inclusivity office that was under the umbrella of student affairs, and it mainly ran training programs and offered counseling for ethnic minority and marginalized students. The campus visit demonstrated that it also provided training programs and seminars for an array of student groups, new faculty and staff orientations, and performed other services as time and staffing permitted.

***Beta Institute.*** This medium-size institution had multiple campuses in California. The strategic plan was found on the office of the president web page and with a few intuitive clicks, one could find other diversity-related resource pages and departments. Most of the universities and colleges that had diversity councils, chief officers, or the like, also had diversity as a strategic plan goal and in most cases had diversity or diversification appear as a finding on their regional accreditation reports. In Beta Institute's case, diversification was tucked away in many different places on its website, starting with the president's office page and including the community web pages, the undergraduate school intercultural affairs office, and graduate school diversity council sites. Diversity was shown to be an important concept at the university, and much effort went into fulfilling the strategic plan goal of becoming a more diverse institution.

***Gamma Institute.*** This institution had a new office of diversity and inclusion that spearheaded the relatively young campus diversification plan detailed below in the interview section of this chapter (see page 47). The school had a comprehensive and far-reaching topical strategic plan that surpassed most institutional strategic plans at the other colleges and universities examined in the study. At this institution, an entire strategic plan was written and put into practice and, at the time of this study, would soon be followed up by a new strategic plan that would tie into this earlier document.

Gamma Institute had completely transformed itself by incorporating diversity and inclusion into every facet of its operation and scholarship. A few examples included an innovative program that assisted faculty members on how to weave issues of diversity and inclusion into the curriculum in the courses they taught, creating a safe space for

students to congregate as a multicultural student body, and addressing the messages of diversity and inclusion the institution wanted to propagate in its campus art.

*Delta Institute.* This institution also had an impressive array of web pages that told a tale of a university that had taken diversification to a higher level than most and combined multiple divisions that traditionally operated on their own and put them in a division with diversity placed prominently in its title. There were pages of material concerning the division's outlook, vision, and mission as well as its responsibilities to implement the university-wide strategic plan. Diversity and inclusion were enumerated parts of the strategic plan and had extensive information about the strategies the institution used to train and develop its staff and faculty. Intercultural competency and sensitivity were important training skills listed in the strategic plan to develop staff members to serve better the thousands of students that came from a wide array of backgrounds and identities.

**Document study summary.** The documents available on the Internet at the institutions reviewed were impressive in their scope and content. They painted a bright picture in every case of the work that the institutions did to bring diversity into the hearts and minds of their respective campus communities and to the broader public at large that happened upon their pages. These websites varied in purpose between marketing tools for prospective students or reference sites for members of the campus communities who needed information about the diversity and inclusivity initiatives at the institutions. Marshall and Rossman (2016) and Yin (2014) discussed the proliferation and usefulness of online research methodology and its ability to gain access to source material that

would otherwise be difficult to find. The limitations of websites included their transient nature as web resources appeared and disappeared at the click of a button and were therefore difficult and inconsistent to access over time.

My review of these four university and college websites showed that there was a plethora of energy going into and information coming out of these institutions to improve both their understanding and acquisition of diversity and inclusivity. The websites presented a snapshot of what one can assume was the official viewpoint of diversity and inclusivity at these institutions, since the information was published on the official websites of each school. Through these, an image of how the institutions viewed themselves and how they wanted to be seen was apparent.

In the next section, I turn to the interviews with the individual administrators working at these institutions to learn about their personal experiences of bringing diversification to life amid bricks and mortar of their corners of academe.

### **Interview Themes**

The themes that emerged from the analyses of the interview data included the following:

- Roadblocks: colorblind and culture-blind,
- Grassroots advocacy for diversity and inclusion,
- Innovations and involvement, and
- Baby steps to success.

**Themes.** Each of the categories above was connected to various themes from the interviews in which the participants shared their perceptions and experiences about diversification plan implementation, and the successes and challenges long-term staff and faculty faced as the institutions transformed around them.



***Roadblocks: colorblind and culture-blind.*** Conditions that arose in the stories shared by the administrators included campus climate factors, traditions, bureaucracy, “political correctness,” and individual and institutional resistance to change, or resistance to a departure from the status quo. As mentioned in the Introduction and Chapter 2 of this paper, color-blindness has been used in recent years with an innocuous and positive connotation that masked ongoing issues of racial bias, discrimination, White privilege, and institutional racism, which Contreras-McGavin (2009) pointed out continued to haunt campus climates at institutions of higher education in the United States (pp. 10, 15, 37).

***Grassroots advocacy for diversity and inclusion.*** This theme was an amalgamation of efforts in the various diversification programs or activities the researcher encountered that originated mainly from the staff members rather than from among administrators or other traditional higher education leadership. Activities such as diversity training and awareness for staff and faculty, or general openness to change in institutional practices, policies, and curricula, populated this overarching theme.

***Innovation and involvement.*** The third theme pertained to administrative, organizational efforts to implement the strategic plan diversity goals. The activities described in the interviews utilized campus communication networks, formal strategic plan implementation protocols or teams, allocation and commitment of financial resources, and recruitment of personnel to attend training seminars or campus-wide community events with diversity education at their cores.

***Baby steps to success.*** Many stories related by the study’s participants spoke of university diversification plan milestone celebrations and growing lists of

accomplishments that were achieved by the institutions. One of the administrators titled these little victories, “baby steps,” and found that each one inspired greater dedication and commitment by the campus community to its diversification goals. The administrators, board of trustees, staff, and faculty found inspiration in the achievements and marked each success with pride and renewed vigor to accomplish their strategic plan goals.

### **Institutional Stories**

The following are the four stories that related the administrators’ sentiments and meanings through their lived experience as they endeavored to manage, participate, evaluate, and engage the campus community to accomplish their strategic plan diversification goals. The administrators spoke on the condition of anonymity, and they and their institutions have been provided pseudonyms for this narrative.

**Alpha Institute.** This private institution was in a large metropolitan area with an enormous diversity of cultures and languages. The college enrolled over 60 percent non-White ethnicities in its undergraduate and graduate programs. About 60 percent of the faculty and staff were Northern-European American.

Administrator Sigma, interviewed on February 16, 2018, spoke about the many students at the institution who were the first generation in college, either because they were the first in their family to pursue an advanced degree or because they were first generation immigrants (documented or undocumented) living in the United States. Almost three-quarters of the students at Alpha Institute were non-Anglo disadvantaged minorities who were in part attracted to the school for its renown and standing as an

institution dedicated to educating a diverse student body. The school's website highlighted this mission and offered extensive text and testimonials of students and alumni, who praised its diversity.

Administrator Sigma reported that the students' experience of the institution was in stark contrast to the marketing messages found on the institution's website. Sigma expressed enormous frustration with the disconnect between the marketing messages that contradicted the reality found on campus about the students' experience. "When they come in here it's not what they expected. We're not retaining our black men, especially when it comes to football [and] our athletes. Our transgender students don't feel that they belong here." Diversity seemed to be more of a marketing tool in that the students' experience at the institution often included bitter struggles with gender and ethnic biases or outright discrimination from some faculty and staff, which led many marginalized students to enormous frustration. The classroom environment, teaching styles, and relations with faculty academic advisors were not especially supportive for many minority students who had a culture clash with their instructors who did not see the need to build bridges between their disparate cultural perspectives.

Sigma worked long hours in a rewarding, though understaffed, office to improve the student life at Alpha Institute. Sigma expressed great satisfaction and relief at recently getting a diversity advocacy group approved, which required the consent of the faculty senate: the institution's main governing body. Sigma worked for a year to get the committee proposal on the senate's agenda and eventually succeeded.

Despite some setbacks in training seminar attendance, a notable example of initiative was shown by Sigma's division, which undertook the task of drafting new vision and mission statements, as well as a new strategic plan that would embody diversification goals more prominently. The division was among a few that forged ahead with their planning rather than waiting for something to come down from the faculty senate and central administration. Sigma expressed relief and pleasure at working with a division that had such self-starting leadership. Stories Sigma shared showed a deep dedication and concern to provide the best experience possible to the students, and though there were many areas of frustration, the grassroots efforts of her division to make a difference in the students' lives and education evinced a passion that brought great meaning to the efforts of a dedicated student services team.

**Beta Institute.** The second institution of higher education had multiple campuses across the State of California. The university adopted a strategic plan with a goal to improve diversity just under a decade ago and has made great strides diversifying its student population in most of its programs. Faculty and staff diversity had shifted slightly but remained far below the student ratio.

Administrator Rho, interviewed February 15, 2018, shared that the campus climate of the institution was supportive, collegial, and sought to engender a culture of helpfulness, civil discourse, and respect. Its faculty and staff ranged in socioeconomic background and along with their students hailed from many parts of the United States and abroad. Its long-serving and mostly homogenous employee base have traditionally had a challenge acknowledging or discussing sensitive or difficult social topics "such as forms

of oppression and . . . racism” that made the diversification of the institution over the last decade more challenging. Before the adoption of the strategic plan and its diversity goal, diversification was not on the radar for most of the employees at the institution. In recent years, pockets of the university had received localized access to diversity seminars, although few training programs were extended university-wide. The separate graduate schools and undergraduate college had their diversity councils, in addition to a university-level diversity council; and some of these units were quite active keeping the topic of diversity at the forefront of campus life.

One of the challenges Rho touched upon was the contradiction between opinion and behavior among at least half of the faculty at the institution.

I think that a significant portion of the faculty if you were to ask them to endorse whether they think diversity's a good thing, I think virtually all faculty would. I think if you ask them how you think you need to change how you teach your courses or how you prepare students? I think most would say no, that . . . things are going really well.

Many faculty and staff would claim that diversification was a good goal to have and that indeed the institution and society, in general, needed to be more multicultural. However, when the reality hit home of what that will mean to an individual and his or her practices that may need to change, support quickly faltered.

Another comment made was regarding a reflection about diversification in general.

It's always kind of a counter-intuitive thing—the more diverse you get, the more students bring feedback, pointing out some of the shortcomings. So, it doesn't necessarily make it a more peaceful climate; it actually can make it a climate where there are more acknowledged challenges and so forth.

Rho continued by saying that was good for the institution, implying that the school needed to face these challenges to ultimately be successful at diversification.

The general tenor of these comments related underlying unease with the reality of diversification and what it would mean in the long run at an institution and for individual people. These and many other comments Rho shared showed that many individuals at the institution felt the direct change of their behaviors and practices were unnecessary or that if there was a problem somewhere in the curriculum, it was someone else's job to fix it. Rho speculated:

I think the faculty would say that the way they are approaching their courses is in a colorblind fashion. That it's like, "Hey, regardless of who I've got in my class, this is how I teach this class. And I do it, and I do it effectively." I think that there'd be some, some puzzlement at the notion of changing that because the student body has changed. It'd be like, "Well, why would you teach this class any differently because it's a more [diverse] student body? I'm still teaching whatever my content area is."

Rho used careful language and thoughtfulness when discussing these views from fellow professors and from the perspective of an administrator who had been trying to crack this nut for a very long time. Rho did not seem frustrated by the sentiments expressed above, but it did feel like these arguments were well worn and had been discussed at faculty conferences, meetings, and in private conversations many times.

Rho shared that when there were issues that the more diverse and diversity-conscious student body wanted to bring up with the school administration, the discourse was almost always more conversational than confrontational. Students rarely resorted to sit-ins and other protests. Although they may not like the slowness of change, or the final decision about their topics of concern, they felt heard and respected by the

administration. The campus community had a strong ethic of respecting others. But Rho seemed to acknowledge that practical understanding among many faculty and staff of their own cultural biases and blinders continued to fail them about what was necessary to foment acceptance versus simple tolerance of diversity.

A challenge for most institutions to realize their diversification goals, including Beta Institute, was that most faculty strongly opposed mandatory diversity training. As with Alpha Institute, diversity awareness was often offered to the faculty, staff, and student body but only a handful of people ever showed up, and usually, it was the more diversity-savvy of the employees and students who bothered to attend. The ones who needed the training were the ones who saw no need for it or were actively opposed to diversification and change in general. Administrator Rho agreed that sometimes the change that was most effective was attrition of older faculty and acquisition of a newer more diverse workforce that “helped drive the process . . . and shift the culture.” Rho was pragmatic and amiable about the experience of working to build an institution that was more open and welcoming of diversity and inclusivity. He felt that the ten-year outlook for Beta Institute was bright and that diversification would eventually settle into campus life over time.

**Gamma Institute.** The third institution that I visited was also in the middle of an urban setting and was surrounded by a majority minority population. Sixty percent of the faculty and forty-five percent of the staff were Anglo-Northern-European Americans. Administrator Tau, interviewed on February 21, 2018, had worked at the forefront of the university’s diversification plan for several years and told the story of its birth and

adolescence with energy and satisfaction. A few years ago, the university received a recommendation from the regional accrediting agency (WSCUC), that the university mission was out of step with the view of the institution reported in their campus climate survey. The administrator was tasked to develop a response, and that turned into the campus diversity plan.

Their method was to look at diversity from every conceivable angle including the lived experience of identity groups and take the overarching institutional perspectives into account. Five taskforces were formed to look at topics such as demographics on campus, the use of physical space, restructuring the curriculum, institutional perceptions, and the strength of its community relationships. More than 12 subcommittees were commissioned that included members looking at diversity and inclusion from many perspectives. Additionally, the faculty, staff, administration, students, trustees, and alumni all had a seat at the table in the taskforces as well. Administrator Tau commissioned the groups to complete a template on which they were to identify five pressing issues that needed to be addressed and further divide those into things that could be resolved rather simply and those things that would need a longer-term, research, and perhaps a larger financial commitment to address. The teams astounded the newly minted diversity and inclusion team with over 100 ideas, which they sorted into five buckets for implementation including curriculum, recruitment, institutional prioritization, community, and climate. These became the five goals of the strategic plan specifically written on inclusion and diversity and launched the university into its project.



With this impressive list in hand, the administrator went to the bargaining table with the university's administrative officers and trustees to gain significant funding for the project. Lowball funding would not do, as had often been part of the failures of the past; and with some creative budgeting and testimonial statements from some of the project team and community, over \$12 million of base funding was granted for implementation—much of which went to salaries for the additional staff needed to accomplish the goals.

With such a long task list and only a couple of people in the diversity and inclusion office, the taskforce members were invited to continue serving as partners on implementation teams for their areas of expertise and passion. Very quickly, numerous little victories, or baby steps to success, were logged and with these, a formerly cynical campus climate that believed nothing new or lasting would come of yet another call for campus-wide change began to turn around. Long-standing issues such as the creation of a multicultural space for students to meet and collaborate was opened, and other projects of every sort implemented to lessen the burden of doing business, of gaining access to various services, and outreach to the community. With the success of the diversity project, the faculty senate disbanded its diversity and inclusion committee in favor of the diversity project that was having far greater success in such a short time.

Staff training for diversity remained mostly accomplished through online tools, although plans were in the works to expand upon these. Additionally, a training and consulting plan was implemented for the university faculties to give them ideas on how to

create a more inclusive hiring practice. Although the mandatory training programs did not escape some faculty pushback, the administrator was happy about even that:

My attitude in all of this is any conversation around diversity and inclusion is better than what we had before, which no one talked about it. And now we're putting it front and center at the beginning of every faculty search: The importance of not only recruiting a diverse candidate pool of faculty, I'm requiring search committees to identify what perspectives might be missing around the table in our staff meetings, our faculty meetings, and then what can we do internally to make sure that we retain those colleagues that were able to recruit here so that we aren't marginalizing them or making them feel disrespected, but we're including them and making them feel valued.

While diversification of the faculty, staff, and student body remained a primary concern, the university human resources office was about to adopt this same training method for use with staff and administration search committees as well.

Administrator Tau related these stories with excitement and joy at how well the campus climate was responding to these changes and the continuing groundswell of support and confidence the community members had for the project. Another ongoing task was the continual assessment of the programs and initiatives to measure how they were doing and what was yet to be done. Communication was another perpetual task needed to keep the hundreds of campus community members in the project informed of its progress, the current work, future innovations that continued to bubble up from the wellspring of ideas to improve diversity and inclusion, and that indeed, some of the work would take a very long time to accomplish. Tau commented,

We can't do everything, you know, we're putting in the central infrastructure that we need to move into the future. So being very pragmatic like that is really important and getting people to understand that, you know, moving it takes a long time. It's a slow process. But the commitment is there, and this is what we've all agreed, and these are the things that we're asking for over the next five years.

As for the next ten years, the administrator was introspective about how students, in general, are always ahead of large organizations because society changes so much faster, especially for college-age adults than institutions.

I think in many ways [the students are] way more progressive and further ahead than we are in their thinking. They assume that we are thought leaders in this, and we're not: they're ahead of us. My biggest challenge right here is really not so much faculty and staff anymore. The people that are here today is that population of students that expect more of the institution.

**Delta Institute.** This school was in a busy suburban environment outside a city center and has a high student enrollment, three-quarters of whom were nonwhite. The university employed a large full-time, and part-time faculty and staff, 47 percent of whom were non-Northern European Americans from underrepresented groups.

Administrator Upsilon, interviewed on February 26, 2018, began the interview sharing about the nearly decade-long diversity project that Delta Institute had implemented and the great success it had. It not only improved services and the experience for the large multiethnic and intercultural student body but also expanded its diverse faculty and staff. The administrator noted that the campus climate was open and thoughtful in its strategies to attract diversity at all levels and in all roles, ideally from its geographic area, which also had a sizeable and diverse population.

The institution aimed to create a faculty and staff that was a mirror image of the community of students that attended the school, and in recent years, the strategic plan strategies helped meet this goal. One main emphasis was diversification of the applicant pools and ensuring that diversity and the quality of candidates went together. Diversity at

the institution referred to ethnicity as well as gender, socioeconomic background, gender identity, sexual orientation, faith tradition, and domestic or international status.

Recognizing the need to offer training to faculty and staff, the school created a comprehensive annual diversity workshop in which nearly the entire staff and administration participated. An outside firm specializing in diversity training came in for three days and met with every level of an employee for up to three hours in sessions that ranged from topics and content from year to year.

So, we provide training for safe space: how to work with your LGBTQ community, how to attract people to the university, why do they want to come work at [Delta Institute]? And then also pointing out things [on which] to provide training programs and support initiatives [such] as . . . our student success team [and] employee recognition.

Upsilon shared that the employee recognition was a program that honored the diversity and inclusion work staff members made on behalf of the community. Additionally, there were many human resources-oriented trainings that took place as well for students regarding sexual harassment mitigation and nondiscrimination.

The strategic plan was successful due in large part to the leadership of the university president who inspired the community with a strong vision for diversification.

Upsilon said,

This. . . last strategic plan was one [where] everyone knew the goals. If you knew how your position related, you knew—you understood—how it enriched the lives for our students to provide a better learning environment for them. It wasn't just on the shelf. People believed in it because they were able to engage. They knew how each goal connected to the other . . . the purpose.

Additionally, the community met twice a year in a town hall meeting and again at Convocation to hear reports and updates about how the strategic plan was faring and what

was coming next. The institution was wrapping up its latest version of the strategic plan that had served for the last five years and was in the process of drafting a new one that would carry it for another 5-7 years.

Another factor that engaged the faculty, staff, and employee buy-in was to include a representative on one of two committees organized by the president's office. Upsilon shared

in order to make sure your employees have a voice to make sure there wasn't a conflict of interest and to make sure that we were truly providing that diverse community for faculty and staff, they needed to have a seat at the table.

The university leadership valued committee member contributions to the project and gave them a trusted forum that took their comments and observations seriously. One of the strengths that resulted from the strategic plan implementation across the campus community was a strong sense of openness and trust of their colleagues. Upsilon said,

I think one of the things that have been paramount is they understand the importance of collaboration. So, being able to partner and collaborate and listen to ideas: even from those who have different perspectives, socioeconomic backgrounds, and just trying to look through things using a different lens, as well.

Finally, Upsilon shared a passion for the experience of working at Delta Institute and the newly created model department that combined several functions at the school under one new division and provided accountability for the strategic plan implementation efforts as well as the ability to forge close ties and collaborate, as was discussed above. Upsilon said, "we are very different, and we are unique in that sense of the creation of the division and the great work that we're doing and how we're changing the climate and the environment and providing a more enriched experience for our students." The institution's "commitment to inclusive excellence" and reaffirmation of their

“commitment to diversity, inclusion, and promoting the values of all on campus” was evident in Upsilon’s pride and satisfaction with the work of the division team and the institution.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

The focus of my research is to investigate how colleges and universities with strategic plan goals to diversify their campuses are creating campus cultures of inclusivity and diversity beyond just admitting more minority students or trying to hire more diverse staff and faculty. My chief questions are, in what ways do colleges and universities focus on developing, improving, or sustaining a campus climate welcoming of diversity and inclusivity? And what are the best practices and potential gaps in the implementation strategies from which other institutions can learn? Conducting a document study of their websites and interviewing an administrator from each institution, I compared the official vision of diversity and inclusivity that each institution put forward online and compared it with the lived experience that the administrator shared during the interview. I also drew from the literature to formulate some recommendations for best practices and gaps in implementation strategies.

In this chapter, I will discuss my findings drawn from a comparison of their experiences in dialogue with the four themes that I identified from the interview responses and I will present the best practices I have gleaned from the study. Finally, I will conclude with suggestions for future research to further this line of inquiry into diversity and inclusivity in higher education.

### **Findings**

Think of a field in which crops will be grown. What needs to happen to have the best yield from whatever kinds of seeds are sown? Aside from soil, water, and sunlight

we can surmise that preparation of the earth will need to be done to make the yield far more successful than just dropping random seeds upon the ground and hoping that they take root wherever they land.

This soil preparation is akin to preparing each member of the campus community to nurture everyone who enters therein. It does little good to *like* the idea of growing seeds—like the faculty who support diversification but do not want to do the work to teach to diversity. There must be actual ground breaking that tills the soil and prepares it for the planting phase. In human terms, on college/university campuses, the existing faculty and staff must have the opportunity to develop an openness to and be supportive of diversification. Bennett and Bennett (2004) state, “The real crux of creating a climate of respect for diversity is demonstrating understanding and appreciation for the different beliefs, behaviors, and values of varying [worldviews]” (p. 150). Before diversity can take root, this “climate of respect” must be developed by expanding upon the existing staff members’ knowledge, skills, and attitudes which are, “a means toward increasing a person's power, energy, and freedom of intentional choice in a multicultural and diverse world” (Connerley & Pedersen, 2005, p. 7).

Most institutions of higher education resort to scattering new student resources over the fields and hoping for the best. There would be a greater potential for success if the preparation of the campus community were happening in advance or at least simultaneously with the onboarding of this treasure trove of experience, worldviews, and distinctiveness that makes diversity such a positive influence.

A different strategy is required to nurture new faculty and staff members if one can hope to have them remain in the community for the long term. They need to be



cultivated like a fruit-bearing tree to produce year after year with the proper care and integration into the institution. Integration should not mean assimilation, however. If the benefit of having a diverse faculty, staff, and student body is to be appreciated, there is little to gain by having everyone parroting the same views. Mestenhauser (1998) stated in *Reforming the Higher Education Curriculum: Internationalizing the Campus*, “People often want others to change, but don't realize that in that process, they have to change themselves” (p. 33). There will always remain a distinctive campus culture following diversification, but one must accept that if the strategic plan goals are successful, the institution must and will change if diversification is done right.

**Theme analysis.** As I examined and analyzed the interview texts, four themes emerged from the four administrators’ experience. These themes include:

- Roadblocks: colorblind and culture-blind,
- Grassroots advocacy for diversity and inclusion,
- Innovations and involvement, and
- Baby steps to success.

**Overcoming roadblocks.** The first theme has to do with roadblocks to diversification and tends to be either faculty and staff resistance to learning more about diversity or blindness to how their actions and policies tend to be monocultural and exclusive rather than inclusive and welcoming. I found it to be true at all four institutions I interviewed that most faculty members have resistance to mandatory training. Administrator Rho from Beta Institute spoke on it extensively in the interview and seemed to have years of experience discussing this theme. Faculty are accustomed to their academic freedom and setting their agendas when it comes to scholarly work. About half of the faculty, the administrator observed, see it as a waste of time to be

required training in avenues of scholarship or interpersonal communication skills that are not their primary subjects of expertise.

I perceive openness among some parts of the campus community. I think there is faculty across all of the schools who are open to change and encouraging change and regularly seek out information and training and so forth. I think there are also, across the university, particularly among faculty . . . I think there is considerable resistance to actually changing practices. What I would say is . . . most faculty members feel like what they're doing right now works very well for them.

This attitude held by part of the faculty and possibly some staff as well reveals the colorblindness and culture-blindness about which I wrote above. Colorblindness in academia or modern civil society is supposed to be a positive development with the implication that a person's skin tone should not matter: everyone is treated equally. However, in practice, this is still far from the case as is evinced by the continued disparity between economic success, admission rates in schools where affirmative action has fallen by the wayside, and other historical factors of institutionalized racism that affect people of color compared with their White counterparts. When the faculty claim colorblindness or that they do not see a reason to change how they teach as their classrooms become more diverse, they are saying that culture and difference are invisible to them, and therefore the differences in learning styles, ways of knowing, assumptions about classroom behavior, and proper interactions between faculty members and students are largely ignored. The faculty who refuse to listen to the scholarship that states these differences are real, substantial, and can be worked with in fruitful ways hurt themselves, their students, and their teaching effectiveness in the multicultural classroom.

However, everyone has a cultural viewpoint and has room to expand from their starting point to openness to cultural plurality. If the faculty are to remain a vibrant part of

the campus community, they too will need to expand their horizons and understand something about thriving in a multicultural environment. Connerley and Pedersen (2005) bring an insightful concept to light that emphasizes both the need for preparation and one of its challenges. They state,

The most important elements of multicultural awareness can be learned but cannot be taught. Good training, however, can create the favorable conditions for multicultural awareness to occur and can provide the knowledge and skills necessary for effective interactions with ALL people. (p. xii)

Making continuing intercultural competency education part of the routine of all faculty and staff is an important innovation that will help prepare and sustain the fields for the seeds of diversity that are planted continually on today's campuses.

Staff are an important segment of the campus community who need training, as well, and do not usually have the same leverage that the faculty does to resist such directives. The model that I found to be most hopeful to engage all members of the campus community was from Delta Institute in which all trustees, administrators, faculty, and staff were engaged in annual diversity and intercultural competency training over three days.

One of the other roadblocks that exist in campus communities is a history of attempts at diversification, or some other program that had a big kickoff and then for myriad reasons did not take off as envisioned. Administrator Tau explained that this cynicism was something that had to be overcome at Gamma Institute because of a long track record of failed or only partially completed projects that had been undertaken over the years. More will be discussed about a model to win little victories by including the whole campus community in the diversification planning. However, after getting the

community behind the initiatives, change is not as difficult because change is happening with the community, not to the community.

**Grassroots advocacy.** Engaging the campus community at a grassroots level is likely to carry change and transformation further than a top-down strategic plan that is expected to be implemented by the lower echelons of employees who likely have no connection to the plan's formation. Kezar et al. (2011) mention that grassroots leadership can have a far-reaching transformational effect by working to fill in the gaps that official policy or campus climate has not yet come around to address. "Our study identified how academic and administrative staff, as employees within academic culture, have access to grassroots leadership tactics that honor the norms, values, and mission of the academy, while simultaneously challenging its enacted practices" (p. 131). The staff can mentor newly hired colleagues and build coalitions of like-minded, progressive colleagues to chip away at the institutional roadblocks to change.

Another area that can work to transform the college campus on the grassroots level is through the office of the chief executive. It is in the person of the chief executive that the vision and mission are most closely tied, and it is that chief who can champion the strategic plan implementation. Kezar et al. (2008) promote the model of a web of support that the chief executive officer can create across the institution. The executive is the orchestrator and builder of the web of connections and at each intersection of the rays and circles on the web are individuals who can work together for a common cause and are put in contact with each other by the president (p. 78). The actual implementation work is being done on more of a grassroots level, but the people performing the work

only make acquaintance through the master web builder and have her strongest support (p. 80).

**Innovations and involvement.** This theme is made from a few trends that I saw among the implementation stories including the commitment of resources, communication, and involvement of people in various aspects of implementation. Administrator Sigma spoke of a series of seminars that were offered to students and faculty alike that centered on difficult topics of discussion and showed participants how to bridge those gaps of awkwardness. At Delta Institute a communication-related subcategory under this theme involved the annual community-wide presentation and discussion on the strategic plan implementation that was used to inform the entire campus on the status of the strategic plan and what the next steps would be. Two of the interview participants commented that keeping the community informed was instrumental in the overall health and progress of their strategic plan implementations at their respective institutions.

Another aspect of this theme of innovation was the inclusion of so many people mobilizing on taskforces at Gamma Institute to envision what needed to change and then the extraordinary decision to keep the taskforces intact to become implementation teams for their ideas rather than turning over the execution to a small group or office. Administrator Tau reported, “The strategic plan really was a consensus-developed whole-community effort by all the different constituent groups and identity populations on our campus about what they felt needed to change: [what] needed to improve.”

The inclusion of so many people seemed to be a key to engage with the preparation work when the movement was campus-wide and from all levels of the community at once.

Tau acknowledged that buy-in was present because

It wasn't a top-down, or it wasn't a secret committee off somewhere that came up with a bunch of goals that no one understood why. It really emerged out of the community in a very organic way, in a grassroots kind of way.

By incorporating so many people into the project and giving them voice, vote, and responsibility to implement their decisions, the wave of energy and movement to realize the goals of the strategic plan is nearly unstoppable. Not only does it engage the community members at all levels, but it also keeps them accountable to one another.

That sort of energy is only rivaled at Delta Institute where the strategic plan implementation has been underway for many years, and their use of both regular intercultural training and meetings concerning the strategic plan kept everyone in the loop and cognizant of what their role in the implementation of the strategic plan was. No one is on the sidelines: every person has a role, and each is held accountable for the part they are to play.

**Baby steps to success.** The final theme has to do with the little victories that the participants share and the impact those have on their campus communities.

Administrator Tau uses the term baby steps referring to mediation between the taskforces that came up with the ideas to implement and the administrator of an office that might be affected by the suggested change feeling a little defensive at the external pressure to change. Tau said:

There were some [taskforce] groups that just got a little more hostile and aggressive than we wanted, and they rubbed some people the wrong way. And so, the director and I would have to do a little damage control both with the

administrator and with the group. . . . “It would be really great if we could work on these two things right here, you know, for the next few months.” And so just by taking it in what I call baby steps. If we can get them to concede to just one thing, what would it be, and let's work on that even though you've got a whole list of a hundred things over here, let's pick/start small. And so, these baby steps just started to add up and add up and to add up to what really started to amount to now as very transformative culture change because of the sheer volume of things that we've been able to accomplish.

The little successes over time gradually won the cynics who had been jaded by many years of promised change with few or no results. With each success, more of the campus community felt that the institution was serious about transformation, and everyone gained confidence in the work yet to be done.

Delta Institute has great success with its faculty and staff diversification process. At the time of the interview, 47 percent of the employees are nonwhite or from underrepresented groups. The university's strategy is to reach out to publications and job boards that target the underrepresented populations that they sought and they “committed \$50,000 a year to help with advertising for the faculty and staff to help bring them here.” The administrator also said that “we've made a lot of progress in our faculty diverse hiring. We have also provided a faculty search committee training, and it's also something we do on the staff side. It was something that we weren't doing before.” Back on campus, they simultaneously had been preparing the community by educating them about diversity, and there were administrators who were taking responsibility for the success of this outreach effort.

This vice president was held accountable and looking at the efforts that we made for our diversity recruitment, not only diversifying improvements but to make sure it's a highly qualified, diverse faculty and staff that we're bringing on board. So that was one of the things we want to make sure people . . . understood: that you didn't have to compromise quality for diversity.

Most of these institutions have come to know that diversity is more than a metric or ratio of minority members added to the faculty, staff, and student body. And it is more than narrowing the inclusivity by whatever measurement, be it by gender, socioeconomic background, ethnicity, religious tradition, sexual orientation, etc. The target is not to assimilate the diverse candidates and make them into the majority campus culture and community. All these options have been tried, and none have resulted in more than a temporary and superficial diversification of the community. The four institutions are in different phases of their transformation and as Tau said a few times in the interview, “it will take a long time. A long time.”

### **Best Practices**

The best practices for creating a campus climate that is welcoming of and open to diversity that I have gleaned from this study are the following:

**Get everyone on board.** Preparing the campus community by beginning to prepare the fields for planting is essential. It will take a long time and requires people to do some self-analysis and introspection. Everyone will not be at the same stage of intercultural sensitivity development, and it is not a training or awareness that can be rushed. Offering regular classes to everyone on the campus community is important. This should become the new normal.

**Have the right people in the room.** A related practice is to hire the right people who are already diversity-minded. Kezar et al. (2008) say,

Hiring staff who deeply care about this is also perhaps as important or more important than stating a vision because—You can’t be everywhere. And we interview for those people. We say this is who we are as an institution. We explicitly talk about diversity. One of the questions I say is, what is your



experience with a diverse student body and how might you approach this? And so we really consciously look for that. (pp. 80-81)

**Make diversification a whole-community effort.** Since this is a transformation of the whole community, the faculty, staff, students, administrators, and trustees must all be involved in creating the vision and securing its implementation. Having a leader with a strong vision for diversification is also important, but this executive need not develop the whole plan. Nor should top leaders be afraid to incorporate the views of the staff who make the university run or the faculty who teach in the college and advise its students. They live and breathe the institution daily, and their front-line input is priceless. They are also the ones who will be implementing the plan so their involvement from the start will ensure buy-in, a passion for the task, and hope for the future of their institution as this long process makes its way to becoming the new status quo.

### **Pitfalls and Gaps**

In addition to the mirror opposites of the best practices above, the following are gaps in training or common pitfalls that hinder the creation of an inclusive, welcoming campus.

**Lack of communication.** Communication and meeting together as a campus community is essential to dispel rumors and ensure that everyone is on the same page. If something is not going as planned, it is best to talk to the campus community about it rather than sweeping it under the rug. Most of the staff will know about it already so waiting to communicate about something seldom does much good.

Mayhew, Grunwald, and Dey (2006) concluded that “How an institution represents its commitment to diversity is . . . an important consideration for . . .

understanding how staff members perceive their institution's climate for diversity" (p. 83). Staff perceptions, they believe, can be influenced by an institution using positive media messaging on diversity issues: messaging that demonstrates the successes of diversification factors that are important to various constituencies of the staff including women, minorities, and the health of the department in which the employee works (its overall openness to diversity and inclusivity) (p. 83). A lack of clear communication or sending the wrong messages to the wrong constituents can result in a negative perception of diversity for the campus climate.

**Training for all.** Offering training to only those who volunteer is not very effective because most of the people who attend these trainings are already allies of diversification and inclusion and one ends up preaching to the choir. There are creative ways that training can be done and incorporated into many types of meetings and circumstances from annual faculty meetings to staff meetings and planning retreats as well as well-placed newsletters or articles in the campus newspaper. Make the faculty and staff aware that they are responsible for their intercultural competency development. The future of the institution depends on it, as does their livelihood.

**Unshared governance.** Making strategic plans behind closed doors and then expecting the regular members to implement it, especially when it affects fundamental human interactions and perceptions about race, communication, prejudice, openness to ambiguity, and being able to see the value and strength in multiple ways of doing things at the same time is a recipe for moderate success at best. Kezar et al. (2008) state,

Institutional agendas and strategies for pursuing diversity efforts are often determined by a small group in the upper echelons of the hierarchy, not a wider, more inclusive process involving those who need to implement the strategies.

Even if such inclusive processes are used to develop the campus agenda, the strategies for their implementation tend to be structural, focused on resource allocation, evaluation, and presidential commissions, and ignore other organizational dimensions, such as the experiences of individuals affected, the interactions in the implementation process, and the importance of organizational culture, symbols and meaning making. (pp. 72-73)

This scenario, frequently repeated in higher education, ignores the valuable contributions of hundreds of people who intimately understand the needs and challenges of the campus culture and how to improve its climate. Administrators would be well served to open the doors of governance to their own best resources: the human capital that brings life and strength to the institution.

### **Future Research**

Developing a campus climate open to and supportive of diversity and inclusivity is a multifaceted task with many moving parts. No solution will benefit every institution in the same way as another because of the complexity of campus climate, composition, prevailing culture, and openness to change within the community. However, the strategies of openness and inclusion of a broad spectrum of the campus community in the effort to plan and execute diversification seem to have the greatest promise. More research into the methods that have been successful at various institutions, while considering their unique challenges and circumstances that made their use of this model most effective would benefit the future implementation of diversity and inclusivity plans.

Additionally, research that takes a closer look at the diversification process, limitations, and opportunities for staff members, as has been done for faculty and students, is well overdue. Scholarly papers are written mostly by degree-holding professors in many disciplines or administrators in student affairs, so their subject matter tends to be

limited to curriculum reform, faculty diversification, or student diversification. There are seldom any scholarly works written about the working conditions, composition, or diversification of the staff in higher education. There is a huge gap in the investigation of staff training, management, and diversification in higher education, aside from a select few doctoral dissertations and master's theses like this one. A treasure trove of research possibilities awaits, and academe has a great need to address this gap in scholarship.

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## APPENDIX A. EMAIL RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

### Creating a Climate to Realize Institutional Diversification Goals: A Phenomenological Study of Campus Diversification

You are invited to participate in a research study that will involve an hour-long interview with me, Ross Canning, a graduate student researcher at the University of the Pacific, School for International Studies. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because of your valuable perspective on the diversification and inclusion efforts at your academy.

The purpose of this research is to review implementation and best practices, especially around staff and faculty training, at institutions that have adopted a strategic plan goal of diversification and inclusion, most notably to:

- Investigate your academic community's response to the adoption of the Strategic Plan for Diversity & Inclusion;
- Review the successes and challenges of creating a campus climate of inclusion and diversity;
- Identify training or programs that target existing employees to develop/ improve/ sustain a culture of diversity and inclusion; and
- Identify best practices and note possible gaps in the implementation of strategic diversification and inclusion plans at an institution of higher learning.

Please reply to this email and let me know your interest to participate. Your office will be contacted to schedule an interview and I will provide a list of question topics for your review. Additionally, I will include an Informed Consent document which outlines the procedures and goals of this study, your rights, and permission to interview you.

The time commitment should not exceed two hours total including a one-hour interview and a possible follow-up call or emails to clarify your responses for my thesis report. The interview should be scheduled as soon as possible.

If you have any questions about the research at any time, please call me at 310-402-8453, or contact my thesis advisor, Dr. Kent Warren, at 503-297-4622.

Thank you for your interest and efforts to support diversity in higher education.

## **APPENDIX B. INFORMED CONSENT**

### **Creating a Climate to Realize Institutional Diversification Goals: A Phenomenological Study of Campus Diversification**

You are invited to participate in a research study that will involve a one-on-one interview with me, Ross Canning, a graduate student researcher. The interview, with your consent, will be audio recorded and transcriptions will be made and stored in an encrypted device outside of your home institution.

I am a student at the University of the Pacific, School for International Studies. You were selected as a participant in this study because of your role and responsibilities within your institution to hire, train, and/or develop programs to promote and improve the diversification of the employees in, and culture of, your academy.

The purpose of this phenomenological research is to review between four and six universities and colleges in California that have set diversification of the institution as a strategic plan or mission goal and review the steps taken by each institution to implement the goal, identify best practices, and note areas that are possibly overlooked. Best practices for diversification of the institution at every level will be reviewed and contrasted with recommendations in academic literature and reported successful experiences. With your agreement to participate, I have included a list of question topics for your review (see below) and invite you to sign this Informed Consent document which outlines the procedures and goals of this study.

You will be invited to sit with the interviewer and answer questions pertaining to the programs, discussions, and initiatives to improve institutional diversity – especially with regard to the training offered for existing staff and faculty to promote a climate conducive to successful diversification. Your participation in this study will include a one-hour interview and a follow-up call or emails to clarify your recorded interview responses for a written thesis. The time commitment should not exceed two hours total.

There are fewer than minimal risks involved for you because your identity will be anonymous. You will be given the opportunity to look at what I have written from the interview before the thesis is submitted to University of the Pacific on or before April 1, 2018. Additionally, there are some benefits to this research: particularly that a study of best practices and gaps in training may be identified that may provide chances to improve

If you have any questions about the research at any time, please call me at 310-402-8453, or contact my thesis advisor, Dr. Kent Warren, at 503-297-4622. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project please call the Research & Graduate Studies Office, University of the Pacific at 209-946-7716. In the event of a research-related injury, please contact your regular medical provider and bill through your normal insurance carrier, then contact the Office of Research & Graduate Studies.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and your decision whether or not to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, that you will receive a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies.

The results of the study will be published as a master's thesis at the University of the Pacific and will be available for public viewing after May 2018.

You will be offered a copy of this signed form for your records.

Signature

Date

\_\_\_\_\_



### APPENDIX C. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the campus climate like at your institution among administration, faculty, staff, and students (regarding collegiality and openness to organizational change, etc.)?
2. What was the staff and faculty view of diversity before the strategic plan was adopted?
3. This institution has a published strategic goal/vision statement that includes a call to diversify the college/university. Tell me about training programs or initiatives that target existing employees to develop/ improve/ sustain a culture of diversity and inclusion.
4. How is diversification affecting staff and faculty now that the strategic plan is being implemented?
5. In what ways or what is some evidence that the administration, faculty, staff, and students open to organizational change?
6. In what way has the campus climate changed since the implementation of the strategic plan began?
7. What will the campus climate feel like ten years from now? – What do you think the
  - a. (for students, faculty, administration)
8. (Optional) If there are any thoughts or ideas that have come up that have not been covered, please feel free to share them.