



Harvard Summer Institute on Admissions: Best Practices from the National Campus Diversity Project

June 23, 2004
Cambridge, MA

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Goals of the National Campus Diversity Project

- Identify best practices and characteristics found in successful diversity initiatives
- Locate programs that have improved academic achievement of underrepresented minority (URM) students and examine the components of these
- Examine admissions policies and practices of schools



Research Questions

- How do students, faculty, and staff describe...
 - the campus' efforts for inclusion and success of underrepresented minority students, faculty, and staff?
 - Campus climate (the social, political, and cultural environment) and inter-racial group relations?
 - Success in providing diversity in curricula, and teaching and learning?
 - Success in providing co-curricular diversity programming?
 - Perceptions of institutional transformation?

Research Sample

- Started with 101 schools that met our criteria
- Narrowed down to 50
- NCDP has visited 28 campuses to date
- From the 28 campuses that we have visited, we have interviewed:
 - 9 college presidents
 - 12 vice presidents or provosts
 - 120 faculty members
 - 250 administrators
 - Over 400 students



What constitutes a "model program?"

- How successfully a campus strives for inclusion and success of URM populations
- How students perceive campus success in providing curricula covering diversity issues
- Administrative and institutional transformation
- In addition, successful or model programs exhibit the following attributes
 - higher than average retention rates for URM students
 - higher than average rates of achievement among URM students
 - higher than average rates of multicultural programming in curricula.





Students: Recruitment Activities

- Minority student recruitment officers on staff
- Admissions office sponsors special recruitment programming
- Contacts and links to minority students
- Student's college prep program
- University has and supports a Minority Alumni Recruitment network




Financial Aid

- Need-blind financial aid
- Race-based scholarships (McNair, Mellon, HEOP)
 - Programs are under fire in the anti-affirmative action era
- Merit Awards
 - “Buying Students” (UVA, Northwestern, Agnes Scott)
- High school-based scholarships (UT-Austin, Berkeley, UCLA)



Academic Enhancement Programs for URM Students

- Model programs create a “culture of achievement” for URM students who might otherwise associate academic achievement with social isolation
- Instructors explicitly state that high standards are the criteria for success, challenging “stereotype threat”(Steele, 1999)
- Virtually all model programs were in the SMET disciplines



University of Texas, Yale University, & Rice University

- Texas' "Emerging Scholars" (Derived from the University of California-Berkeley)
- Yale's STARS Program
- Rice's Spend a Summer With a Scientist Program
- Carnegie Mellon, Mt. Holyoke, Occidental, Northwestern, Stanford, the University of Florida, the University of Miami, Wellesley, and Williams College all have specific, very successful SMET programs for URM and female students



Institutional Vision and Transformation

- Leadership, vision, financial resources, college institutional research and evaluation combine to form the Institutional capital of the college
 - Financial resources in our cohorts appear to play less of a role
- Mission statements promoting diversity attached to a strategic plan or a commission updating such a plan
- Campus assessment of various strengths and weaknesses with regard to diversity, or campus climate
- Supportive, vocal Presidents have specific task forces, commissions, or better yet, administrative offices dedicated to follow through on strategic planning initiatives



Mt Holyoke College & Occidental College

- High structural diversity at **Mt Holyoke** and **Occidental**
- Institutional vision follows practice over time
- Faculty recruitment is strategic
- Students, administrators, and faculty know and understand the efforts at these campuses via participation and information sharing
- **Dartmouth College** (Hanover, NH) is making strides from reactive to proactive strategies to address diversity



University of Maryland & Princeton University

- Semester-long cross-cultural dialogue and leadership retreats at **Maryland** (similar programs are also at **Arizona State**, **UMass**, and the **University of Michigan**)
- Sustained Dialogue at **Princeton** (similar programs at the **University of Virginia** and **Mt. Holyoke**)



Aspects of Curriculum Transformation

- There are a few full ethnic/specialty departments (e.g., African American, Latino, and Women's Studies) that have a range of courses
- Transformation is typically spurred by diverse faculty
- A very few schools have mandatory enrollment in one or more courses that focus on social justice issues; or history, status, achievement of diverse groups



Teaching and Learning Challenges (for students)

- Negative Class Room Experiences
 - Native Informants
 - Perceptions of White Professors
 - Perceptions of Faculty of Color
 - Challenges from White students and faculty



Challenges for URM professors

- Lack of community due to few professors and administrators of color
- Administrative burden of being “point person for diversity”
- Overextension in being many things for many people – colleagues, students and community members alike
- The faculty reward system





Positive Teaching and Learning Experiences

- Faculty-Student Engagement
- Creates the space for Diverse Perspectives
- White students have the chance to explore assumptions
- Student-to-Student Engagement
- Attentiveness to how students are experiencing the learning environment



Student Concerns

- ‘Mainstream’ campus population doesn’t attend or appreciate events
- Concern about retention of their minority peers
- Inadequate response by Senior Administration
- General isolation from faculty and administrators
- Classroom experiences need enhancement
- Frequently diversity program directors and staff are not viewed as “mainstream”
- Social isolation
- Exhaustion about “doing it all”



Summarizing Thoughts

- More “model programs” than “model institutions”
- Students of color experience the institution differently from mainstream students – despite programming

Attributes of Successful Programs

- ❖ Vocal and active commitment from senior administrators with regard to diversity initiatives
- ❖ Institutionalized administrative support for such initiatives (e.g., Offices of Multicultural Affairs)
- ❖ Opportunities for meaningful cross-cultural dialogue through community service or intercultural dialogue programs



Attributes of Successful Programs

- ❖ Programs targeted specifically for promoting the achievement of URM students
- ❖ Faculty and staff training and support on diversity issues
- ❖ Majority student engagement in events and in the classroom
- ❖ Crisis prevention and intervention through explicit protocols and preventive education

