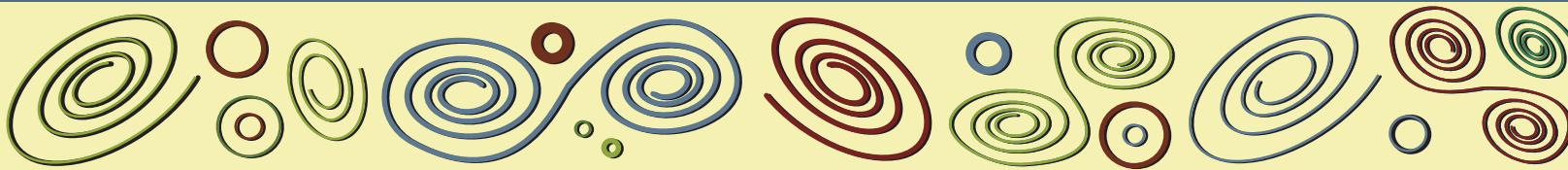


Making Excellence **INCLUSIVE**

Preparing Students and Campuses for an Era of Greater Expectations

Making Diversity Work on Campus: A Research-Based Perspective

By Jeffrey F. Milem, Mitchell J. Chang,
and Anthony Lising Antonio



One in a series of three papers commissioned as part of the Making Excellence Inclusive initiative



Association
of American
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Introduction to the Series

Background

The educational environment following the recent Supreme Court decisions on **affirmative action** calls for colleges and universities to connect their educational quality and inclusion efforts more fundamentally and comprehensively than ever before. This challenge, however, presents a set of difficult questions. What will the next generation of work on inclusion and excellence look like? How will both our thinking and our actions need to shift? Who will need to be involved? How will we know we are accomplishing our goals?

This introduction prefaces three papers commissioned by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) to respond to these questions and to provide an intellectual backdrop for its new initiative, Making Excellence Inclusive.¹ With initial funding from the Ford Foundation, this multiyear initiative is designed to help campuses: (a) integrate their diversity and quality efforts, (b) situate this work at the core of institutional functioning, and **(c) realize the educational benefits available to students and to the institution when this integration is done well and is sustained over time**. We feel strongly, and evidence is beginning to show, that integrating diversity and quality initiatives—as with the forging of elements into an **alloy**—produces something that is both different than its constituent elements *and* stronger and more durable.

As an “alloy,” Inclusive Excellence re-envisioning both quality and diversity. It reflects a striving for excellence in higher education that has been made more inclusive by decades of work to infuse diversity into recruiting, admissions, and hiring; into the curriculum and cocurriculum; and into administrative structures and practices. It also embraces newer forms of excellence, and expanded ways to measure excellence, that take into account research on learning and brain functioning, the assessment movement, and more nuanced accountability structures. Likewise, diversity and inclusion efforts move beyond numbers of students or numbers of programs as end goals. Instead, they are multilayered processes through which we achieve excellence in learning; research and teaching; student development; local and global community engagement; workforce development; and more.

¹ We also use the term “Inclusive Excellence” to capture this notion.

Mapping the Future of Inclusion and Excellence

Each of the three commissioned papers— *Making Diversity Work on Campus: A Research-Based Perspective*; *Achieving Equitable Educational Outcomes with All Students: The Institution’s Roles and Responsibilities*; and *Toward a Model of Inclusive Excellence and Change in Postsecondary Institutions*—addresses one or more aspects of the work that is needed to comprehensively link diversity and quality. Collectively, they offer readers fresh perspectives on, and evidence-based approaches to, embedding this work into campus culture and sustaining this work over time.

In the first paper, *Making Diversity Work on Campus: A Research-Based Perspective*, Jeffrey Milem, Mitchell Chang, and Anthony Antonio discuss recent empirical evidence that demonstrates the educational benefits of diverse learning environments. The evidence, gathered on behalf of the University of Michigan in its defense of its affirmative action policies before the Supreme Court, indicates that diversity must be carried out in intentional ways in order to accrue educational benefits for students and for the institution. The authors argue persuasively for a conception of diversity as a process toward better learning rather than as an outcome—a certain percentage of students of color, a certain number of programs—to be checked off a list. They also provide numerous suggestions for how to “engage” diversity in the service of learning, ranging from recruiting a compositionally diverse student body, faculty, and staff; to developing a positive campus climate; to transforming curriculum, cocurriculum, and pedagogy to reflect and support goals for inclusion and excellence.

In the second paper, *Achieving Equitable Educational Outcomes with All Students: The Institution’s Roles and Responsibilities*, Georgia Bauman, Leticia Tomas Bustillos, Estela Bensimon, Christopher Brown, and RoSusan Bartee discuss the responsibility that institutions have to examine the impact that traditional higher education practices have on those students historically underserved by higher education, including African American, Latino/a, and American Indian students. With the persistent achievement gap facing African American and Latino/a students as a starting point, the authors argue that if we do not commit to discovering what does and does not work for historically underserved students, we run the very real risk of failing a significant portion of today’s college students—even as we diversify our campuses to a greater extent than ever before. To demonstrate the kind of institutional commitment that is

needed, the authors present one campus’s process for systematically monitoring and addressing the inequities they discovered.

In the third paper, *Toward a Model of Inclusive Excellence in Postsecondary Institutions*, Damon Williams, Joseph Berger, and Shederick McClendon offer a framework for comprehensive organizational change to help campuses achieve Inclusive Excellence. The authors review several dimensions of organizational culture that must be engaged to achieve this goal and discuss a method to help campuses monitor changes that might come from introducing new systems and new practices. The resulting framework, perhaps most importantly, helps campus leaders focus simultaneously on the “big picture”—an academy *that systematically leverages diversity for student learning and institutional excellence*—and the myriad individual pieces that contribute to that picture (see box 1).

Box 1. From diversity as an isolated initiative to diversity as a catalyst for educational excellence

Isolated Initiative: Increase racial/ethnic diversity of student body

Responds to:

- Calls from business and community leaders to strengthen workforce diversity
- Desire to redress past societal inequities
- General feeling that diversifying student body is the “right thing to do”

But does not address:

- Compositional diversity of other parts of campus community (faculty, staff, administrators)
- Differences between predominantly white institutions and predominantly minority-serving institutions
- Campus climate once students and others arrive on campus
- Students’ multiple identities: race and ethnicity intersecting with gender, class, sexual orientation, national/regional origin, ability, and religion
- Curriculum transformation to include perspectives, sources, and modes of inquiry heretofore left out of the academy
- How compositional diversity influences classroom and cocurricular practices, and ultimately, student learning

Catalyst for Educational Excellence: Increase racial/ethnic diversity of student body as part of comprehensive plan to make excellence inclusive

Also responds to:

- Need to enact diversity in intentional ways that enhance students’ intercultural competency, cognitive complexity, and ability to work in diverse groups (Milem et al.)
- Need to address equity in academic achievement for all students, with particular attention paid to groups historically underrepresented in higher education (Bauman et al.)
- Need to engage entire campus community in conceiving of, carrying out, and assessing a comprehensive process to enact diverse learning environments (Williams et al.)

Defining “Inclusive Excellence”

At the outset of this initiative, AAC&U advanced an operational definition of **Inclusive Excellence**. This definition is intended to be flexible enough to be “localized” by a campus while also retaining basic principles to guide a national movement and to connect campuses in these efforts. The definition consists of four primary elements:

1. *A focus on student intellectual and social development.* Academically, it means offering the best possible course of study for the context in which the education is offered.²
2. *A purposeful development and utilization of organizational resources to enhance student learning.* Organizationally, it means establishing an environment that challenges each student to achieve academically at high levels and each member of the campus to contribute to learning and knowledge development.
3. *Attention to the cultural differences learners bring to the educational experience and that enhance the enterprise.*³
4. *A welcoming community that engages all of its diversity in the service of student and organizational learning.*

Each set of authors received this definition when they were commissioned to write the papers, and each connected it to existing and emerging research on subjects as varied as the educational benefits of diversity, the achievement gap, and organizational change. We expect this reworking to occur in the field also, as campus leaders juxtapose the definition against institutional mission, policies, and practices. At the same time, we believe the definition is incomplete without all four elements in play, and the large questions posed at the beginning of this introduction cannot be answered without having all four present.

Why Now?

Making Excellence Inclusive builds on major AAC&U initiatives—most notably, Greater Expectations and American Commitments—and ties together the association’s long-standing interest in educational quality in the undergraduate curriculum, in diversity and civic

² “Best” here implies the provision of qualified instructors and sufficient resources—including other learners—as well as a sequence of study that is coherent and challenging, and one that comprehensively addresses the student learning goals of the particular institution. Contexts vary from preschool to postgraduate education, by affiliation (e.g., religious or secular), and by sector (e.g., elementary, high schools, community colleges, research universities).

³ Cultural differences include race/ethnicity (e.g., Latino, Caucasian, Asian/Pacific Islander, African American, American Indian), class, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, first language, physical and learning ability, and learning style.

engagement, and in preparing faculty to deepen students' learning. It is designed to address the following four dilemmas confronting higher education today.

Islands of Innovations with Too Little Influence on Institutional Structures

Hardly any campus is without some tangible, and often impressive, number of initiatives to help create more inclusive environments, more expansive intellectual horizons, or more opportunities for outreach to the larger community. Yet how does a campus coordinate these multiple efforts so they have a greater impact on all students, and on the institution as a whole? One frequently can identify educational innovations, but rarely can one detect structures that link them. Accordingly, the impact of these innovations is isolated rather than pervasive. And with so many individual diversity initiatives springing up like daffodils in springtime, people long for coherence, cohesion, and collaboration. They also want to figure out how to “get it right” as they move through this astounding transition to an inclusive academy that strives for diversity *and* excellence.

The Disconnect between Diversity and Educational Excellence

Although we know meaningful engagement with diversity benefits students educationally, little has been done to create a comprehensive framework for excellence that incorporates diversity at its core. Similarly, new research about how to help diverse and differentially prepared students succeed has not yet provoked widespread change across higher education. And diversity is not typically a focus at any level in “quality improvement” efforts. As a result, education leaders routinely work on diversity initiatives within one committee on campus and work on strengthening the quality of the educational experience within another. This disconnect serves students—and all of education—poorly.

Disparities in Academic Success across Groups

There has been significant progress in expanding access to college for underrepresented students. Yet many of these students experience differential retention rates and inequities in academic achievement. This troubling achievement gap, especially across specific racial and ethnic groups and across different income levels, signals failure, not only for the individual

students affected but also for the colleges and universities they attend and for the educational system as a whole.

The “Post-Michigan” Environment

The U.S. Supreme Court’s landmark decisions in the recent University of Michigan cases affirm the value of diversity when tied to the educational purpose and mission of an institution. At this historic juncture, it is imperative that higher education leaders seize the opportunity to help colleges and universities—and the public—better understand how diversity and educational quality are intertwined. Despite the Court’s affirmation, those opposed to affirmative action continue to bring lawsuits, organize anti-affirmative action referenda, and influence public opinion. While many campuses feel pressure to move into “compliance mode,” AAC&U aims to help institutions establish diversity as a core component in achieving desired student learning outcomes and put diversity and inclusion efforts at the center of their decision-making. In order to reach this academic higher ground, diversity, inclusion, and equity initiatives must be so fundamentally linked to educational mission that to ignore them in everyday practice would jeopardize institutional vitality.

A Comprehensive Response

Initially, Making Excellence Inclusive seeks to bring about comprehensive educational reform based on research and theory not only about “what works” to help *all* students achieve new forms and levels of excellence, but also about what makes for responsive, educationally powerful colleges and universities. In addition to commissioning these three papers, AAC&U has organized several other “foundational” activities. We have held thirteen forums around the country where key education stakeholders discussed how our conception of Inclusive Excellence can serve as a catalyst for institutional renewal and to identify promising practices toward that end. We launched a pilot project with nine institutions to test the usefulness of new frameworks for inclusion and institutional change, and we are starting to build a collection of practical resources to help campuses enact these frameworks.

Looking ahead, we plan to work with a broad range of postsecondary institutions to make Inclusive Excellence a signature element of America’s best colleges and universities. We will engage campus leaders in refining our current definition of Inclusive Excellence and ask them to

document their challenges and successes as we work together to make excellence inclusive. In the process, we will continue to build our resource collection by featuring campus “success stories” and developing tools that reflect the latest research “what works” in fostering inclusive and educationally powerful learning environments.

Conclusion

The three papers, taken together, form a rich dialogue where similarities and dissimilarities arise and information that is gleaned from one is made richer by the others. We hope they will engender this same kind of interplay between people on campuses, as well as provide them with practical evidence, support, and guidance for this ongoing work. The efforts needed to make excellence inclusive cannot be done by any person, unit, or campus alone. Nor will it look the same everywhere. What individuals and institutions *will* share are its hallmarks—an ongoing, systemic awareness of the “state of the campus” and the “state of higher education” regarding the interconnectedness of diversity and quality, an active process of engaging diversity in the service of learning, and the courage to reflect on our efforts and to improve them where needed. Please visit AAC&U’s Web site (www.aacu.org) for updates about the Making Excellence Inclusive initiative, including the evolving resource collection that will support our shared endeavor of helping all students develop the intellectual, social, emotional, cultural, and civic capacities needed to lead in this new century.

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***Making Diversity Work on Campus:
A Research-Based Perspective***

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Introduction

“We expect that 25 years from now, the use of racial preferences will no longer be necessary to further the interest approved today.”

— Justice Sandra O’Connor in *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 123 S. Ct. at 2347, which affirmed the use of race in admissions decisions at the University of Michigan Law School

In July 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court determined that diversity is a compelling governmental interest that justifies certain narrow considerations of race in admissions. The Court noted that diversity in the student body furthers the broad educational mission of institutions of higher education by building students’ new knowledge, advancing their existing knowledge, and preparing them to better serve society as workers, citizens, and leaders. These educational outcomes associated with diversity helped to persuade a majority of the Court that it is in the best interest of the government to allow for certain race-conscious admissions practices that enable institutions of higher education to better fulfill their overarching mission. Allowing for such practices is particularly important since our increasingly diverse nation will eventually rely upon students educated in these institutions to fuel the nation’s economy and to shape its moral and civic life.

The Supreme Court’s understanding of the important role that diversity plays in fulfilling the educational mission of higher education institutions was based in part on a growing body of empirical evidence that establishes how diversity enhances learning outcomes for students. The importance and usefulness of this research—which focuses primarily on the educational experiences of students who attend historically white institutions—is not limited to the legal case for race-conscious admissions practices. Findings from the research also point to a number of significant implications for institutional practice, particularly if educators are truly committed to realizing the educational benefits associated with enrolling a racially and ethnically diverse student body.

The goal of this paper is to synthesize the existing empirical evidence about the educational benefits of racial and ethnic diversity on campus and, based on that evidence, to offer a conceptual map of key practices that help to maximize the benefits for students. The evidence we summarize and the practical steps we recommend to institutional leaders who want

to achieve the benefits of diversity support the concept of inclusive excellence described in the introduction to this series of commissioned papers.

In the pages that follow, we present a working definition of diversity. We then highlight key findings from the empirical literature on the educational benefits of diversity for undergraduate students. It is clear from this literature that the context in which diversity is enacted matters a great deal. Hence, following this summary we discuss a framework for understanding campus racial climate to assist campus leaders seeking to achieve the educational benefits associated with diversity. We conclude the paper by outlining the types of processes that campus leaders can implement to realize these benefits. Through this discussion, we hope to move the discourse about diversity from one that conceptualizes diversity as a demographic outcome to one that views diversity as a process that influences a set of critical educational outcomes.

Defining Diversity as Engagement

In his exploration of American schooling and civic life, Stephen Macedo asserts that “diversity is the great issue of our time” (2000, x). Under this broad term, Macedo notes, educators have advanced numerous programs and practices to heighten awareness of **gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation**. For him, the driving force of diversity is a “never-ending contest over what defines us as a nation,” and although he believes that many forms of diversity are important to a democratic society, he cautions that “diversity is not always a value” (x) and should not be accepted uncritically. Because many themes and interests constitute diversity work and are connected to particular forms of practice, we are sensitive to Macedo’s caution. We do not believe that institutions invoke diversity for the same reasons. The varied institutional agendas surrounding diversity are not equally beneficial to students, and some are poorly conceived and misguided.

Since our primary concerns here are to discuss ways of maximizing the educational benefits of diversity in college learning environments and to underscore the need for certain race-conscious admissions practices, we will define diversity with a focus on race and ethnicity and with an eye toward campus process and practice.¹ This narrower definition does not imply that other ways of conceiving diversity are inappropriate or less important, although some forms of

¹ Hence, in the pages that follow, the term “diversity” should be taken to mean racial/ethnic diversity. When it adds clarification to a particular discussion, the longer phrase is used.

practice, as we will discuss, are inadequate. Given our focus on process, we define diversity as engagement across racial and ethnic lines comprised of a broad and varied set of activities and initiatives. This definition is not only consistent with our own research about effective institutional practices and change processes; it also suggests that institutions must think beyond mission and value statements in developing and implementing a plan that will make an appreciable difference.

In defining diversity, we must account for some common usages of the term in higher education. Perhaps the most common use of the term is to describe student body composition. Given that most student bodies are overwhelmingly white, this is clearly an important consideration for any engagement with diversity. At the same time, employing diversity strictly to describe or change the composition of a community is inadequate. One limitation is that when diversity is understood only in numerical terms, calling for greater diversity can lead to an uneasy line of questioning.

For example, during Supreme Court hearings regarding the University of Michigan cases, Justice Antonin Scalia asked, “How much diversity is enough?” This question is a powerful example of the “Catch-22” of relying exclusively on numbers regarding campus diversity. If we were to respond by citing a specific number, it would suggest that we were applying quotas, which were ruled unconstitutional in the *Bakke* decision (*Regents* 1978). Yet not responding to this question with a precise answer raises questions about whether or not an approach to achieving campus diversity is narrow enough to be legally permissible. It is also difficult to respond to this question when we consider what we know, and do not know, about racial dynamics on college campuses. For example, even on campuses that appear to be quite compositionally diverse, there can be significant problems associated with the campus racial climate—especially when specific racial and ethnic groups are dramatically underrepresented in the environment. These related problems can diminish the educational benefits linked to enrolling a diverse student population.²

In addition to student body composition, diversity is often equated with notions of multiculturalism, and in application, the terms overlap. However, we are mindful that the terms

² Moreover, there is evidence that different students benefit in different ways from diversity on campus. In her expert witness testimony in the University of Michigan lawsuits, Patricia Gurin noted that while all students benefited from the exposure they had to students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, it was also important for students of color to have opportunities for same-race contact.

and their respective foundations are not interchangeable. Conflating the terms can easily lead to a mischaracterization of diversity efforts as recognition or celebration of different cultures that lacks a more substantive agenda of changing existing arrangements of power. Thus, in addition to conceiving of diversity in terms of composition and as an exploration of differences, we would add to the definition an interest in opposing unfair forms of exclusion, prejudice, and discrimination. According to Macedo (2000, 3), “At its best, talk of diversity . . . reminds us of the extent to which the promise of freedom and equality for all remains a work in progress: only partially realized, only partially understood” (see also AAC&U 1995a).

Indeed, perhaps more importantly for our definition of diversity, we firmly believe that **diversity is fundamentally about work — very time-consuming and difficult work**. This work takes into consideration various levels and dimensions of the campus racial climate and an institution’s context in shaping student learning outcomes. When applied in a systematic and multidimensional way, this definition significantly increases the chances of realizing the educational benefits of diversity.

Research Synthesis

In the last three years, several reviews have been published about how racial and ethnic diversity within higher education provides educational benefits for undergraduates. Among the most comprehensive are “The Benefits of Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Higher Education” (Milem and Hakuta 2000), “College Environments, Diversity, and Student Learning” (Hurtado et al. 2003), and “The Educational Benefits of Diversity: Evidence from Multiple Sectors” (Milem 2003). Collectively, these reviews show that diversity-related benefits are far ranging, spanning from individual students and the institutions in which they enroll to private enterprise, the economy, and the broader society. Because there is **remarkable consistency** among these reviews with regard to the empirical studies considered and the conclusions drawn from the studies, we will summarize some of the major findings rather than replicate their efforts in documenting the research. We will then add to this summary the findings from several newer studies that the authors of this paper have either individually or collaboratively conducted.

Compositional Diversity and Learning

One important conclusion that emerges from the three reviews is that the vitality, stimulation, and educational potential of an institution are directly related to the composition of its student body, faculty, and staff. Kanter's (1977) early work demonstrated that the distribution of individuals in particular organizational contexts plays a crucial role in shaping the dynamics of social interactions that occur in those contexts. With regard to higher education institutions, Chang (1999) found that the likelihood that students will engage with students who are from different backgrounds increases as the compositional diversity of the campus increases. Hurtado, Dey, and Treviño (1994) showed that campuses with high proportions of white students provide limited opportunities for cross-racial interaction and restrict student learning experiences across social and cultural lines.

On college campuses that lack a diverse population of students, underrepresented groups have an increased chance of being viewed as tokens. Tokenism contributes to the enhanced visibility of underrepresented groups, the exaggeration of group differences, and the alteration of images to fit existing stereotypes (Kanter 1977). On predominantly white campuses, the fact that students of color are underrepresented can produce both negative social stigma (e.g., see Fries-Britt 1998; Fries-Britt and Turner 2001, 2002; Steele 1992, 1997, 1998; Steele and Aronson 1995) and "minority status" stressors (Prillerman, Myers, and Smedley 1989; Smedley, Myers, and Harrell 1993) that adversely affect student achievement.

However, campus communities that are more racially and ethnically diverse tend to create more richly varied educational experiences that enhance students' learning and better prepare them for participation in a democratic society. This richness is due in part to the continuing role that race and ethnicity plays in shaping opportunities and experiences in U.S. society. Individuals of different racial and ethnic groups often have differing opinions and viewpoints about a wide range of issues. In a recent study, Chang (2003) confirmed that there are significant differences in viewpoints between racial groups at the point of college entry on a variety of pressing contemporary issues. Although individuals of any given race hold a range of opinions, the average viewpoints of each group differ. There are statistically significant differences of opinion between racial groups on important social and political issues such as the death penalty, consumer protection, health care, drug testing, taxation, free speech, criminal rights, and the prevalence of discrimination. Although this study shows broad racial differences

in viewpoints at the student level, it is not clear from the findings how those differences play out at the institutional level.

Also in this line of inquiry, Chang conducted two studies (Chang 2002a; Chang, Seltzer, and Kim 2001) that examined how changes in the racial composition of the undergraduate population affected the variance in student opinions at the institutional level. These studies showed that there are consistent links between the racial composition of campuses and several educationally relevant domains of opinions—for example, the extent to which a student feels that racial inequity is a prevalent issue that requires remedies such as affirmative action and the degree to which a student endorses more lenient treatment and punishment of criminals in our society. The divergence of opinions in these domains increased as the proportion of underrepresented students in an entering class increased. The effects were significant in both the public and private educational sectors, even after holding constant other factors that might confound the effects of underrepresented student enrollment or that are considered for admitting students (institutional selectivity and size, students' parental educational level, hours worked for pay, level of participation in high school clubs and sports, geographic diversity, etc.).

It appears from these findings that increasing the compositional diversity of a campus by increasing the representation of students from various racial and ethnic groups leads to a broader collection of thoughts, ideas, and opinions held by the student body, and this in turn increases the probability of exposing a student, irrespective of his or her race and opinion, to a wider range of perspectives on a particular issue. Perhaps this core characteristic of a diverse campus community is the key mechanism by which diversity makes an intellectual atmosphere, in the words of Justice Lewis Powell, more “conducive to speculation, experiment and creation—so essential to the quality of higher education” (*Regents* 1978). Bickel (1998) argues that the belief that exposing students to a wider range of opinions improves the quality of those students' intellectual advancement can be traced back to John Stuart Mill's famous 1859 essay, “On Liberty.” In that essay, Mill argues that popular opinions must be submitted to the “marketplace of ideas” and suggests that when perceptions are narrowed by the limits or biases of experience, geography, education, or class, they become the basis of judgment and social policy, and true social advancement is ostensibly compromised.

The educational benefits associated with exposure to different experiences, viewpoints, and opinions have also been linked to psychological theories. Some of the reviews cited earlier

draw from psychological theories and discuss the importance of providing “discontinuity” from students’ home environments. Based on a body of psychological literature, the reviewers conclude that institutions of higher education are more influential when they offer students a social and intellectual atmosphere that is distinctively different from that with which they are familiar. Such an atmosphere creates greater discontinuity for students and subsequently improves the chances for enhanced cognitive and identity development. For example, when students encounter novel ideas and new social situations, they are pressed to abandon automated scripts and think in more active ways. By contrast, institutions that have a homogeneous community and replicate the social life and expectations of their students’ home communities are more likely to impede personal and intellectual development because students are not as challenged in these ways.

A recent study (Antonio et al. 2004a) tested psychological explanations of the impact of diversity by drawing upon theories of minority influence. Minority influence theories contend that when minority opinions are present in groups, cognitive complexity is stimulated among majority opinion members (Gruenfeld, Thomas-Hunt, and Kim 1998). Antonio and colleagues extended the theory to test whether the presence of diversity in groups also enhances complex thinking. Their findings suggest that diversity does have a positive effect on cognitive complexity, particularly when group discussions include an issue with generally different racial viewpoints (e.g., the death penalty). Their experiments also show that, in these group discussions, minority students cause others to think about the issue in different ways, introduce novel perspectives to the discussion, and are influential in the group. In short, due to the ongoing power of race to shape life experiences in U.S. society, racial and ethnic diversity can create a rich social environment that subsequently can be used as an educational tool to promote all students’ learning and development.

Because a student’s understanding of and willingness to engage with diversity is not assured, and both understanding and willingness influence participation in a “robust exchange of ideas,” all three reviews cited earlier make clear that a sustained and coordinated effort is needed to increase the positive effects of diversity on student development and learning. Research on diversity consistently shows that educational benefits do not automatically accrue to students who attend institutions that are, in terms of student or faculty composition, racially and ethnically diverse. Rather, if the benefits of diversity in higher education are to be realized, close attention

must be paid to the institutional context in which that diversity is enacted. In other words, it is not enough to simply bring together a diverse group of students, although this is an important first step in creating opportunities for students to learn from diversity. Diverse college campuses provide unique challenges and opportunities that must be considered if the learning opportunities that they present are to be maximized.

The cited reviews identify several effective ways to maximize such opportunities for cognitive and personal growth, particularly in terms of cultural knowledge and understanding, leadership abilities, and commitment to promoting understanding. Beyond bringing students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds together, campuses must provide stimulating courses covering historical, cultural, and social bases of diversity and community, and must create additional opportunities for students to interact across racial and other social differences. Such intentional institutional efforts are critical because it is much easier for students to gravitate toward people of the same racial background. When students retreat from the rich and complex social and learning opportunities offered by a diverse campus and settle into institutional spaces that are more homogenous, they are likely to miss out on many of the important benefits derived from diversity. Hence, there is a behavioral aspect of the institutional context that is important to examine as we consider how students benefit from diversity on campus.

One important context for interracial interaction on campus is interracial friendship. Numerous studies have shown that interaction with close friends of a different race or ethnicity is a powerful way in which students accrue the educational benefits of diversity—benefits ranging from enhanced self-confidence, motivation, and educational aspirations to greater cultural awareness and commitment to racial equity (Gurin 1999; Antonio 2001a, 2001b, 2004a). Recent work in this area provides insight into one way in which students access the benefits of diversity. Antonio's (2001a) study of friendships on a racially diverse campus indicates that the outcomes associated with diversity are both realized from and mediated by friendships with students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. In his longitudinal study of UCLA students, he found that students with more diverse sets of close friends were more likely to interact across race outside of the comfort zone provided by their closest friends. When they did interact with students other than their closest friends, these students were more likely to engage in conversations on topics concerned with diversity and difference, such as political and social views, racism and discrimination, women's rights, and national politics. Since interracial

interaction and discussions of difference were directly related to outcomes such as gains in cultural awareness and commitment to racial understanding. Antonio concluded that interracial friendships serve the critical function of defining norms of behavior for engagement with diversity.

In another study, Chang (2002b) found that students who had nearly completed a required diversity-related course made significantly more favorable judgments of African Americans than those who had just started the requirement. The effect occurred even though the content of the courses that were randomly selected for the study varied, and many of them did not specifically focus on African American issues. This study's findings suggest that general education curricula, specifically diversity course requirements, can play a meaningful role in diminishing divisive racial prejudices and can subsequently improve race relations.

To examine the broader educational implications of reducing racial biases, Chang (2001) collected and analyzed data from an institutional sample of undergraduate students to estimate the relationship between racial prejudice and seven educational experiences. After controlling for confounding factors, Chang found that reduced levels of racial prejudice are associated both with enhancing students' ability to adapt successfully to change, especially demographic and cultural shifts, and with developing students' values and ethical standards through thoughtful reflection on arguments and facts. In explaining the broader educational significance of these findings, Chang draws from information-processing models of social judgment to argue that reducing students' level of racial bias is a rigorous educational undertaking because it requires students to actively process new information that conflicts with existing knowledge. Besides developing more accurate knowledge, students also learn to think more deeply, actively, and critically when they confront their biases and change erroneous information. Having students think in these ways about diversity-related issues, Chang concludes, not only helps to improve race relations but also promotes other educational goals that are widely shared and valued by the higher education community.

The Role of Institutional Expectations and Commitment

The effectiveness of campus initiatives and programs at successfully engaging students with diversity also depends on a larger institutional context. This institutional context is represented by the role that diversity plays in the mission and goals of an institution,

commitment to the educational value of diversity at the highest levels of campus leadership, and the ongoing funding and support for key diversity programs and initiatives on the campus. According to the reviews, higher perceived levels of institutional commitment to diversity are associated with perceptions of relatively low racial tension among African American, Chicano, and, to some extent, white students. Higher perceived levels of commitment have also been shown to be associated with higher reported college grade-point averages and increases in personal goals to promote racial understanding. In contrast, lower levels of perceived institutional commitment to diversity are accompanied by higher levels of perceived hostility and discrimination and are associated with low grades for African American students, feelings of isolation among Native American students, higher levels of alienation among all students, and lower scores on college adjustment and sense of belonging among Latino students. Likewise, white students' perceptions of hostility or discrimination on campus have both direct and indirect effects on their persistence in college and are related to their lower sense of belonging on diverse campuses.

Given the above findings, it appears that students' assessments and perceptions of their institution's overall commitment to diversity are influential in determining whether or not they are able to benefit from diversity. Evidence suggests that students are more likely to perceive greater levels of institutional commitment when campuses enact a more comprehensive diversity approach, as opposed to a piecemeal one. The effects of strong institutional commitment to diversity may positively affect not only individual outcomes but also the campus climate, which further reinforces the benefits associated with diversity.

Some evidence of the type of effect noted above has been reported in two recent studies. Chang et al. (2004) found that the student body's average level of cross-racial interaction affects students' self-comparison of gains made since entering college, particularly in their knowledge of and ability to accept different races and cultures. Even students who have very little cross-racial interaction in college but are part of a student body that has high average levels of interaction tend to report greater individual gains in openness to diversity than those who have the same level of interaction but are a part of a student body that has low average levels of cross-racial interaction.

In a longitudinal study of college students attending institutions with varying degrees of racial diversity, Chang and DeAngelo (2002) found that white students attending an institution

with fewer students of color (less than 10 percent of the total population) were 72 percent more likely to participate in the Greek system than white students at an institution where students of color made up more than 17 percent of the population. These effects were demonstrated even after controlling for relevant student background and institutional characteristics. Chang and DeAngelo attribute this finding to the influence of institutional norms on students. They reason that white students may find membership in a social fraternity or sorority on a more diverse campus to be less appealing because of conflict with the overall sensibility and values of the institution and the general student body.

Yet even on relatively diverse campuses, students may view institutional commitment to diversity as weak, and consequently feel discouraged from interacting with students of different races. In a pair of studies, Antonio (2001a, 2004b) found that surface segregation—the appearance of ethnic clustering on campus — is often interpreted by students as a failure of diversity and evidence of a token commitment to diversity by an institution. Moreover, this perception is shared both by students who maintain many interracial relationships and by those who maintain few. In other words, even when students actively take advantage of campus diversity via their friendships, they remain somewhat discouraged by the lack of institutional support for a positive climate for diversity. Institutional commitment to diversity, Antonio concludes, needs to be highly visible and unambiguous if students are to view such interactions as contributing to the larger cultural norms of the campus.

Even though a student's actual engagement with diversity is a more direct and powerful way to realize developmental gains, the above findings suggest that being in an environment committed to diversity may also contribute to students' development and influence their participation in different campus activities. This emerging body of research indicates that the institutional conditions that promote diversity may by themselves improve race relations, irrespective of a student's level of interest in and engagement with diversity. As illustrated by Chang et al. (2004), a supportive campus climate and set of institutional practices might be linked to, or serve as a proxy for, high levels of cross-racial interaction among students— and make it possible for all students to improve their knowledge of and ability to accept others from different backgrounds and cultures.

Concluding Thoughts about the Research on Diversity

Hurtado and colleagues (2003) note that the higher education literature identifies several important elements that link diversity to student learning, including factors related to individual development and the environments within which students are educated. They also note that three themes have emerged from hundreds of research studies that have explored these issues:

1. Individuals who are educated in diverse settings are far more likely to work and live in racially and ethnically diverse environments after they graduate.
2. Individuals who study and discuss issues related to race and ethnicity in their academic courses and interact with a diverse set of peers in college are better prepared for life in an increasingly complex and diverse society.
3. Increasing the compositional diversity of the student body is essential to create the kind of learning environment described here.

The authors conclude that it is crucial for campus leaders to create conditions that maximize the learning and democratic outcomes associated with being educated in racially and ethnically diverse environments.

Institutional leaders must learn to think systematically and multidimensionally as they consider the types of policies and procedures that will maximize the educational benefits of diversity. However, our assessment of current efforts to institutionalize diversity on campuses suggests that most campus leaders have fallen well short of this goal. In the sections that follow, we provide a conceptual framework for understanding diversity that we believe will help educators think more systematically and comprehensively about making diversity work on their campuses. We then offer a set of recommendations for specific institutional policies and practices that, in light of the framework, can help to maximize the educational benefits associated with diversity.

Understanding the Campus Racial Climate

Implicit in the preceding research synthesis is the understanding that these educational benefits are not automatically bestowed on students who attend racially and ethnically diverse institutions. If leaders are to help students achieve the educational benefits of diversity, they must pay close attention to the broad campus climate. Although bringing together individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences is an important *first* step in providing students with

opportunities to learn from diversity, it cannot be the only step. Diverse learning environments provide unique opportunities for *and* challenges to learning and teaching that must be addressed. If we are to maximize opportunities and minimize negative outcomes that may emerge from campus diversity, it is important that we understand more completely the forces that interact to create the often contested conditions under which students can successfully learn from diversity.

In describing and understanding the impact of those multiple forces, we draw primarily from—and expand upon—the work of Hurtado and others (Hurtado et al. 1998, 1999). Their framework for understanding campus racial climate is helpful for several reasons. First, it is empirical, drawing from the body of research on the impact of climate on student learning and development that was synthesized earlier. Second, the framework treats campus climate as a multidimensional phenomenon that is shaped by the interaction of internal and external forces. Third, the framework offers specific suggestions about how to improve educational policy and practice through the engagement of campus diversity.

The framework advanced by [Hurtado and colleagues \(1998, 1999\)](#) builds on earlier scholarship regarding campus climate. This earlier work defines climate as the attitudes, perceptions, or observations that campus constituents have about the environment (Peterson and Spencer 1990). This research illustrates how individual attitudes and perceptions tend to be more malleable and, as a result, can be differentiated from the more stable institutional norms and beliefs that are used to characterize an organization’s culture. In the framework offered by Hurtado and colleagues, climate is not limited to perceptions and attitudes (what they term the “psychological climate”), but also includes the institution’s structure and history as well as people’s interactions across differences. This framework also assumes that students are educated in racial contexts that vary from campus to campus, and that the variations in climate that occur are shaped by a range of external and internal forces.

External Forces

[Key external forces that shape campus racial climate include *governmental policy, programs, and initiatives* as well as *sociohistorical forces*.](#) Some governmental factors that influence the campus racial climate are financial aid policies and programs, state and federal policy regarding affirmative action, court decisions related to the desegregation of higher education, and the manner in which states provide for institutional differentiation within their

state system of higher education. Examples of sociohistorical forces that influence the climate include events or issues in the larger society that relate to the ways in which people view or experience racial diversity. While these forces occur “outside” of college campuses, they serve as **stimuli for discussions** or other activities that occur on campus. The ongoing debate over affirmative action in college admissions, for example, has had a noticeable impact on the racial climate at colleges and universities across the country. Likewise, the events of 9/11 and our country’s response to these events are sociohistorical forces that have had a profound effect on campus racial climate.

As noted by Hurtado and colleagues (1998, 1999), these external forces interact with internal forces to produce the campus racial climate. To describe these internal forces, they highlight four dimensions that result from the educational programs and practices at an institution: **(1) compositional diversity³, (2) historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion, (3) psychological climate, and (4) behavioral climate.** We would add a fifth dimension of climate, the organizational/structural aspect, which was recently conceptualized by Milem, Dey, and White (2004).

Compositional Diversity

As mentioned earlier in this paper, compositional diversity refers to the numerical and proportional representation of various racial and ethnic groups on a campus. Institutional programs and policies that increase the compositional diversity of a campus play an important symbolic role by communicating to interested internal and external constituents that diversity is a priority for the campus and its leaders. Hence, it is not surprising that Hurtado and colleagues (1998, 1999) argue that compositional diversity is the single dimension of the climate that most campus leaders think about when they consider creating programs and initiatives targeted at improving the climate. However, there is also a tendency for institutional leaders and policy makers to focus *only* on this dimension. In fact, a frequently forwarded assertion is that a “critical mass” of people from different racial groups must be present if diversity is to work on

³ Much of the recent research on campus climate and the education outcomes of diversity describes this dimension of climate as structural diversity. However, Milem, Dey, and White (2004) recently argued that the term compositional diversity is a more accurate descriptor of the phenomenon that it represents. Milem and colleagues assert that using the term structural diversity to represent the numerical and proportional composition of the campus can result in confusion about another important dimension of campus climate that is absent from the framework described by Hurtado and colleagues (1998, 1999). This “fifth dimension” of campus climate represents various organizational/structural aspects of the campus climate.

our campuses. In forwarding the idea of a “critical mass,” campus leaders must be prepared to respond to questions about how to determine how much diversity is enough to achieve the educational benefits of diversity. For the reasons described earlier in this paper, we do not believe this is a productive argument to pursue. Moreover, when the focus is solely or primarily on compositional diversity, we have a tendency to focus on diversity as an end in itself, rather than as an educational *process* that—when properly implemented—has the potential to enhance many important educational outcomes.

Clearly, increasing the compositional diversity of a campus is an important first step in efforts to enhance these outcomes. However, this cannot be the only aspect of climate that campus leaders address when planning and implementing campus diversity initiatives. While racially diverse campuses provide important opportunities for teaching and learning that racially homogeneous campuses do not provide, they also present significant challenges that must be addressed if the educational benefits of campus diversity are to be achieved. It is for this reason that campus leaders must learn to think and act more multidimensionally about the learning that can be derived from campus diversity.

Historical Legacy of Inclusion or Exclusion

This dimension points to the historical vestiges of segregated schools and colleges, which continue to affect the climate for racial and ethnic diversity on college campuses (Hurtado et al. 1998, 1999). We find evidence of this in the resistance to desegregation in some communities and campus settings, in the maintenance of policies that serve a homogeneous population on predominantly white campuses, and in the prevalence of attitudes and behaviors that impede or prevent interaction across racial and ethnic communities. It is important to note that most predominantly white colleges and universities have a much longer history of exclusion than they do of inclusion and that this history continues to shape racial dynamics on our campuses. One product of this history of exclusion is that, on many campuses, benefits sustained for particular groups go unrecognized and often work to the detriment of groups that have been historically excluded by the institution.

It is important that institutional leaders be clear about any history of exclusion that has occurred on their campus, talk about efforts over time to be more inclusive, and address any persistent negative consequences that this history has had. If campus leaders address this

dimension, we believe that they are more likely to gain broader support for diversity initiatives and other programs that are designed to improve the campus climate. Moreover, leaders who acknowledge their institution's history of exclusion demonstrate to internal and external constituents that the institution is willing to acknowledge its past transgressions and is indeed making efforts to redress its exclusionary past.

The Psychological Climate

Hurtado and colleagues (1998, 1999) describe the psychological dimension of campus climate as including views held by individuals about intergroup relations as well as institutional responses to diversity, perceptions of discrimination or racial conflict, and attitudes held toward individuals from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. We know from many studies of campus climate that administrators, students, and faculty from different racial and ethnic backgrounds are likely to view the campus climate in dramatically different ways. Hurtado and colleagues (1998, 1999) assert that who people are and where people are positioned in an institution affect the ways in which they experience and view the institution, its mission, and its climate. It is critical that campus leaders neither dismiss nor underestimate the significance of these perceptual differences. These perceptions are products of the environment, and they influence the decisions that people make about their future interactions in the environment as well as the outcomes that result from these interactions (Astin 1968; Berger and Milem 1999; Milem and Berger 1997; Tierney 1987).

The Behavioral Climate

The behavioral dimension of campus climate consists of the status of social interaction on the campus, the nature of interactions between and among individuals from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, and the quality of intergroup relations (Hurtado et al. 1998, 1999). A commonly held view is that campus race relations are poor and that segregation has increased on college campuses—usually as the result of students of color isolating themselves from the rest of the campus. However, the empirical research that examines student interactions reveals that students of color are much more likely than white students to report that they interact across racial and ethnic groups. In addition, research indicates that students from different racial and ethnic groups view same-group interactions differently. For example, Loo and Rolison (1986)

found that white students viewed ethnic group clustering as an example of racial segregation or separation, whereas students of color viewed this clustering as a means for finding cultural support within a larger environment they felt was unsupportive.

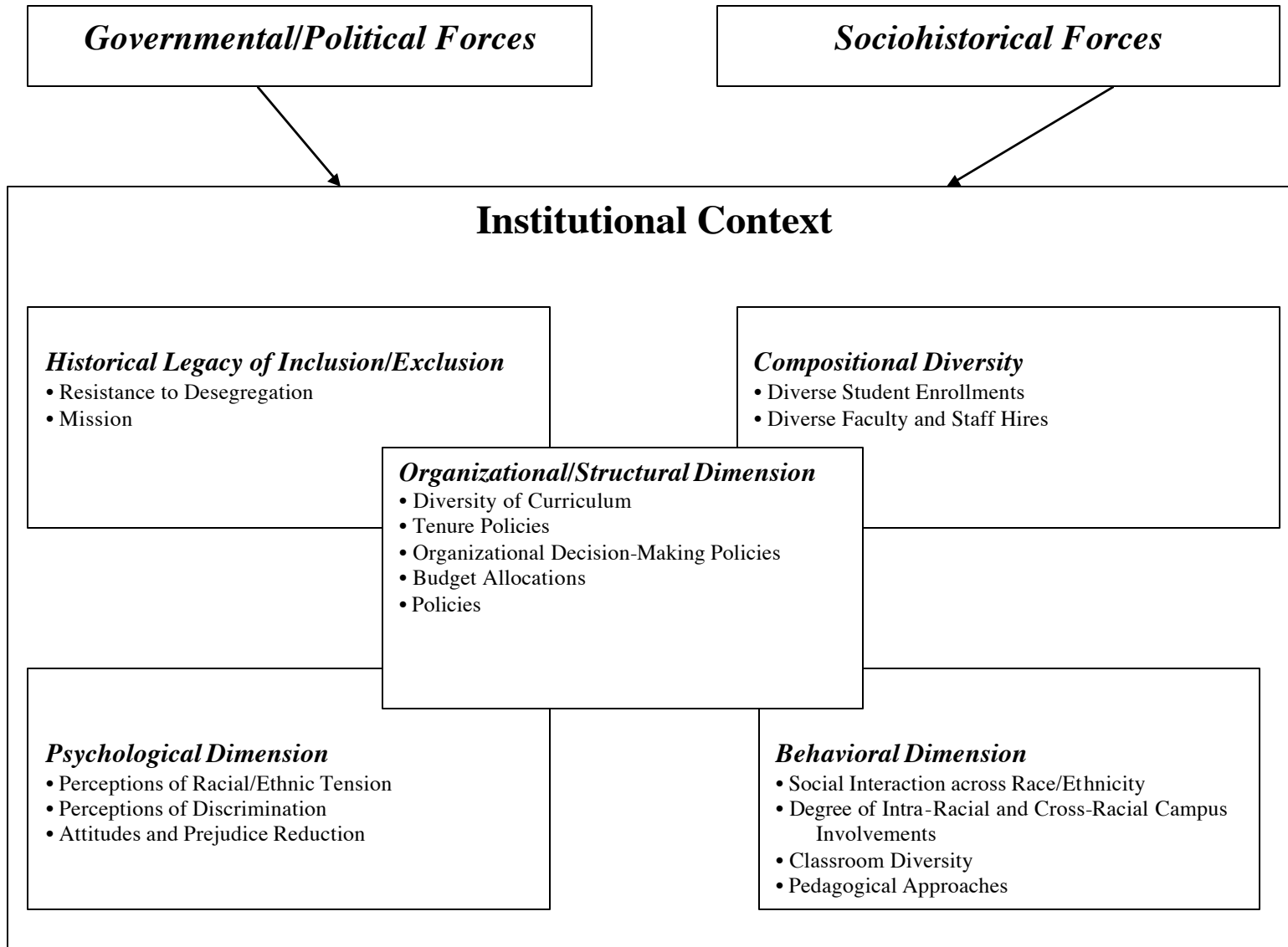
At the same time, the absence of interracial contact does impact students' views toward others, their support for campus diversity initiatives, and their development of key educational outcomes (Hurtado et al. 1998, 1999). Clearly, same-group and intergroup contact need not be mutually exclusive—what matters in such contact is the quality of interaction. As the earlier research summary notes, students who have the opportunity to engage peers from different racial backgrounds in regular, structured interactions are more likely to show growth in a number of critical educational outcomes.

Organizational/Structural Diversity

While Hurtado and colleagues argue that the historical legacy of exclusion at higher education institutions influences institutional policies and practices, they do not fully elaborate on this important idea (Hurtado 1992; Hurtado et al. 1998, 1999). We concur with the recent assertion of Milem, Dey, and White (2004) that there is a “fifth dimension” of climate that is important to consider and that can serve as an important source of influence in shaping the campus climate. Specifically, this dimension represents the organizational and structural aspects of colleges and the ways in which benefits for some groups become embedded into these organizational and structural processes. The organizational/structural dimension of climate is reflected in the curriculum; in campus decision-making practices related to budget allocations, reward structures, hiring practices, admissions practices, and tenure decisions; and in other important structures and processes that guide the day-to-day “business” of our campuses. For example, recent research by Smith and others (Smith et al. 2004) indicates that racially homogeneous faculty search committees are not likely to hire candidates from different racial groups unless deliberate steps are taken to require the committees to seriously consider such candidates.

Figure 1 summarizes the five dimensions that shape campus climate and affect to what degree diversity efforts will lead to educational benefits for students. These dimensions are interconnected, but at the same time each dimension is unique and must be intentionally

Figure 1. Campus climate frame work



addressed if the benefits associated with diversity are to be realized. To clarify how educators can address these dimensions, we highlight a set of promising practices in the next section.

Engaging Diversity on Campus

So far, we have synthesized the large body of research that informs our understanding of diversity and offered a conceptual framework based on this synthesis. We now introduce guidelines as well as specific recommendations for engaging diversity—an intentional and coherent process of planning, developing, and implementing institutional policies and practices explicitly designed to help students attain the benefits that can be gained from attending a racially and ethnically diverse college or university. In this way, we hope to strengthen the connection between academic scholarship on diversity and educational practice.

Our list of proposals is not exhaustive; however, our proposals are informed by the most current research available. Consistent with this research, we preface these recommendations with three principles of practice.

1. Take a multidimensional approach. Specific policies may not be effective with all students in the same way. Therefore, it would be wise for campus leaders to utilize a multidimensional approach to diversity and anticipate that the effects of diversity policies may differ. For example, Duster (1992) found that at the University of California-Berkeley, white students preferred informal opportunities to engage diversity while African Americans desired formal campus programs. Similarly, students of color benefit educationally from same-race interaction in ways that white students do not. Orchestrating multiple and varied initiatives is a central principle of strong diversity practices.

2. Engage all students. The benefits derived from diversity cannot be reserved for white students, residential students, students in certain majors, or the most highly involved students on campus. All students should be considered when developing a multidimensional approach, so that cultural “border crossing” is pursued by everyone. It is especially important that no single group of students—especially students of color—be unintentionally burdened as “the diversity” with whom all others should interact.

3. Focus on process. Diversity is a means toward achieving important educational outcomes, not an end in itself. When campus leaders view diversity as the end goal, they often neglect the racial dynamics that surround interactions among different groups, which can limit

the effectiveness of certain practices. For example, race dialogues are counterproductive when the goal of mere participation outweighs the goals of developing empathy and understanding among participants. This can occur when well-intentioned institutions require race dialogues but staff them with poorly trained facilitators.

These principles make clear that engaging diversity to improve students' educational outcomes is an ever-changing and demanding process that must account for multiple facets of a campus community and employ a wide range of interventions.⁴ Not all campus interventions will be designed to reach all students; some may instead strategically focus on particular groups of students. Likewise, even broad interventions will benefit different groups of students in different ways. Finally, the principles also take into account that campuses are dynamic communities. Interventions and their related outcomes, therefore, are rarely stable, and so engagement with diversity will likely remain a work in progress.

Developing and Maintaining Diverse Student Bodies

Addressing compositional diversity requires proactive institutional policies that seek to develop and maintain diverse student bodies. The underrepresentation of African Americans, Latina/os, and Native Americans in higher education is often viewed as a “pipeline” problem. The implication of this problem for institutions is that compositional diversity efforts need to begin prior to the admissions process. Furthermore, while press attention typically goes toward admissions policies such as race-conscious practices, effectively attending to compositional diversity requires committed efforts on several fronts.

Outreach, Enrichment, and Recruitment Programs

Outreach, academic enrichment, and recruitment programs are among the first policies that an institution can develop to cultivate a diverse student body. Outreach programs should be connected with rural and inner-city high schools that have historically sent few graduates to colleges and universities. Because many schools with low college-going rates are poorly funded or located in less wealthy districts and neighborhoods, they are less likely to offer a strong

⁴ The research cited in this paper focuses on a particular set of educational outcomes of diverse learning environments. Also critical, and the focus of another paper in this series, is academic persistence and success. Emerging work on diversity scorecards by Estela Bensimon and colleagues (e.g., Bensimon 2004) shows that on compositionally diverse campuses, academic success (gauged using traditional measures) for African American and Hispanic students can significantly lag behind success for white and Asian students. This reinforces the argument that compositional diversity is not enough to enable all students to benefit from diverse learning environments.

precollege curriculum or related activities. Given this situation, outreach must involve academic enrichment. Together, outreach and academic enrichment programs serve as strong correctives to recruitment programs that typically focus on both high schools and individual students with strong academic records. While the structure and organization of specific programs can vary, an institution and the high schools it partners with should share the following goals (adapted from Oakes et al. 2002).

Building a strong college-going culture in the high schools. Institutions should work with schools to build a culture where going to college is the norm and all resources are geared toward students' admission to and success in higher education. For example, institutions could maintain a physical presence in the high schools by having faculty and staff regularly provide workshops, counseling, and information. Institutions could also keep high school teachers and counselors informed of current standards for college-level work and of current admissions and financial aid procedures. In addition, institutions could sponsor campus visits for students and teachers from partner high schools.

Providing access to a rigorous academic curriculum. Institutions should work with schools and districts to make a rigorous, college-preparatory curriculum the norm for all high school students. For example, institutions could work with districts to align high school graduation requirements with college entrance requirements. College faculty could partner with high school teachers to develop mutual understanding of writing skills students need to be prepared for college-level work. In addition, faculty could work with high school teachers to ensure that college-preparatory curricula in all subjects are aligned to placement tests at the receiving institutions.

Providing academic support for college preparation. With limited funding, today's high schools find it difficult to provide the services required to ensure that all students make a successful transition to college. With partner schools, higher education institutions can share the work of academic tutoring, SAT/ACT test preparation, and general college admissions counseling. Institutions can also use existing pedagogical structures, such as service learning, community service, and undergraduate research, to involve its students in these efforts. Campus leaders of such efforts should be intentional about fostering learning outcomes for both the undergraduate students and the partner high school students.

Retention and Success

Once partner high school graduates are admitted and enrolled, a key responsibility for institutions is to **keep underrepresented students enrolled and help them reach high academic achievement upon graduation.** Underrepresented students typically have lower retention rates across majors, and therefore campuses should develop and support programs shown to enhance the retention and success of students of color, including

- plans to identify inequities in educational outcomes of students of color by analyzing disaggregated data on student success indicators (e.g., GPA, major migration) and to address those inequities by eliminating their underlying causes;
- retention programs tailored to identified educational needs that offer tutoring support, academic advising, and financial aid counseling;
- racial/ethnic community centers that serve as physical homes and central gathering places for students and thus provide social anchors for those students most at risk for dropping out;
- racial/ethnic student organizations that provide students with opportunities for identity development, cross-cultural learning, and peer support;
- financial aid programs geared toward those students who are doubly at risk because of race and socioeconomic status.⁵

Developing Positive Perceptions of the Campus Racial Climate

As was stated earlier in this paper, intentional fostering of a positive campus racial climate is critical to achieving the benefits of diversity. According to the framework presented earlier, an important aspect of an institution's racial climate is psychological. Therefore, institutions need to understand how their policies and practices influence student perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity and intergroup relations. Below are five policy areas that can help campus leaders enhance the psychological dimension of the campus racial climate and create an environment supportive of cross-racial interaction, and cultural exploration and affirmation, irrespective of a student's race or ethnicity.

⁵ Of course, decisions to implement this approach are subject to legal considerations at particular institutions and in particular states.

Institutional History

An institution's historical legacy of inclusion and exclusion serves as the backdrop for the campus racial climate. Actively engaging students in the school's history—positive and negative—communicates to the campus community that local issues of race and racism are acknowledged and understood, and that current understandings benefit from historical context.

Institutions can draw upon their histories to address campus climate in several ways. The University of Texas, for example, hosts an annual symposium on civil rights named for Heman Sweatt, an African American who was denied admission to its law school in 1946 on the basis of race and later gained admission following a Supreme Court ruling. Dartmouth's annual Pow-Wow marks both the institution's poor commitment to Native Americans early in its history as well as its more recent accomplishments. Some campuses also highlight moments of inclusion, such as the admission of the first African Americans, women, or Native Americans to the institution, in brief histories placed on their Web sites.

Diversity as Policy

Campus statements. Ideally, the institution's commitment to diversity should permeate policy in all areas of institutional life. A first step in signaling an institution-wide commitment to diversity is for the top campus leadership to issue statements of support, purpose, and action. Statements such as those at Carnegie Mellon University, Colby College, and the Universities of Michigan, Nebraska, and Western Washington are good examples of publicly stated commitments to diversity.⁶ These statements establish principles for diversity and education, and in some cases, set forth goals for creating a welcoming and safe environment for interaction across groups and for diversifying the curriculum, faculty, and student body. Such statements can also provide an organizing framework for specific diversity initiatives—initiatives that communicate to students in a tangible, unambiguous way that institutional commitment to diversity is strong, steady, and proactive. The campus community can also use these statements to hold their institutional leaders accountable for keeping their diversity-related promises.

Faculty diversity policies. A particularly important area of institutional policy for diversity is the recruitment and retention of faculty of color. Faculty, along with staff, serve as an institution's front-line representatives, and in the academic realm, faculty are also the

⁶ AAC&U lists many other examples of statements on its DiversityWeb resource site. See www.diversityweb.org/diversity_innovations/institutional_leadership.

embodiment of authority on campus. Students are painfully aware when there is discrepancy in diversity between the faculty and student bodies on their campus, and failure to actively and publicly pursue a more diverse faculty sends a message of insincere commitment to diversity. In this way, faculty diversity initiatives are not only important in their own right (a point that will be discussed later), but they also serve to enhance the perceived climate for diversity.

Campus Balkanization

Although the presence of visible clustering of students by race on campus may not be directly related to institutional policy and practice, it does present a formidable barrier to interracial interaction if left unaddressed by campus leaders. As stated earlier, research shows that the appearance of self-segregation belies what is usually a fairly high frequency of cross-racial interaction among students. The relevant policy area for institutions here is research and dissemination. Careful monitoring of the campus climate via surveys and interviews can generate valuable data on the actual extent of interaction across groups that students engage in and can indicate whether their behavior may be at odds with their surface-level perceptions. Communication of these data through articles in the student newspaper and official statements by the president can help dispel negatively perceived images of the racial climate and replace them with information more consistent with students' actual experiences.

Cultural Spaces

Campus racial climates are negatively affected when students of color feel culturally isolated or unsupported in their exploration of their ethnic heritage and identity. Institutions can easily address these challenges through the development and support of "safe" cultural spaces. Examples of such spaces are racial/ethnic community centers, racial/ethnic student organizations, and racially and ethnically themed residence halls.

Transforming Classroom Environments

The classroom environment is an especially important space for diversity to thrive, and can potentially affect all dimensions of campus climate. Research has demonstrated the positive impact that a classroom engaged with diversity has on student outcomes, particularly when faculty, course content, and pedagogy are considered in conjunction with the compositional

diversity of the students. Institutions can be proactive in fostering the educational benefits of diversity in the classroom by developing policies that address the following issues.

Faculty of Color

Having a diverse faculty ensures that students see people of color in roles of authority and as role models or mentors. Faculty of color are also more likely than other faculty to include content related to diversity in their curricula and to utilize active learning and student-centered teaching techniques (Astin et al. 1997; Milem 1999). As stated above, a coherent and sustained faculty diversity initiative must exist if there is to be any progress in diversifying the faculty.

Effective Pedagogy

Active learning pedagogies provide opportunities for students from different backgrounds to engage with each other around the content of courses—a form of interaction that is restricted in a lecture-based environment. These interactions have a direct impact on climate by breaking down stereotypes and facilitating more nuanced out-of-class interactions. Such pedagogies are available in all disciplines and departments, supporting learning experiences across campus that can significantly impact campus climate. To flourish, such pedagogies require institutional commitment and faculty incentives. Successful programs tend to offer faculty course reductions and/or summer salary incentives for the development, implementation, and assessment of new pedagogies. To institutionalize these pedagogies, tenure and promotion guidelines that reflect the institution’s commitment to engaging diversity also need to be implemented.

Curricular Transformation

Students must see that ideas and perspectives reflective of diversity are present in the curriculum. In his book *A Different Mirror*, Ron Takaki writes, “What happens, to borrow the words of Adrienne Rich, ‘when someone with the authority of a teacher’ describes our society, and ‘you are not in it?’ Such an experience can be disorienting—‘a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing’” (Takaki 1993, 16). Juxtaposed against a diverse student body, a lack of diverse perspectives in the curriculum may not only cause moments of psychic disequilibrium, but also contribute to a campus climate of exclusion. As with pedagogical reform, achieving curricular change—successfully incorporating diverse

information, ideas, and perspectives into the curriculum—requires aligning faculty development and rewards to these goals.

Diversity and Goals for Student Learning

Over the past two decades, many campuses have changed their general education programs to include study of diversity as a graduation requirement. But the single, “stand-alone” diversity course may send many students the unintended message that diversity is one more general requirement “to get out of the way as soon as possible,” rather than a form of learning they will need for life. This defeats the larger goal of preparing students to live and engage with others in diverse communities.

A better strategy is to articulate clear goals for diversity and learning in both general education and the different departmental majors. Following a comprehensive review of the multiple purposes addressed by diversity requirements, AAC&U’s national panel on American Commitments: Diversity, Democracy, and Liberal Learning recommended that colleges and universities provide opportunities for students to engage diversity in the larger context of their society’s unfinished exploration of democratic values, aspirations, and commitments. Above and beyond students’ study of world cultures and issues, the American Commitments panel proposed, U.S. diversity should be addressed through multiple lenses, across the curriculum. While each campus needs to address diversity and civic engagement in ways appropriate to its own mission, history, curricular patterns, and students, the American Commitments national panel recommended that all students should have well-designed opportunities to explore at least four topics that prepare them for a diverse democracy:

- *Experience, identity, and aspiration.* Exploration of one’s own particular inherited and constructed traditions, identity communities, and significant identity questions as a basis for exploring experiences, values, and hopes that differ from one’s own.
- *United States pluralism and the pursuits of justice.* A substantial and comparative exploration of diverse histories and communities in U.S. society, with significant attention to their differing experiences of U.S. democracy and their pursuits—sometimes successful, sometimes frustrated—of equal opportunity.
- *Experiences in justice seeking.* Encounters with systemic constraints on the development of human potential in the United States and direct experiences with

community-based efforts to articulate principles of justice, expand opportunity, and redress inequities. (Note: The panel recognized that, since different communities may have sharply conflicting understandings of justice and expanded opportunity, students need opportunities to reflect collaboratively with faculty and staff mentors on the implications of their field-based learning.)

- *Diversity, equity, and justice issues in the major field.* Each major field should identify its own challenges in engaging difficult difference, and should provide a course of study that ensures graduates are prepared to meet these challenges. Such preparation should foster collaborative, deliberative, and problem-solving capacities relevant to the field, as well as content knowledge about diversity, justice, and social responsibility challenges faced by practitioners within that field.⁷

Intergroup Dialogues

One way to encourage cross-racial dialogue among students is to provide a structured format in which students can learn how to engage positively in such dialogue. Institutions can provide regular opportunities for people to come together in a sustained and structured manner by offering dialogues for credit or building them into existing courses.

Encouraging and Fostering Interracial Contact

The key finding across all the research on diversity is that student-student interaction is essential for realizing the educational benefits of diversity. The development of interracial friendship is particularly important because friendship represents the context of racial contact that is most likely to be characterized by equal status between individuals. This behavioral aspect of the racial campus climate is strongly influenced by many structural aspects of an institution. The setting for student interaction that is created by a campus, for example, creates a pool of peers for friendship selection, establishes the patterns and terms of contact among peers, and determines the types of friendship roles that are important within that setting. Consequently, the local environment in which a student most often interacts plays the critical role of determining

⁷ Readers interested in a fuller discussion of these proposals should read *American Pluralism and the College Curriculum* (AAC&U 1995b), where the original curriculum recommendations from the American Commitments National Panel were published. The language of the original recommendations has been updated for this publication, as part of AAC&U's current work on Making Excellence Inclusive.

the diversity of a student's potential friends. Institutions need to recognize how different structures on campus limit or broaden students' access to interracial contact.

On a diverse campus, heterogeneous residence halls are an extremely important site for the development of friendships with students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. In contrast, common barriers to broad interaction generally, and interaction across race specifically, include fraternities and sororities, off-campus work, commuting, residence hall architecture, and intensive involvement in racial/ethnic student organizations. Institutions with a student population of traditional age can minimize the impact of these barriers with policies focused on first-year students, since the first year is the period when friendship selection is the dominant aspect of a student's social life. The premise underlying the following policy examples is that proximity is a strong determinant of friendship selection, and this proximity can influence cross-racial interaction.

Fraternities and Sororities

Historically white Greek organizations pose particular problems for interracial contact because the Greek system is typically more homogeneous than the overall student bodies. Moreover, Greek life involves a large time commitment from its members, focuses heavily on the recruitment of first-year students, and on residential campuses, frequently draws students away from the residence halls and into the cloistered quarters of sorority or fraternity houses. First-year students who "rush" these traditionally homogeneous Greek organizations almost immediately cut themselves off from frequent and sustained interaction with students outside the Greek system. Consequently, their friendships tend to be more culturally homogeneous than those of their non-Greek peers. Institutional leaders can remove this barrier to cross-racial interaction by postponing the rush process until the sophomore year.

Commuting

On residential campuses, all students ideally should be required to live in residence halls during their first year at the institution. This policy, however, requires a commitment of resources that many institutions cannot provide. On such campuses—as well as on campuses that are nonresidential or that draw a large percentage of returning students—the challenge is to integrate commuting students into residentially based or other student activities so that all

students experience frequent and sustained interaction with as broad a cross section of the student body as possible. Rather than developing commuter-specific student lounges, labs, or activity centers, institutions should reform residential programs to allow for participation of commuters. For example, discounted meal plans could be offered to commuters to encourage them to eat their meals in a residential dining commons rather than in a separate campus facility or off campus. A portion of commuters' student activities fees could be directed toward residential programming so that all such events are open to commuters as well as residents. Institutions could also offer free parking to commuter students who wish to utilize campus study areas and attend night and weekend events on the campus. Campus leaders should also consider how they can support the involvement of nontraditionally aged students who are likely to have family responsibilities, full-time jobs, and other commitments outside of school that limit their ability to be involved in campus activities and events.

Residence Hall Architecture

The geography and architecture of some residence halls can also limit proximity of students in general and restrict interaction across racial groups. Individual buildings may be spread out across campus or smaller halls may have isolated common rooms and dining spaces. Institutions can counter these structural impediments to interaction by creating regular cross-residence activities and programs.

Racial and Ethnic Student Organizations

Racial and ethnic student organizations, like fraternities and sororities, tend to have more homogenous memberships than the general student body, but unlike Greek organizations, they have not been identified as significant barriers to interracial friendship and interaction in the research literature. Typically, only a handful of students are so intensively involved in the organization's activities that the majority of their time is spent with the same core group—which may result in a homogeneous friendship group. Nonetheless, the popular perception of these organizations as contributing to campus segregation warrants some attention by institutional leaders in order to address both the psychological and behavioral dimensions of the campus racial climate. To dispel some of these perceptions, encourage the development of these organizations, *and* establish norms for cross-racial cooperation and learning, institutional leaders

can create programs and incentives that require interorganizational involvement. Activity funds can be earmarked for collaborative events or projects undertaken by organizations partnering with ethnic student organizations. Campus leaders can also develop specific “umbrella” programs, such as Stanford’s Leading through Education, Activism, and Diversity (LEAD) program, which brings together members of four different ethnic student organizations in a leadership development program.

Off-Campus Work

The increasing cost of higher education, coupled with decreasing financial aid in the form of grants, has, among other things, increased students’ time to degree completion. Students are working more hours per week than ever before to pay their educational expenses. Because this work often takes place off campus, it disengages students from campus life and, specifically, diversity-related interventions. To remedy this, institutional leaders can offer more campus jobs. In addition, campus leaders can offer formal and informal opportunities for cross-racial interaction at different times of the day to accommodate a variety of student schedules.⁸

The Diversity Agenda: The Time Is Now

Over the course of three and a half decades, the concept of diversity and its educational agenda have evolved to encompass a broad set of purposes, issues, and initiatives on college campuses (Chang 2002c). The earliest initiatives to increase minority access to predominantly white campuses and later to enhance gender equity were prompted by desegregation mandates as well as social justice concerns grounded in democratic principles of equal opportunity and equality. Although equitable access for students of color remains of paramount interest, concerns about their persistence and academic success have, since the mid-1980s, joined access as issues of great concern to higher education. Additionally, ongoing incidents of racial and ethnic hostility and the need for what Lawrence Levine terms “a more eclectic, open, culturally diverse, and relevant curriculum” (1996, 171) have become important concerns in a rapidly expanding diversity agenda. Such trends have not only centered on race and ethnicity, but have also encompassed other categories of difference (e.g., gender, class, sexual orientation, and disabilities).

⁸ Knowing that some students may only come to campus for their classes also underscores the need for intentional infusion of diversity into pedagogy and the curriculum.

This oversimplified historical account makes clear several crucial points about campus diversity. First, the concept of diversity has evolved to now encompass a range of issues related to democratizing nearly every aspect of higher education. Second, the diversity agenda is closely linked to a broad and varied set of campus activities and initiatives. Third, diversity-related efforts are not limited to simply improving the proportional representation of students of color; they also seek to address multiple aspects of campus life and climate.

While diversity efforts are having widespread educational impact, engagement with diversity is not uniform across college campuses, and some do a much better job of maximizing the educational benefits associated with diversity. We firmly believe that thinking more deeply about and conducting sound research on diversity continue to be national imperatives because the underlying problems that make racial considerations in admissions necessary are far from being solved. Based on what we already know, colleges and universities can do much more to address these underlying problems. It also appears that the Court, particularly Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, expects higher education to do much more than it has done in the past, enough to make superfluous the "use of racial preferences." Although the Court recognized and affirmed the importance of diversity, it also expects the need for considerations of race in admissions decisions to expire twenty-five years after the date of the ruling.

Even if this expectation is merely to serve as a guide and not a strict deadline, a warning has been issued that higher education must play a much more active role in addressing both the quality of education delivered for an increasingly diverse nation and the ongoing power of race in shaping opportunities. Because civil rights were not significantly rolled back by the courts in the recent Michigan cases, we now have an opportunity as well as a charge to work more intentionally and systematically to enact diversity on our college campuses.

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