SECOND IN A SERIES

THE UNFINISHED AGENDA: ENSURING SUCCESS FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR

Leadership Strategies for Advancing Campus Diversity

Advice from Experienced Presidents

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The Unifying Voice for Higher Education

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Foreword

During the last three decades, few topics in higher education have fueled more explosive rhetoric than the issue of diversity. The progression from rhetoric to predictable calls for action is familiar and almost formulaic. Racially offensive incidents occur on a campus. Sensitivities are aroused. Discussion groups and task forces are formed. Conclusions and recommendations ensue: The institution has done nothing to increase the number and percentage of students of color; the faculty have failed to recruit and appoint faculty of color; students of color feel marginalized in a hostile campus environment and, as a result, not enough of them succeed.

This second in a series of four ACE papers correctly changes the thrust and tenor of the discourse from *access* to *success* and from *rhetoric* to *action agendas*. With students of color now entering higher education institutions in unprecedented numbers, access is no longer the paramount issue. For students of color, success—broadly defined in this paper to include such indicators as participation in honors societies and progression to graduate and professional school (and, presumably, gainful employment after graduation)—is an equally high priority for institutions. The 30 seasoned college and university administrators quoted here convey a clear sense of urgency to adopt this imperative as a call to action.

What makes this paper a refreshing departure from past discourses on diversity is the shift it urges from an exclusive focus on incoming numbers and percentages to consideration of other important factors, such as the nature of the campus environment and culture, the use of data to monitor progress, holding people accountable for results, and establishing appropriate indicators of success. While new presidents should seriously consider adopting this important and resourceful paper as a "best practice" guide for navigating the waters of race and gender on their campuses, they also should exercise discretion in assessing the merits of each suggestion. While some of the proposed strategies are clearly appropriate for all campuses, others may very well produce unintended outcomes if not properly implemented. For example, few would argue with the proposition that incorporating a diversity agenda into the strategic plan is a best practice that all institutions should adopt. However, as a former faculty member of color, I take issue with the assumption embodied in the some of the suggestions that a *de facto* role for faculty of color is to mentor and advise the students of color enrolled on campus. It should be clearly understood at all levels that faculty of color are recruited because of the knowledge, perspectives, and experience they bring to teaching and learning. Their presence

and visibility on campus are important to students of color and they, of course, should be responsive to the needs of these students. However, mentoring and advising both students of color and majority students are the responsibilities of *all* faculty members.

In addition to the many excellent suggestions contained in this paper, new presidents should give careful attention to the following important issues that also may affect their efforts to advance diversity: How should the campus remove the stigma that is often associated with enrolling in developmental studies courses? How can campus constituents (i.e., students, faculty, staff, and members of the community) come to grips with the reality that racial and gender stereotypes influence communications and interpersonal relationships? How does a campus mitigate the effect that stereotype threat has on the academic performance of students of color? Are there discipline-specific admission requirements that prohibit entry for students of color? Do institutional publications portray students of color in activities other than sports? Does the institution appear to value the accomplishments of alumni of color? To be most effective in addressing these delicate matters, new presidents may have to rely on the power and influence of their position, combined with personal style and charisma.

In the final analysis, I suspect that the most compelling indicator of progress in advancing diversity on our campuses is the presence of strong and committed leaders at the top. The candid and forceful testimonials of the presidents surveyed for this paper provide a measure of assurance that, at least on some campuses, rhetoric is giving way to action. The underlying message for new presidents is that they should avoid behaving as if they're starting the diversity agenda from scratch. Their campuses have probably experienced their own rhetorical flourishes on diversity issues over the years. They should begin their service as presidents with the intention of moving to campus-wide agendas that advance diversity as quickly as possible.

In the Walk the Talk section of the recently completed American Association of State Colleges and Universities Graduation Rate Outcomes Study (AASCU, 2005), presidents "seeking to create and sustain a campus culture centered on student success" are advised to "regularly look into the mirror to examine their own day-to-day behavior." Monitoring their own leadership behavior and making the appropriate adjustments in campus culture are bottom-line issues for presidents who wish to ensure success for students of color.

Livingston Alexander
President, University of Pittsburgh at Bradford

Introduction

For more than three decades, many of America's colleges and universities have made determined efforts to create racially diverse campuses. From 1991 to 2001, African-American enrollment rose by 36.9 percent and Hispanic enrollment increased by 75.1 percent. During that same period, the number of Asian-American students on college campuses increased by 53.7 percent and the number of American Indians rose by 35.3 percent. Despite these increases, participation rates (the number of students from a particular subgroup enrolled in college, divided by the total number of persons in that subgroup) for African-American and Hispanic students continue to lag behind rates for white students (31.3 percent for African Americans and 19.9 percent for Hispanics, compared with 40.9 percent for whites).[1] Making continued progress on enrolling and graduating underrepresented minority students is a perennial issue on many campuses.

In 2003, the highly visible Supreme Court cases involving admissions decisions at the University of Michigan called additional attention to an already important issue. However, access to higher education for students of color, while remaining an absolutely necessary objective for colleges and universities, is only part of the equation. Ensuring that students of color are academically successful is the ultimate goal. Although most institutions have been effective in attracting and admitting students of color, many have fallen short in fashioning a successful undergraduate experience for these same students. Graduation rates for African-American and Hispanic students trail those of their white and Asian peers. Among students entering four-year degree programs in 1995–96, 62.3 percent of Asian-American students, 58 percent of white students, 42 percent of Hispanic students, and 36.4 percent of African-American students earned bachelor's degrees after five years.[2] The difficult fact remains that it does a student little or no good to matriculate if he or she does not succeed, regardless of institution or program.

To this end, the American Council on Education (ACE), with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation, is seeking to make the *success of* students of color a high priority for institutions. *Success* is broadly defined, to include not only persistence and graduation rates, but also other indicators, such as equity in GPAs, participation in honor societies and awards, and postgraduate experiences (such as enrollment in professional and graduate degree programs). ACE is producing a series of occasional papers that

[1] Harvey, W. B., & Anderson, E. L. (2005). *Minorities in higher education: Twenty-first annual status report.* Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

[2] Harvey & Anderson. *Minorities in higher education.*

address different dimensions of ensuring the success of students of color. This second paper focuses on the leadership challenges new presidents face as they attempt to articulate and advance a diversity agenda on campus. The first paper in the series argued for the use of equity indicators and hard data to bring about institutional change that advances campus diversity. The third paper will provide college and university presidents with a legal roadmap to programs essential to the success of students of color: (1) race- and ethnicity-conscious financial aid and scholarships, and (2) programs and activities for students of color, such as enrichment and retention programs, race-oriented student groups and clubs, and minority-associated residence halls and mentoring programs. Another paper in the series will focus on persistence rates across various disciplines and fields by race and ethnicity, addressing the question, how well are colleges and universities doing in ensuring the success of students of color across a range of majors and degree programs?

This second paper draws upon a series of hour-long interviews with nearly 30 presidents from diverse backgrounds, representing a wide array of colleges and universities—public and independent; two- and four-year; rural, urban, and suburban; and predominately white as well as historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, and tribal colleges. We invited presidents who had strong track records in diversity, as suggested by their peers and by experts in higher education. We also identified people to interview based upon insights gained from exploratory focus groups of presidents, held during various ACE advisory meetings. During the interviews for this project, we asked presidents to speak about lessons and insights from their successful and unsuccessful experiences in advancing a campus diversity agenda, one that particularly focused on the success of students of color. We specifically pursued the challenges presidents face during their initial years in office, such as initiating diversity efforts or advancing or redirecting ongoing agendas, paying attention to the right issues, generating a sense of shared responsibility, being opportunistic, overcoming the challenge of ensuring change over the long term, avoiding destructive conflict, and changing campus culture. From interview transcripts, a series of themes emerged. Those ideas, as well as specific illustrative examples from the interviews, are presented in this paper.

We thank those presidents who agreed to be interviewed for this project. They were all extremely willing to speak about the challenges they faced, their successes, and their missteps in advancing a campus diversity agenda. They were reflective, insightful, and candid. A list of people interviewed appears at the end of this paper. Many of them also offered constructive comments on a final draft, as did Bill Harvey, Marlene Ross, and Madeleine Green of ACE. We also thank Dao Luu from ACE, and Stephen Quaye and Melissa Contreras-McGavin from the University of Southern California, who helped with the data and provided edits.

Finally, we recognize the Rockefeller Foundation for its kind support of this paper and others that focus on ensuring the success of students of color.

Ensuring Success for Students of Color: The Role of the President

A variety of statistics suggest the same story. According to U.S. Census Bureau data, the college-going rates for African Americans and Hispanics trail that of whites (31.3 percent for African Americans and 19.9 percent for Hispanics, compared with 40.9 percent for whites). Among 25- to 29-year-olds in 2003, only 17.2 percent of African Americans and only 10 percent of Hispanics had completed four or more years of college, compared with 34.2 percent of whites. Other recent data show that almost one-third more African-American and Hispanic students than white students leave college after five years without attaining their degree (30.1 percent and 29.2 percent, respectively, compared with 18.8 percent for whites).[3] When it comes to racial and ethnic equity, higher education continues to fall short on admitting and, more importantly, graduating African-American and Hispanic students. A central tenet of higher education is to serve as the pathway for personal and professional advancement, yet colleges and universities continue to disproportionately provide that opportunity to some groups of students over others.

The situation is made more urgent by the increasing numbers of students of color that higher education must serve. The number of African-American and Hispanic students completing high school continues to climb. Among Hispanic students, that number has almost tripled in the last 20 years. In California, for example, the anticipated demographic growth has been dubbed "Tidal Wave II" to illustrate its magnitude. States such as Texas, New York, and Florida will continue to experience tremendous population growth in both numbers and diversity. Other states and regions are experiencing significant, yet smaller-scale changes in their racial and ethnic composition. The Educational Testing Service (ETS) predicts that by 2015, more students of color will be enrolled in higher education than white students in three states—Hawaii, California, and New Mexico—and the District of Columbia. Six other states will have populations of students of color over 40 percent, and Texas will be evenly divided between white students and students of color.[4]

[3] Harvey & Anderson. *Minorities in higher education.*

[4] Carnevale, A. P., & Fry, R. A. (2000). *Crossing the great divide: Can we achieve equity when generation Y goes to college?* Washington, DC: Educational Testing Service.

These trends come as little surprise to most, if not all, college and university presidents. Diversity is a familiar institutional objective. However, if ensuring the success of students of color is a campus goal, why is something important so slow to advance? What leadership challenges are associated with advancing a campus diversity agenda? Specifically, how can presidents make progress on an essential but difficult challenge?

The keys to moving forward, we submit, are an institutional commitment to and a coordinated agenda for fostering academic success for students of color. For the most part, institutions that have made progress benefit from a committed and coordinated effort. However, the reality is that most colleges and universities typically approach the challenges by establishing a set of discrete programs rather than by making fundamental change through an institution-wide approach. Most campus diversity efforts tend to be fragmented and localized within particular departments or programs. For example, diversity initiatives may focus on particular majors (such as students of color in engineering), address campus life issues (such as cultural houses), or involve special scholarships or service programs. Although these approaches do generate positive change, they typically do not have the ability to transcend departmental or program boundaries to gain important campus-wide synergies or meet the needs of diverse students throughout the institution. Institutionalizing these efforts is difficult, as they are idiosyncratic and do not lend themselves very well to scaling up or tend to depend on a few individuals in particular units who, if they leave, take with them important momentum and knowledge.

Presidential leadership is essential to institution-wide progress. While not the only key to success, long-lasting and meaningful progress is difficult without it. Although presidents are extremely busy and face tremendous and diverse job pressures, they are uniquely positioned to advance a campus-wide diversity agenda by making the success of students of color an institutional priority, garnering the necessary resources, ensuring sustained linkages between student and academic affairs, making it a leadership challenge at every level throughout the institution and then holding campus leaders accountable for measurable progress, and keeping the institution focused on the challenges over the long term. Ensuring the success of diverse students is a presidential issue. Without the necessary changes made possible through a president's leadership and the commitment of her or his leadership team, the pool of college graduates will remain less talented, less diverse, and less-prepared to address the challenges of the 21st century.

> Your diversity efforts are going to be measured by how well you retain [students of color] and help them through to graduation.
>
> **—Robert Hemenway, Chancellor, University of Kansas**[5]

[5] Titles and affiliations of those quoted reflect their positions at the time of the interviews.

Presidential Leadership: Its Role and Reach

Presidents provide the administrative, political, symbolic, and entrepreneurial leadership to make campuses function well.[6] Administratively, they carry out the policies of the board, allocate resources, oversee key personnel decisions, and establish and reinforce systems of accountability and safeguard academic freedom and institutional autonomy. Politically, they respond to the needs of a variety of on- and off-campus stakeholders, whose support is necessary to maintain their effectiveness, including the faculty, alumni, elected officials, students and their parents, business and community leaders, and presidents of other colleges and universities. Symbolically, they embody the values of the institution, represent its ideals, serve as team leaders, and breathe new life into its history and traditions. Finally, presidents are chief entrepreneurs for their institutions. Fund raising is perhaps the most visible aspect of this function, but presidents also advocate for legislation at the local, state, and national levels; negotiate corporate contracts; secure licensing agreements; support technological transfer and incubator projects; and oversee auxiliary services.

However, as every president knows, the strength of the position, while important and influential, is curtailed by many factors beyond his or her control. First, faculty, students, and others, both on and off campus, expect to be involved in key decisions, stemming from traditions of shared governance. Important decisions need to be vetted and vetoes can easily come from a variety of stakeholders, including the campus senate and unions. Second, the competing priorities of statewide coordinating boards or public university systems add additional complications to public-sector presidencies. Third, presidents' time and attention are limited. They cannot be everywhere at once (regardless of advances in wireless technology). Fourth, resource constraints are constant. One never has sufficient financial resources to fund all the good ideas that exist within an institution, or to fulfill the increasingly long list of demands on any college or university.

Effective presidents accept shared governance and the presence of unions, the shortcomings of strategic planning, the ambiguity and conflicts inherent in their own roles, and the frequent irrationality of the organizations that they are attempting to lead. As presidential scholar Robert Birnbaum noted in describing effective academic leaders, "They are more likely to be realists than idealists."[7] Presidential influence comes through focused and consistent attention on a few key objectives, effective team leadership, a deep and thorough understanding of their institution's culture, effective leveraging of scarce resources, visible progress toward agreed-upon institutional goals, and organizational systems that work well.

[6] Birnbaum, R., & Eckel, P. D. (2005). The dilemma of presidential leadership. In P. Altbach, R. Berdahl, & P. Gumport (Eds.). *American higher education in the twenty-first century: Social, political, and economic challenges* (2nd ed.) (pp. 340-361). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

[7] Birnbaum & Eckel. The dilemma of presidential leadership (p. 356).

New presidents who set out to advance a campus diversity agenda face the added challenge of managing an important transition and acclimation period (although, the duration and intensity of this transition vary, depending on individual and institutional circumstances). First-time presidents undoubtedly find themselves in a very different type of position from the one they held previously, with different, expanded, and unfamiliar responsibilities. They are bombarded with a host of new expectations—some realistic, others not—from a variety of stakeholders. They may have a honeymoon period, but it is often short. New presidents must form and manage a variety of key relationships with trustees, elected officials, alumni, and prospective donors, in addition to the faculty, a senior administrative team, and students. They may or may not have all of the information they need about the institution to start the job well.[8] As new presidents quickly realize, search processes never reveal everything, particularly the buried skeletons. Finally, new presidents must juggle the demands of a new job with the realities of trying to succeed at a new institution. Although experienced administrators, they face different campus procedures, policies, and institutional habits and, probably most importantly, a different institutional culture that, at best, can be somewhat familiar and, at worst, completely foreign.

“First-time presidents undoubtedly find themselves in a very different type of position from the one they held previously, with different, expanded, and unfamiliar responsibilities.”

So how do newly appointed presidents advance a campus diversity agenda, given that this is a difficult task and that they are new to their positions? What should they pay attention to? How should they move the institution forward? With whom should they work? How do they create important opportunities for advancement or take advantage of opportunities that appear? The following section presents advice for new presidents on just such things, from close to 30 seasoned college and university presidents.

[8] Corrigan, M. (2002). *The American college president: 2002 edition.* Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

Leading the Way: Presidential Strategies for Ensuring the Success of Students of Color

How do presidents advance a campus diversity agenda? What advice do seasoned presidents have for their newly appointed colleagues? The overarching message from the interviews that form this paper is that new presidents should be intentional and systemic in their approaches. Focus and commitment, by the president and the campus, are required. Presidents have the ability to leverage resources, create situations, and take advantage of emergent opportunities to advance the institution's diversity efforts. They need to tap the institution's most important resource, its people, to ensure success for students of color and prepare for and find ways to take advantage of inevitable conflict. What we know is that presidents who successfully advance diversity on campus use a combination of varied yet interrelated strategies that create the necessary conditions needed to ensure the success of students of color.

Setting the Right Pace

It is clear that advancing diversity on campus is akin to a marathon, not a sprint; it is a run over potentially rocky and shifting terrain. New presidents must choose their paths wisely—where to focus their time, attention, and resources. To understand how best to move forward, new presidents should evaluate their situations. Is the institution just beginning to make concerted efforts to advance diversity? Does it have a long history with ensuring success for students of color? Does its agenda need a new boost of energy or a new direction? As Dale Rogers Marshall, president emerita of Wheaton College, said:

> *Every president has to assess his or her own setting. I did all the obvious things, meeting with minority faculty, minority staff, and minority students early on, asking them what they needed. And they would invite me to their meetings to learn more.*

Leaders need to match their approaches to the immediate needs of the institution. Does the institution have a sophisticated understanding of the challenges facing its students of color? To what extent does it understand the degree to which different populations of students are succeeding? Is

there a common definition of student success? The conversations with the 30 presidents that informed this essay suggest several tracks. Presidents at campuses that are just beginning their diversity efforts should focus on building broad support, both on and off campus; articulating a shared vision for where the institution should be going and why that direction is important; developing the data infrastructure to support their efforts; finding necessary resources; and identifying the right people for the tasks at hand. Leaders at institutions with more developed diversity agendas might focus on assessing campus efforts to date; refining their strategic plans; developing supportive off-campus networks; creating a culture that continually examines data to challenge prevailing beliefs and set new directions; and evaluating the curriculum. Institutions in either group can always afford to listen more closely and more frequently to students.

Presidents should know when to push their institutions and when to ease off. Moving too far ahead of the institution creates distances between themselves and key campus stakeholders difficult to bridge. However, not providing adequate challenge encourages complacency. Jerry Sue Thornton, president of Cuyahoga Community College, said:

> *If the environment is not ready, you only serve to remove yourself. Assess, test, and sensor the environment as you begin and [then again] from time to time. This is one of the most important things that a president can do.*

Choosing the Right Path at the Right Time

Although no one offered a step-by-step plan, the interviews did lead to a consensus that certain strategies are important initial actions, such as creating commitment and framing diversity in support of the mission, developing a shared agenda, creating campus dialogues, and including support for students of color in the strategic plan. Other strategies—such as transforming the curriculum, raising necessary funds, and creating external networks—are more important after a groundwork has been laid. That said, these strategies are not simply items to be crossed off a strategic to-do list. Instead, presidents repeatedly noted that ensuring the success of students of color is a *process* in which one repeatedly revisits key strategies.

We group the key insights that follow around four themes: commitment and focus; presidential points of leverage; a focus on and investment in people; and inevitable conflict. However, there are a few strategies on which presidents placed particular importance. For instance, presidents resoundingly agreed that hiring faculty of color is the most important strategy for ensuring the success of students of color. They also mentioned holding people accountable for results and moving from commitment and rhetoric to action (such as building an agenda or tying performance appraisals to diversity objectives) as extremely important strategies. In addition, the use of data to a neutralize what can easily become a political issue was stressed as important to moving forward. So, although we began our discussion by focusing on commitment and focus, we use this idea as a starting point, and not to suggest that this strategy is most important.

Commitment and Focus

Advancing a campus diversity agenda requires a great deal of commitment, from both the president and the institution, including the board. However, being committed to diversity is only a beginning. Institutions advance their efforts when they make diversity a priority and create the structures to keep it high among competing institutional priorities.

Articulate a personal commitment to diversity and establish an institutional one. Before a campus community can truly begin to address diversity, it needs to understand its own beliefs and assumptions about supporting students of color and to develop a widespread commitment and vision. This journey starts with the new president's awareness of his or her own beliefs and values. Most presidents who are successful in advancing a campus diversity agenda are deeply, personally committed to ensuring the success of students of color. They make this issue a constant priority among all of the competing agendas that they face day in and day out. Thornton reflected on this issue:

> *Presidents need to examine their own commitment to diversity. If you have it, fine-tune your values and vision, and make it known.*

People pay close attention to newly hired presidents to understand what will be important to the administration and thus to the campus. Ample opportunities exist for presidents to send messages about what is important to them in both the short and long term. Numerous presidents interviewed stressed this point, suggesting that new presidents should take advantage of their first few speeches, public events, and ceremonies to stress diversity as an important issue and position it front and center on the institution's agenda.

> People will focus on what you tell them is important. They can deny or ignore you, but if the president is standing there saying, "Work with me on this; this matters. I am going to see to it that this gets done" [then a lot will get accomplished].
>
> **—Nancy Zimpher, President, University of Cincinnati**

Robert Hemenway, chancellor of the University of Kansas, noted:

As a new president, you have to say, "This is one of my top two or three priorities. I'm not going to be deterred from it." If people see that you are absolutely deadly serious about this, and you're going to implement policies and procedures over the long haul that will check and monitor how successful your institution is at enrolling and graduating students of color, you will institutionalize a culture that will serve you very well in the long run. But you have to seize this issue by the throat, right from the beginning.

The president does not always have to be the sole developer of the campus vision, however, particularly if some other senior leader can do so more passionately. Some presidents may not have the strong personal commitment or the time necessary to lead a diversity agenda. Thornton eloquently addressed this point:

If you do not have a strong commitment, it will come through, so delegate it to a high-level person who possesses a commitment and who can provide a vision. If you choose another person, bless him or her and give the person full support. People are looking for a commitment and vision and if the president doesn't have it, he or she can effectively delegate it.

Frame diversity as essential to the institution's mission. It might seem a cliché to say that linking diversity to the institution's mission will ensure it is a priority, but experience shows that this can be a powerful tool for developing an institutional commitment. Presidents who have made meaningful progress toward advancing a campus diversity agenda explicitly articulate the success of students of color as a key to fulfilling the institution's mission. Thus, diversity is articulated as an important contributor to the mission and not viewed as a hindrance or something taking time and energy from the "real work" of the campus. Christopher Dahl, president of the State University of New York (SUNY) College at Geneseo, described how he did this:

When I came in as president, I situated diversity within the college's mission, as we were redefining the mission [to be an outstanding public liberal arts college]. I explicitly identified diversity as one of the three things the college needed to do to achieve greatness as a public liberal arts college…. Our diversity efforts were carefully integrated with our redefinition of mission.

He later added:

You should not isolate your efforts on the diversity front from the central mission of the college, because they are part and parcel of it. When the mission and diversity become connected, then diversity becomes part of the strategic plan, curriculum, hiring practices, etc., and it becomes much easier to support.

Freeman Hrabowski took a similar approach when he assumed the presidency of the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC). Like so many other institutions, UMBC had a modest commitment to diversity. Hrabowski took a different approach from his predecessors and tied diversity to the campus's strong history and priorities in science and mathematics. He framed the new diversity agenda as "developing the talented tenth," referring to a plan to build leaders of color for those disciplinary areas already considered important to the university.

At Willamette University, President M. Lee Pelton framed diversity as central to the mission of the institution. He said,

At our campus, diversity was seen as a good thing, but not necessarily tied to the work we do. I started to articulate why diversity is important for learning and critical thinking - that diversity is central to a liberal arts education. And it's important to have a simple message and to repeat [the message] over and over again. The most important strategy is to provide a clear rationale and tie [the rationale] to the core mission.

Similarly, Irving McPhail, chancellor of the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC), described the mission of his two-year college as a "learning college for all." He argued that "if certain groups are not performing, we are clearly not meeting our mission." Framing diversity in terms of falling short of the college's mission served as an important wake-up call for faculty and staff at the college.

Move from commitment to a campus-wide agenda. Commitment to diversity is important, but action is necessary. It is essential that presidents create an agenda for the campus that puts the commitment into action. The presidents with whom we spoke tended to adopt one of two approaches to do this. Some presidents felt they needed to articulate the diversity agenda for their institution, while others saw their role as assisting the campus community in giving voice to the diversity agenda. Alex Johnson, president of Delgado Community College, exemplified the first strategy: "As a new president, you really have to articulate a commitment and vision for multiculturalism and diversity. It should not be done in a vacuum, but you should have some ideas that can be built on by the community." Much of what a president can do is grounded in the realities of the job and the institution's history with diversity, Johnson noted, saying:

When implementing your vision, first make sure you understand the nature of the college and its culture. Don't make decisions in isolation. Make sure that when it comes to the diversity agenda, you get initial input and feedback from individuals who understand the institution, but also from individuals who are going to be affected by a diversity agenda. You may have to push the envelope, but you need to know where the envelope is.

> As a new president, you're hit with so many agendas so quickly and you really have to take a step back and decide exactly how aggressive and committed you're going to be to a diverse campus. There will be the [campus] bureaucracy and the faculty, and even students, who will create a lot of reasons why you can't get things done.
>
> **—Robert Hemenway, Chancellor, the University of Kansas**

Gail Mellow, president of La Guardia Community College of the City University of New York, illustrated the second approach. When she began her presidency, she held a summit on diversity in order to have people from across the college discuss their views and develop a shared agenda for moving forward. She described the power of this event, saying, "At the summit we realized the campus community's vision of diversity was as a challenge and problem, and not as an asset. We completely reoriented our vision from the summit." The college now holds annual summits on diversity that bring together much of the campus to discuss the institution's hopes for diversity.

Cultivate board support. Several presidents mentioned that their boards regularly revisit campus diversity plans, which helps establish and maintain these plans as a campus priority. Board support is particularly important at institutions that are just beginning to embark on a concerted diversity initiative. Boards also can play important roles at institutions whose efforts seem stalled. For example, Sidney Ribeau, president of Bowling Green State University, explained the role his board played on that campus:

I had the Board of Trustees pass a resolution in support of diversity as an institutional imperative. As the board saw recruitment programs, financial aid initiatives, and retention programs being put forward, they knew that it was connected to that resolution we had passed on diversity. I have been fortunate that my board has embraced our emphasis

Campus Dialogues for Establishing a Commitment to Diversity and Advancing a Diversity Agenda

Campus-wide dialogues serve as an effective strategy to establish a strong institutional commitment to diversity. Such dialogues serve as vehicles for raising important questions, examining beliefs and assumptions, and developing new understandings. Initial conversations also can help the institution understand the challenges it faces and assess its current efforts in supporting students of color. Subsequent conversations help keep the campus focused on its diversity efforts and take stock of where it has been and where it is headed. Christopher Dahl, president of **SUNY Geneseo**, talked about such campus-wide dialogues at his institution:

What I have found is that you need a continuing conversation by the whole community about the problems in differential degree completion rates and the actual educational experiences of students of color. If you don't keep interaction and conversations going, you lose momentum.

Students provide powerful voices in such conversations. Presidents repeatedly mentioned that faculty and staff listen carefully to students and are open to their insights. But presidents also need to be visible. This is not the type of event to which they can send a delegate. Creating an environment in which diversity can be discussed openly is an important step toward changing the climate to support students of color. Different types of institutions have approached these dialogues in a number of ways:

Bowling Green State University invited administrators, select faculty, and student leaders to talk about their visions for race relations at the university. Students did most of the talking, and faculty and staff listened

on diversity as good for the campus community and they are very supportive. They will ask me about the continuation rates if I don't bring it up. They have bought into diversity as a value in a significant way, and I know it has helped us in advancing our agenda. People on campus see what a significant priority it is for the board; they cannot ignore this imperative.

Boards also can be important when presidents face active resistance to efforts to advance diversity, particularly if they attempt to change hiring practices, reallocate resources, alter strategic priorities, or hold units accountable for meeting specified objectives. When active opposition erupts, governing boards can serve as essential presidential allies. In addition to the board's role as advocate and supporter, boards also can be powerful in brokering off-campus partnerships and networks and in fund raising, activities that are described later in this report.

Establish presidential-level task forces or commissions to create a sense of priority. Campuses need a visible expression—beyond presidential speeches and white papers—that they are serious about ensuring the success of students of color. A useful approach to guaranteeing that campus stakeholders realize diversity is a priority is through high-level commissions or task forces, although the specific charges, structures, and compositions of these groups may vary. For example, these groups can oversee the development of strategic plans, or assess campus progress toward its stated goals. In some instances, these bodies are established as part of the formal institutional structure. In other cases, they are ad hoc and dissolve after they have fulfilled their charge. These

intently. Students who participated got a chance to hear from other students and speak directly to the president, administrators, and faculty about their experiences. Because the number of students of color was growing and new issues regarding diversity were continuing to emerge, the administration decided to hold these dialogues frequently, in hopes of maintaining the conversation.

The Human Relations Council at **New Jersey City College** sponsored a series of dialogues to help key campus stakeholders deepen their understanding of campus diversity issues. As an urban institution located not far from New York City, many on campus assumed that diversity was not a problem on campus because the student population was extremely diverse. The Council opted to host a series of "hot topic" discussions, each related to different aspects of race and ethnicity and the student experience on campus. One session focused on bioterrorism and self-preservation; the next on the myths and misconceptions of Islam; a third focused on inter-religious interactions; and a fourth on stereotyping. These engaging discussions helped make diversity part of the pulse of the campus.

Berkeley College of New York and New Jersey holds two major semi-annual retreats attended by faculty, staff, and administrators, at which the college explores strategic issues related to supporting students of color. The college invites an outside speaker who has expertise in issues related to diversity. At first, these retreats were used to raise awareness about the experiences of diverse students. Over time, however, these conversations evolved into new strategic initiatives to advance the college's efforts to help students of color.

commissions can provide a well-defined structure that presidents can monitor, ask advice of, and hold accountable for progress.

The composition of a commission is extremely important and varies depending upon the particulars of the institution: Who are the formal and informal leaders on campus? Who has personal commitments to ensuring the success of students of color? Who knows how to get things accomplished on campus? SUNY Geneseo's Dahl advised presidents to:

> *choose the members in close consultation with a number of people. My commission consists of students, clerical staff, and faculty. As president, it is important to hand-pick the people and to choose the leadership—a senior faculty member who had been involved in diversity work was chosen on our campus. Also, include some of the people you would expect, who have been working very hard and have a commitment, but also people who were not the usual suspects from the faculty and staff. Also, some people have a particular interest or expertise—making the curriculum more diverse, measuring effectiveness, or identifying ways of reaching different student populations. Search for and stay open to various people.*

Commissions, however, are not strategies that excuse presidents from active participation in the campus's diversity efforts. Joanne Creighton, president of Mount Holyoke College, emphasized that presidents should attend commission meetings regularly and stay involved in the progress of the group. She added, "I missed not a single meeting and played a major role in the development of the commission's agenda. I think this kind of commitment matters."

Effective Approaches for Commissions and Task Forces

Carlos Hernández, president of **New Jersey City College**, created a Human Relations Council as a standing campus body. The Council is broadly reflective of all constituencies and has the following responsibilities:

1. Examine data to determine strategic areas for change. The Council pursues questions such as: What do we know about one another, as groups of people? What do the data tell us about the university community and its diversity? Where do problems exist?
2. Respond to issues in the external environment and be positioned to identify needed changes. In response to occurrences of bigotry and hatred that were occurring in Jersey City as well as across northern New Jersey, for instance, the Council put together seminars, courses, and workshops for the university community.
3. Act as a 24/7 swat team, addressing issues that come up on campus whenever they might occur. For example, people on campus were calling East Asian and Indian students derogatory names and Indians were being assaulted in the area. The Council gathered people to discuss their responsibility to address that issue, both on and off campus.
4. Foster dialogues that can help shift the campus climate.

Presidential Leverage Points

Institutional leaders have at their disposal a set of tools and opportunities to advance campus diversity. They can use the strategic plan wisely, create accountability frameworks, collect and use institutional data, use the curriculum, support student and cultural programming, form external partnerships, and raise needed funds.

Use the strategic plan. Incorporating diversity into the campus's strategic plan embeds it as an institutional goal, ensures financial support, and provides a framework for campus-wide accountability for progress on it. The strategic planning process is one clear mechanism through which presidents can articulate their priorities for the campus. It also is something that they can directly shape and influence, although how institutions go about developing and implementing their strategic plans varies. One choice presidents face is either to make diversity an explicit objective of the plan or to weave it through multiple objectives. Nancy Zimpher, president of the University of Cincinnati, described the two approaches:

> *There are two competing theories in my own experience in strategic planning: Do you thread diversity through your major strategic goals, or do you appoint a diversity czar and that way ensure that diversity work gets done? In the first approach, like thread through cloth, the risk is that it [a diversity initiative] will get lost. In the second, the risk is that everybody will just say, "Let Mikey do it." Neither one is a [simple] remedy.*

Shortly after his arrival on campus in 1989, **San Francisco State University** President Robert A. Corrigan established a Human Relations Task Force. From it emerged the post of university dean of human relations and the Human Relations Council. Comprising 25 people from both inside and outside the campus, the Council disbanded in 2004. A changing campus-wide philosophy that now views diversity as part of every individual's job has replaced the need for an independent unit focused on the issue. However, for 15 years, the Council had an enormous effect on the campus, keeping diversity as a campus-wide priority, helping develop key initiatives that became part of on-going strategic plans, undertaking important reviews of campus climate and culture, and mobilizing the community when a pressing diversity issue arose on campus. Corrigan also established a key task force on inter-group relations that advised university leaders on immediate and long-term strategies for improving campus climate after an explosive incident on campus in 2002 between Jewish and Palestinian students.

At **Bowling Green State University**, President Sidney Ribeau created a team whose specific charge was implementing diversity plans and initiatives that had been developed but had not come to fruition. He said:

> *I found out in the last couple years that there were many things that we said we were going to do that we had not done. I developed an implementation team with all the individuals who work in any area related to diversity. I gave them specific charges and timelines and this worked to make changes and helped us not get distracted.*

Presidents may choose to incorporate diversity throughout their other strategic objectives when they face a long list of other "top priorities," which was the case at Wheaton College in Massachusetts. Marshall, Wheaton's president emerita, noted:

Strategic planning is all about . . . getting the whole community saying, "What are the things that we need to make our top three priorities?" In that sense, diversity wasn't in our top three—it was in the plan, but not the top three. Obviously [to us], the top three were financial [issues], a capital campaign, and continuing to reach out to alums so they felt OK about [the college becoming] co-ed. The toughest thing to figure out is how to pay attention to diversity when these other issues exist, and how you are really going to make it a personal priority. You basically have to look at the context of your institution and the resources you have available to move yourself ahead, and then communicate, communicate, communicate.

On the other hand, presidents may choose to make diversity an explicit priority in the strategic plan. The presidents with whom we spoke took this route when they wanted to justify significant resource allocation to support diversity, felt their institution had not made diversity a conscious priority in the past, or believed that the other approach would not result in adequate attention and make accountability for progress difficult.

Regardless of process, effective planning involves evaluating progress and allocating resources. Clark College President Wayne Branch emphasized this point:

We use the goals from the strategic plan for annual performance evaluation of staff and faculty. You have to tie plans to rewards and performance to ensure accountability. This process also makes accountability for diversity a shared goal by all individuals.

When planning is done well, resources can follow priorities. Presidents repeatedly described how their campus diversity efforts are well-supported because they are key initiatives within the strategic plan. Robert Corrigan, president of San Francisco State University, provided the following advice to new presidents about planning and resource allocation:

The most important advice I would give to new presidents is to maintain control over the budget. . . . The president should use the budget to support diversity initiatives. No matter how limited your budget is, it can still be used to support change. It can provide rewards and incentives. Too many presidents shy away from using the budget effectively. Support your commitment and sense of priority with budget allocations.

Using plans to drive resource allocation helps prevent resources from being spread too thinly among competing priorities, often resulting in diversity efforts receiving short shrift. Strategic plans also provide a vehicle to structure campus incentives. For example, Daniel Bernstine, president of Portland State University, puts resources aside for hiring faculty of color, supporting creative faculty projects that advance diversity or undertake curriculum transformation efforts, and providing bonuses for

meeting departmental targets of hiring faculty of color or retaining students.

However, just because diversity appears in a plan does not mean that it enjoys campus-wide, or even cabinet-level, support. Some presidents noted that they made the mistake of assuming their administrative team or cabinet shared their same level of commitment. Johnson, of Delgado Community College, described this challenge:

[An important] piece of planning is working with your administrative team to institute practices that nurture inclusion. And that's across the board: in your academic areas, your finance areas, your workforce development area, and your student affairs area. Incorporating practices that promote inclusion—hiring programs, services to students, all of that—and creating a climate on your campus that supports inclusion—[through] clubs, organizations, course work, and cultural arts programming—all help you create a climate that supports inclusion. This type of comprehensive work does not get done unless the team really understands the vision and the strategic plan.

Hold people accountable. The challenge is clear: Institutions need to move from rhetoric about diversity to action that results in success for students of color. To that end, as the University of Kansas's Hemenway said, speaking of his first chancellorship at the University of Kentucky, it is one thing to have *a plan* for advancing diversity, but is it another thing to have *advanced* diversity on campus. He said:

People can give you plan after plan and show you rhetorical piece after rhetorical piece about how the institution's heart is in the right place, but that doesn't mean a damn thing. When I came in as a new chancellor, I said, "Show me the affirmative action plan." They showed me a 60- to 70-page document. "That's really great, but how many black faculty did you hire last year?" "One," [they replied]. And I made a point of saying—in a big meeting of campus executives, faculty, and staff—that I have no interest whatsoever in the affirmative action plan. I'm interested in affirmative action, and here's what we're going to do. We set a goal of hiring 50 tenure-track African-American faculty, and we're going to get it done.

Presidents who have seen results acknowledge that accountability is essential to progress. Holding individuals and units accountable for diversity can take a variety of strategies. In some instances, presidents use the strategic planning and budgeting processes to hold their institutions accountable, particularly for faculty hiring. Accreditation can be another means for charting progress, particularly when it comes to student learning and persistence. Hemenway described his approach at Kansas:

I met with the deans once a week. The very first meeting, I asked the deans individually how their plans for hiring minority faculty were going and nobody had much going on.... For that entire year, I asked that same question every single cabinet meeting. Every dean knew that when they went to that meeting, they were going to have to explain, in front of their colleagues, what it was that they were doing: how many people they were interviewing, how many candidates they had identified, when the interviews were going to start, what the quality of the candidates were.... Everybody was going to be held responsible.... This pushed people to

have something good to say when we went through that weekly analysis of how we were doing.

The University of Cincinnati's Zimpher adopted a different strategy. She convened a group of 70 off-campus leaders, who were committed to the success of students of color, to evaluate campus progress regularly. This is a high-stakes strategy, of course, but it has the potential for high payoff. As she noted, "You have to be very open and expose your problems, and be willing to have people see the real situation, not a PR presentation."

> "Data can help a campus move beyond the misinformation and preconceptions that often accompany issues of race and ethnicity."

Use data compellingly. An essential component of accountability is having data that can readily chart progress or the lack of it. Data can identify underlying problems and help change common misconceptions, add legitimacy to diversity initiatives across campus, and help set funding priorities. Data can help a campus move beyond the misinformation and preconceptions that often accompany issues of race and ethnicity. Finding ways to create and satisfy a "culture of evidence" surrounding the success of students of color is essential to progress. Hrabowski, of UMBC, described the way he used data to transform the beliefs of people on his campus:

We had focus groups with faculty, in which we asked challenging questions [such as] why are [certain] groups [of students] performing a certain way? We would show them data and get them focused on facts. We do not let faculty get away with stereotypes and assumptions. We ask people to be part of developing solutions and not come in [to the discussion] with answers right away.

Branch noted how Clark College began to use data intentionally to advance its diversity efforts:

All planning groups and management meetings now require review and presentation of data for decision making. . . . Once people realize you will not make off-the-cuff decisions and will demand data, campus practices change. But just saying you want data-driven [decisions] is not enough. You literally have to stop making decisions for people to take it seriously. . . . We now recognize that our assumptions were often incorrect about what students want and feel.

Data are important not only for understanding the challenges related to ensuring success for students of color, but also for assessing how well various strategies

are working. Hrabowski elaborated on this strategy:

We have started so many different new programs and practices and it would be a waste if we just assumed they worked. It was those poor assumptions that the old practices were working that made us stagnant and not address fundamental changes that should have been happening on campus. We need to constantly evaluate our work to support students of color and revise it on an on-going basis.

Using data effectively is not equivalent to asking that data be used more often. Data have to be readily available in usable forms, missing data have to be identified and collected, and, most importantly, decision makers have to see the efficacy of data and use them accordingly. These conditions may require new systems and processes and may require nothing less than cultural change. CCBC's McPhail described this challenge:

The key component of our success, I believe, was establishing a culture of evidence. It took me a couple of years to totally revamp my planning, research, and evaluation staff; to substantially increase the number of professionals I have in the planning and institutional research areas; and to begin to develop a data warehouse to pump information in and out. You have to build up the infrastructure to support a culture of evidence if you want to assist students of color.

Focus on the curriculum. That the curriculum is the purview of the faculty is a common understanding of most administrators. However, presidents mentioned that the curriculum is simply too important not to be leveraged to advance diversity on campus. What is taught and how it is taught reflect important institutional values. Presidential attention and support can go far in making the curriculum an important ingredient to an institution's efforts to ensure the success of students of color. Joseph McDonald, president of Salish Kootenai College, offered a strategy for presidential involvement in curriculum changes:

I established a curriculum committee at the presidential level to examine courses. Faculty need to demonstrate respect for all cultures in the way course material is presented. I know that we have a different structure from most campuses, but I imagine presidents of other institutions could adopt some variation of this approach. The president has to be involved in the curriculum—it is just too important. It is the core of the institution.

Presidential attention also can energize others with similar concerns. Carlos Hernandez, president of New Jersey City College, said:

In the past few years, I have spoken up about the infusion of [foreign] languages throughout the curriculum. There have been faculty [who] have been dying to hear the president talk about that for some time. Once I mentioned it at the university-wide meeting, they just took the ball and ran with it. There were many faculty already thinking about how to address that issue in a very practical way in their courses and help other faculty do it, as well. Once people see the president is committed, more curricular change occurs.

Curricular revision can be an overwhelming process with limited success, as many presidents know. An effective strategy for many is to support individual faculty and other campus-wide efforts that have the potential to shape the curriculum directly or indirectly. For example, SUNY Geneseo's Dahl said:

A lot of the discussions of diversity and a lot of the issues related to diversity in the classroom are dealt with in [our] Teaching and Learning Center. I have publicly supported the Center and its work, which has made people more interested in its work.

Support student programming. The experiences of students of color are, in many ways, shaped by the co-curriculum. The presence and strength of student organizations for various ethnic groups and the number of student leadership positions filled by students of color are, for instance, easily identified barometers of how well an institution is doing in ensuring success for students of color.

One component of supportive co-curricular programming in which presidents can play an important role is the presence of cultural or multicultural centers. Successful presidents recognize that these centers are important in developing supportive communities for many types of students, not just for students of color, but also for other populations, such as returning students and gay and lesbian students. MacDonald, of Salish Kootenai College, noted the key role of multicultural centers:

I often tell presidents of predominantly white institutions that the best way they can support students of color is to ensure that there is a safe [place] for students of a particular racial or ethnic group. Unless they have a space to get together, affiliate, and develop relationships [with one another], they just will not make it.

The role of the president is not only to ensure these safe places exist, but also to advocate for them and protect them when under fire, particularly in difficult budget situations. This was the case at California State Polytechnic University–Pomona, where the president, Michael Ortiz, had to step in and defend these centers when a faction on campus sought to consolidate them.

An additional role for the president is to promote and encourage linkages between student affairs and academic affairs divisions and departments. Often, these two areas work independently. However, presidents can support and facilitate collaborations that result in a better environment for students of color. For instance, when Ortiz began at Cal Poly–Pomona, he hired a senior-level administrator to bridge these two divisions.

Reaching into the Community

Since assuming her presidency, Juliet Garcia of the **University of Texas at Brownsville** has made an intensive effort to develop strong ties with the local community—efforts that are now bearing fruit. For example, the campus realized that some students of color who also worked were having difficulty because their employers were not allowing flexible scheduling when the students needed to take midterm and final exams. She met with employers in the community to describe the importance of flexible work schedules to ensure academic success for their employees. The employers responded by changing their practices.

Form external partnerships. Ensuring the success of students of color requires the involvement of individuals and organizations outside the institution. Some obvious examples include partnering with local schools, community agencies, and organizations. In some instances, these extramural networks help recruit diverse students to campus. Portland State's Bernstine described his involvement in outreach: "As president, I go out into school systems to recruit students. It is really important for students of color to see a president of color and to encourage them to attend college."

Other external linkages can support currently enrolled students of color. For example, CUNY's La Guardia Community College developed extensive partnerships with a variety of community-based organizations in New York City to support the educational, social, and cultural needs of its student body, which represents approximately 150 different cultures. Without community partnerships, Mellow acknowledged, the college could never be able to meet such diverse needs. In a similar effort, Thornton, at Cuyahoga Community College, worked directly with local Catholic churches to encourage Hispanic females to attend the college and support them once they enrolled. While at San Jose State University, Robert Caret developed three community-university ethnic councils—African American, Asian American, and Chicano/Hispanic American. These councils had members from the most influential community organizations and provided key communication links to important communities for the university. Caret noted, "They provided an important forum where trust and understanding developed . . . keys to our eventual success. It is important to recognize that no matter how well-intended out actions, if trust was not part of the equation, the likelihood of success diminished proportionately."

The presidents who we interviewed often assumed personal responsibility for developing these important networks, although this task is something they could easily have delegated. Pelton, of Willamette University, an independent university in Oregon, described his role in such outreach efforts:

> *I personally took on the task of meeting with these organizations and developing collaborations and networks to improve our admissions pipeline. Many of these organizations were partners with public institutions, but had not considered partnering with a private institution. Many of these organizations [offer] scholarship money. I personally took [this] on because I had the language and knowledge and did not feel I could delegate this to any other person, because our campus is still developing its vision related to diversity.*

Finally, outside groups can provide counsel and encouragement to institutions on diversity issues. Max Castillo, president of the University of Houston–Downtown, established presidential advisory councils for each of the university's schools and colleges. Comprising business, industry, nonprofit, and government leaders, these groups encourage the schools to hire more faculty of color, recruit and retain more students of color, and establish mentoring and support programs, among other goals.

to make it more inviting to students of color, adding Hispanic design elements that changed the feel of the campus.

But success with diversity on campus can, in turn, contribute to fund-raising activities. For example, some presidents have used their diversity agendas to secure state and federal grants intended to support underrepresented students. UMBC's Hrabowski has used that university's highly successful Meyerhoff Program—an initiative for students of color in math, science, and engineering—

I did everything you can imagine, from black-tie dinners to car washes, to raise the money. I was at every event. I realized we just were not going to be able to meaningfully help students of color without financial assistance and I was willing to put my time and effort there.

—Juliet Garcia, President, University of Texas at Brownsville

Raise necessary funds. For many students of color, financial issues are a serious impediment to their success. To that end, successful presidents recognize the importance of providing adequate support for those most in need. However, ensuring the success of students of color means more than simply providing student scholarships. The two-for-one hiring program at San Francisco State (see "Diversifying the Faculty" page 22) and Portland State President's office effort to offset 25 percent of the salaries of newly hired faculty of color can have significant effects on a campus—but they carry obvious costs. Another strategy is to support endowed chairs, as the University of Houston–Downtown does, which can be a tremendous asset in recruiting leading faculty of color. In addition, many campuses need to increase their capacities to meet growing demand, particularly from students of color, which may require an expanded physical plant, or new programs and centers. The University of Texas at Brownsville altered its architecture to leverage additional public and private support for campus diversity efforts.

A Focus on and Investment in People

Every president recognizes that the institution's greatest resource is its people. A college or university is nothing but a simple collection of buildings without the faculty, students, administrators, and staff who make it a special and meaningful place. Like all of a university's other work, the key to advancing diversity on campus is its people.

Find people who "get it" and support them. One of the fastest and most effective ways to create both immediate *and* long-term change is to hire and support people who understand the importance of ensuring success for students of color and are committed to it. Savvy presidents realize they cannot drive a diversity agenda by themselves. As so many presidents suggested to us, these champions include both the usual suspects as well as the

not-so-usual ones. Juliet Garcia, president of the University of Texas at Brownsville, described the opportunity:

If you hire the right people, controversy around a diversity agenda is often less likely. You start off with a coalition. When there is controversy, it is usually diffused by the network of leadership. [The new campus coalition] creates a type of shared governance without procedure, but through a common mindset around diversity issues.

Presidents have the opportunity, especially when they first step into office, to make changes in existing positions and create new ones. In some instances, they create a senior position chiefly responsible for campus diversity. Or, they may spread the responsibility for advancing diversity widely. The strategy followed often is shaped by the size and structure of the campus, as well as by its culture, with many institutions choosing both to have a chief diversity officer and make it part of others' portfolios as well.

Being involved in the hiring process is important for presidents, but it can take valuable time. Mellow, of La Guardia College, personally meets with candidates for key administrative posts as well as full-time faculty positions so they hear first-hand her commitment to diversity. "It [diversity] is worth my investment," she noted. "If I have the right people on board, I have less day-to-day work over time related to these issues."

In addition to new people, many individuals may already exist on campus who are committed to ensuring the success of students of color. Johnson, of Delgado Community College, said:

Early on, a president should do his or her homework and learn which people are committed to making the college community more diverse. They [will be people who] have a history of supporting that type of agenda and that is where you need to start. These will be the people who can serve as advisors to clubs, serve on your diversity committees, and help you understand the importance of diversity and multiculturalism—those individuals who will actually step out front and lead the campus forward, if supported. I'm not just talking about people of color but having individuals from all backgrounds. And then you need to provide them with rewards, celebrate their successes, and provide PR for their efforts.

One of the challenges new presidents face is that oftentimes these potential champions have been marginalized. Graham Spanier, president of Pennsylvania State University, had experience with this issue:

You have to build trust with them. I know that when I started and [these potential champions] asked for resources, they did not believe they were going to get it. Other times I noticed they were hesitant to advocate [for] something. I really had to work to build their trust and make them feel empowered.

It can be a major revolution if you identify critical masses of people throughout the institution who are committed to supporting students of color and, when provided the right support, are able to make a real difference in the lives of students.

—Irving McPhail, Chancellor, Community College of Baltimore County

Hire faculty of color. Presidents agreed that one of the most important contributions they can make to ensuring success for students of color is to support the hiring of more faculty of color. As Marshall, of Wheaton College, simply stated, achievement by students of color "depends on diverse faculty." Presidents strongly agreed that students of color benefit when they have mentors and role models who look like them. Presidents also believed that this strategy needs to be reinforced through the institution's strategic plan, that individual units must have hiring goals, and that they must be held accountable for progress (or lack of progress) toward those goals.

When it comes to diversifying the faculty, presidents have learned that they need to stand firm, while helping the hiring departments think broadly about faculty qualifications. For instance, some presidents told stories of rejecting hires from all-white candidate pools and providing seminars to train department chairs in hiring processes and criteria. Marshall offered this insight:

> *I made it clear—knowing that I would get some criticism—that if people came up with either hires or projects that would promote diversity, the chances of getting them approved were much higher than other projects. Obviously, you get criticized for that particular thing. [But] I just said that this is what would be best for the quality of the education for all students.*

Hemenway, of the University of Kansas, echoed that stance. He said,

> *You either believe in affirmative action or not. Oftentimes, you're posturing a bit; you're doing things for dramatic effect. . . . [But] if you don't, everybody will go along just as usual. The principle is really important: Seize the day, grab the issue by the throat, and don't give any appearance of bending on it.*

Presidents also can develop and support programs that help diversify the faculty. For example, Castillo did at the University of Houston–Downtown what many presidents do and established a program to develop and train faculty of color (a "grow your own" effort). The university hires faculty of color as adjunct professors while they finish their doctoral degrees, offering stipends and support to help them finish their studies, particularly for those studying the sciences. Another option is creating incentives for the

Diversifying the Faculty

Robert Corrigan, president of **San Francisco State University**, supported a program in the late 1980s that, in its conception, was highly innovative. The program gave departments that found two qualified candidates, one of whom was a person of color, the opportunity to hire both. In effect, departments got "two for one," thanks to that program and vigorous recruitment efforts.

During the early 1990s, 70 percent of new faculty hires were people of color or women—which, in turn, affected the way the campus operated. At the program's inception, Corrigan did not realize the significant effect the increases in faculty diversity would have. Upon reflection, he believes this is the university's "single most important strategy for making students of color successful" on their campus. What he has learned over the past 17 years, he said, is that students of color will not succeed unless faculty of color and majority faculty who care deeply about the success of students of color are present in significant numbers on campus.

Additional Resources on Recruiting and Retaining Diverse Faculty

Smith, D. (1996). *Achieving faculty diversity: Debunking the myths.* Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Smith, D. (2000). How to diversify the faculty. *Academe, 86(5), 48-52.*

Turner, C. (2002). *Diversifying the faculty: A guidebook for search committees.* Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

department, such as what Portland State University did: The administration pays 25 percent of a new faculty member of color's salary for three years, freeing departmental monies. Cuyahoga Community College took a more developmental approach, instituting training for all department chairs and members of search committees to ensure they examined candidates fairly and to broaden their hiring criteria.

Listen to (and learn from) students. Successful presidents understand that their own students are important sources of wise insight and rarely pull any punches. In some instances, student engagement can open a president's eyes. Mellow, a white women leading LaGuardia College in New York City, said, "I learned to support students of color by spending time with them." But white presidents are not the only ones who can learn by interacting with students of color. UMBC's Hrabowski, who is African American, cautioned fellow presidents of color not to believe that they understand students of color just because they share their race or ethnicity. "Students' backgrounds are so diverse and [when you] add in social class, regions, etc., there is just no way to really understand" all students without talking to them.

Engaging students of color is a two-way street. Presidents learn from their students, but students also learn from their presidents. Thus, students' understanding of the campus becomes more sophisticated, their opinions better thought out, and their insights more helpful, given the realities of campus life.

Inevitable Conflict

> *You have to repeatedly use every problem that arises on campus as a catalyst, a teaching moment, and an opportunity to strengthen the campus commitment to diversity.*
>
> **—Dale Rogers Marshall, President Emerita, Wheaton College**

Issues associated with race and ethnicity continue to be difficult for the United States, and its campuses. Thus, when race becomes a focal point of discussion, presidents should expect a variety of potential conflicts. As Corrigan, of San Francisco State, said:

Because the campus has institutionalized its diversity efforts, conflict is open. Conflict is not seen as something uncommon or controversial—it is a daily occurrence at San Francisco State. And the conflicts constantly evolve, taking on a different character. You never get to a point where you say, "We have worked through this diversity stuff." For example, in the Asian-American [student] group, the Japanese and Chinese students were in conflict recently. Before that, it was the Latino and Chicano students, and the Arab and Jewish students.

Presidents play important roles in managing such conflict, so that it becomes constructive and not destructive. Most presidents interviewed for this project told stories of racially motivated graffiti; inappropriate comments in the student newspaper, over e-mail, or in the classroom; or attacks on affirmative action (and, by extension, on the institution's diversity efforts). Although the specifics varied, presidents who have been successful in diversifying their institutions shared the belief that controversy can be and should be an educational opportunity. Shaped by this philosophy and drawing upon their experiences, the presidents interviewed suggested the following key strategies:

1. Prepare for inevitable conflict by appointing a campus group (such as a human relations commission or presidential task force) to monitor incidents, quickly inform the community of emerging problems, hold campus-wide conversations, and reassure victims that the issue will be addressed. The overarching philosophy of this groups should be to "humanize" the conflict and to get people to talk to, and thus learn from, one another.
2. Inform the campus about any incident soon after it occurs. Depending upon the situation, the president may choose to make a statement. An important part of any acknowledgment of a racial incident is to state clearly that *racism will not be tolerated*.
3. Hold (and attend) a town hall meeting or campus forum with trained facilitators. Make sure to set parameters and groundrules for the discussion.
4. Meet with key student, faculty, and staff leaders, such as officers of the black or Latino student associations or Hillel, key faculty who serve on campus diversity groups or committees, and members of the black faculty and staff union.
5. Put a human face on the consequences of racism on campus. In some instances, campuses invite testimonials from different people about the effects the incident has had on them personally, and this can be an effective strategy.

> There are students of color who really have something to bring to the table because they want to build a better community. These students have been our strongest allies and they sometimes have been the officers of things like the Latino Alliance. [They are] people who want to help build community and are committed to that.
>
> **—Christopher Dahl, President, SUNY Geneseo**

Presidents can easily find themselves at the center of controversies over race. This is particularly the case when some groups believe the institution is (1) not doing enough to support a particular group, or

(2) doing too much in support of a particular group. Hrabowski offered this advice:

I worked to build trust with different groups—African Americans, Hispanics, gays and lesbians. When I have been challenged by a particular group of students or faculty, others have emerged to defend me. You want others defending you, ideally. The lesson is to build these alliances and trust up front. Students can often be your best defenders, as they are considered legitimate by legislators, alumni, and the community.

Alumni also can raise concerns to presidents about diversity issues. Presidents, particularly new presidents, need a thorough understanding of the campus's history with such issues (including its recent history). Be prepared for this type of feedback, and listen and acknowledge the various concerns. As the new president of Spelman College, Beverly Tatum commented, "My advice to a new president would be to learn as much as you can about those traditions. You have to honor the past as you try to move people forward into the future." However, presidents must remain steadfast in their commitments and carefully explain the campus's current vision for diversity and why diversity matters.

Presidential Race Matters

We intentionally interviewed presidents of different races and ethnicities about advancing a diversity agenda on campus. Through the interviews, we learned that while all presidents promoting a diversity agenda face challenges, one's race matters in how they go about finding strategies that work.

For example, presidents of color who worked to advance a diversity effort oftentimes felt they were viewed as favoring the group to which they were a member or that they were focusing on diversity to the exclusion of other issues. Hrabowski addressed this dilemma:

I realized soon that I needed to demonstrate that I could be fair to all groups. Everyone felt I [as an African American] was favoring African-American students' needs. There was suspicion and I was losing credibility. You cannot provide any evidence for this stereotype and must be vigilant about your behavior.

In response, presidents of color took care to employ strategies to overcome this perception. For example, many presidents of color worked to expand the opportunities for other leaders to advance diversity. In many instances, these people were faculty, other administrators, or board members who could take up the charge. Frequently, these partners represented a variety of races and only some of them had a history of championing diversity on campus. This approach helped convey the message that diversity is the responsibility not only of minority faculty and staff, but also of everyone on campus.

Additionally, presidents of color noted that they frequently found themselves at institutions that were, in the words of one Hispanic president, not yet ready for "too many people of color in top positions." When this was the case, they often felt that their actions were overly scrutinized and second-guessed. They particularly felt this challenge regarding hiring. White presidents were often able to hire several key administrators of color with minimal controversy. However, presidents of color were met with much greater resistance when making similar appointments. The perception was that they were overemphasizing race.

On the other hand, presidents of color often believed they served as key role models for students of color and could empathize with these students' experiences and frustrations. Some also believed that their own experiences as people of color helped them gain a deeper understanding of the personal and institutional challenges of diversity and that those experiences had helped them develop innovative strategies for campus diversity over time.

While white presidents did not face these issues and believed themselves to be generally perceived as more objective and less self-interested in their diversity efforts, they faced different difficulties. White presidents often believed that some stakeholders did not consider them credible or legitimate to lead a diversity effort. They also found themselves in situations in which faculty and staff of color did not trust them. Many white presidents found that focusing on accountability helped establish credibility and develop trust. Their demand for results demonstrated a concern for progress. Like presidents of color, white presidents found themselves developing coalitions and networks to advance diversity, and to help enhance their credibility with faculty and staff of color.

Part of the challenge faced by white presidents is acknowledging in a constructive way the marginalization that many faculty, staff, and students of color have experienced over the course of their academic lives. Understanding the institution's history with race and oppression, as well as individuals' personal stories, can be helpful to this end.

Conclusion: Transforming Campus Culture and Climate

Taken as a whole, these strategies can alter the culture and climate of a campus. They lead institutions to re-examine key assumptions and think deeply about important institutional values and beliefs. An important leadership role for presidents is to help their institutions determine which elements should remain steadfast and which need to be reshaped. Students of color will succeed when college campuses embrace all students and become inclusive, when institutions care deeply about the academic and personal success of all and make the necessary changes to fulfill this desire. However, for most institutions, this is a long process that, as mentioned in the beginning of this essay, is a marathon, not a sprint. Through hard work during the course of their tenure, presidents can cover important ground, getting closer to the end of that race and transforming the institution's culture to ensure the success of all students.

As a president engages his or her campus in dialogue and discussion, reflects upon the institution's mission, and examines both personal and institutional commitment to diversity, that president is helping the campus examine its culture by surfacing its values and priorities. Making these values a deep part of people's consciousness and behavior is reinforced through the strategic plan, rewarding people for meeting objectives related to diversity, holding people accountable, and providing them with necessary support and resources. Institutional culture also can be reshaped by hiring new people and altering the curriculum. As the effects of these strategies add up over time, slowly but surely the institution's culture and climate will change. Because it is difficult to gauge when the culture and climate have changed and because that transformation occurs dynamically and episodically, people often do not notice the deep changes in the institution. Yet, as those with whom we spoke alluded, these strategies help move the institution to a vastly different place. Presidents help students most when they acknowledge their own roles as shapers of the institution's culture, remembering that these strategies move the campus and all its participants toward the finish line, achieving success for all.

Appendix: Presidents Interviewed for This Paper

We thank the following individuals for sharing their experiences and insights. Their titles and affiliations reflect their positions at the time of the interviews (January–March 2005).

Jacquelyn M. Belcher
President
Georgia Perimeter College

Daniel O. Bernstine
President
Portland State University (OR)

R. Wayne Branch
President
Clark College (WA)

Robert L. Caret
President
Towson University (MD)

Max Castillo
President
University of Houston–Downtown (TX)

Robert A. Corrigan
President
San Francisco State University (CA)

Joanne V. Creighton
President
Mount Holyoke College (MA)

Christopher C. Dahl
President
State University of New York College at Geneseo

Dolores M. Fernandez
President
City University of New York Hostos Community College

Mildred Garcia
President
Berkeley College of New York and New Jersey (NY)

Juliet Garcia
President
University of Texas at Brownsville

Thomas F. George
Chancellor
University of Missouri–St. Louis

Robert E. Hemenway
Chancellor
University of Kansas

Carlos Hernandez
President
New Jersey City University

Freeman A. Hrabowski
President
University of Maryland Baltimore County

Alex B. Johnson
Chancellor
Delgado Community College (LA)

Dale Rogers Marshall
President Emerita
Wheaton College (MA)

Joseph F. McDonald
President
Salish Kootenai College (MT)

Irving P. McPhail
Chancellor
Community College of Baltimore County (MD)

Gail O. Mellow
President
City University of New York LaGuardia Community College

J. Michael Ortiz
President
California State Polytechnic University–Pomona

M. Lee Pelton
President
Willamette University (OR)

Sidney A. Ribeau
President
Bowling Green State University (OH)

Graham B. Spanier
President
Pennsylvania State University

Beverly Daniel Tatum
President
Spelman College (GA)

Jerry Sue Thornton
President
Cuyahoga Community College (OH)

Nancy L. Zimpher
President
University of Cincinnati (OH)

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