A Matter of Excellence:
A Guide to Strategic Diversity Leadership and Accountability in Higher Education

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ACE American Council on Education
Leadership and Advocacy
A Matter of Excellence: 
A Guide to Strategic Diversity Leadership and Accountability in Higher Education

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Introduction

A Matter of Excellence: A Guide to Strategic Diversity Leadership and Accountability in Higher Education focuses squarely on the topic of leading diversity-themed change in an intentional manner. It challenges the higher education community to face the imperatives of a new reality in which diversity is no longer simply a question of moral and social responsibility, but a matter of achieving excellence and gaining competitive advantages in the world we live in today: a matter of improving organizational creativity, learning, problem solving, and institutional effectiveness—of sustainability and relevance in a twenty-first-century knowledge economy.

Whether they are large public universities, elite liberal-arts colleges, or open-enrollment community colleges, postsecondary institutions of today must adopt a new model of diversity that requires leaders who are willing to “interrupt the usual” behavior at their institutions and embrace new possibilities built on the premises of accountability, dynamic diversity infrastructure, meaningful diversity plans, evidence-based approaches, and non-linear efforts designed to accomplish the goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion, all of which are matters of strategic diversity leadership.

Overview

Part of a family of publications by the author that includes Strategic Diversity Leadership: Activating Change and Transformation in Higher Education; The Chief Diversity Officer: Strategy, Structure, and Change Management, with Katrina Wade-Golden (scheduled for publication in 2013); and The Role of the Chief Diversity Officer in Academic Health Centers, this American Council on Education issue brief presents tips for higher education leaders to develop their big-picture infrastructure to advance issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Rather than addressing a particular challenge within diversity, such as faculty diversification, diversity-themed curricular transformation, or the educational disparities facing male youths of color, this brief provides a framework for strategic leadership on diversity issues in the academy. It is organized into three major sections, starting with a discussion of the idea of diversity in higher education, moving onto the Strategic Diversity Leadership Model, and finally focusing on the subject of accountability and developing a strategic diversity leadership scorecard.
Section 1: The Evolving Idea of Diversity in Higher Education

From its beginnings in the civil rights movement and the nationalist movements of the 1960s to its recent reorganization in response to trends in social science validating diversity's educational benefits, the diversity, equity, and inclusion movement in American higher education has pressured colleges and universities to support the rights and concerns of diverse individuals and groups.

Diversity is referred to as an idea, because ideas, like the definition of diversity, are fluid and shift over time. For nearly five decades, the diversity idea has evolved as new communities have emerged and asserted their voices, policy environments have changed, language has shifted, and institutions have responded accordingly. Ask 10 people to define diversity, and you will get 10 different definitions, because even when individuals use the same word, they often have very different ideas about what is to be accomplished and how to do so (Pope, 1993). It is important, however, for institutions to ensure that there is definitional consensus among its constituents as a first step in advancing a diversity agenda. Exhibit 1 provides guidance on developing a campus definition of diversity, while Exhibit 2 gives an overview of key diversity terminology that may be useful in developing that shared definition.

Exhibit 1. Recommendations for developing an institutional definition of diversity

- **Develop a shared process:** Use a collective process that encourages feedback and opportunities for hearing from and vetting multiple perspectives.
- **Include a wide range of diverse identities:** Include both primary and secondary dimensions of diversity, emphasizing a collective purpose as members of the campus community.
- **Embrace diversity’s complexity:** Embrace rather than shy away from the complexity of diversity, making it a vital ingredient in learning, mission fulfillment, and institutional excellence.
- **Acknowledge the multiple rationales for diversity:** Include a statement about diversity’s educational benefits and the need to continue advancing the historic agenda of access and equity while also embracing and valuing the unique needs and experiences of diverse groups, as defined broadly.
- **Understand that developing the diversity definition policy document is an iterative process:** Draft, draft, and redraft until you get a definitional statement that feels like it reflects the language, values, and needs of your institution.
- **Perfect the document through engagement:** While your definition is being developed, it is vital to get input from faculty, staff, and students and to submit the definition to the formal mechanisms of governance at your institution. Failing to get support during the development and adoption process can do grave harm by marginalizing the definition as the work of a few campus voices, rather than as a consensus shaped by the perspectives of many. Furthermore, submitting the definition to the formal governance procedures helps hardwire it into an institution’s mission, plans, priorities, and processes.

To continue this work, we need to change the way we think about diversity—our diversity paradigm—and appreciate that diversity is no longer only about protecting rights, including historically disadvantaged individuals and groups, or simply doing 100 different things focused on issues of diversity without understanding how these efforts fit together and complement one another. The new paradigm of diversity is about achieving academic and institutional excellence and positioning graduates and institutions to compete and win in the global marketplace.

Exhibit 2. Overview of critical diversity terminology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Refers to all of the ways in which people differ, including primary characteristics, such as age, race, gender, ethnicity, mental and physical abilities, and sexual orientation. It also includes secondary characteristics, such as education, income, religion, work experience, language skills, geographic location, and family status. Put simply, diversity refers to all of the characteristics that make individuals different from each other and, on its most basic level, refers to heterogeneity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>Refers to the process of creating equivalent outcomes for historically underrepresented and oppressed individuals and groups. Equity is about ending systematic discrimination against people based upon their identity or background.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiculturalism</td>
<td>Acknowledges and promotes the acceptance and understanding of different cultures living together within a community. As such, multiculturalism promotes the peaceful coexistence of diverse races, ethnicities, and other cultural groups in a given social environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion</td>
<td>A relatively recent addition to the diversity lexicon describing the sense of belonging that traditionally marginalized individuals and groups feel when they are empowered to participate in the majority culture as full and valued members, shaping and redefining that culture in different ways. That shared trait is an answer to the common misconception that diversity is concerned exclusively or reductively with difference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive excellence</td>
<td>An aspirational state that exists when an organization is strategically well positioned to meet the needs of a changing world and embraces a culture that views diversity as fundamental to organizational success, effectiveness, and excellence. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are at the core of such an institution's mission, and its infrastructure is aligned to accomplish the campus's diversity goals and priorities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 2: Strategic Diversity Leadership

The Strategic Diversity Leadership Model is a powerful, dynamic model that is responsive to the times in which we live. Exhibits 3 and 4 present the model both as a strategic framework and visual model representation. Given the highly decentralized and complex environments of most institutions, diversity leaders must utilize a full complement of perspectives and tools to achieve a truly diverse and inclusive campus community. By adopting a multidimensional approach, strategic diversity leaders can read external and internal dynamics, navigate often-treacherous organizational politics, leverage the best of what is known about diversity-themed change.

Exhibit 3. Strategic diversity leadership framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Dynamics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Dynamics</td>
<td>Environmental pressures that have elevated issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion as essential priorities in postsecondary education</td>
<td>• Changing demographics&lt;br&gt;• Societal and educational inequities&lt;br&gt;• Global knowledge economy&lt;br&gt;• Legal and political dynamics&lt;br&gt;• Isomorphic diversity forces&lt;br&gt;• Workforce imperatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Reality</td>
<td>Institutional dynamics that enable and constrain campus diversity efforts, forming the critical adobe that frames reality for strategic diversity leaders on campuses</td>
<td>• History of inclusion and exclusion&lt;br&gt;• Senior leadership&lt;br&gt;• Fiscal reality&lt;br&gt;• Geographic location&lt;br&gt;• Diversity brand&lt;br&gt;• Mission and selectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Strategies</td>
<td>Five essential change-management approaches that all strategic diversity leaders must utilize in their efforts to bring about disruptive change on campuses</td>
<td>• Organizational learning&lt;br&gt;• Structural leadership&lt;br&gt;• Political leadership&lt;br&gt;• Symbolic leadership&lt;br&gt;• Collegial leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Strategic Diversity Core</td>
<td>The major diversity goals, definitions, and rationales that guide and legitimize an institution’s diversity interests</td>
<td>• Strategic diversity goals&lt;br&gt;• Definition of diversity&lt;br&gt;• Educational benefits of diversity rationale&lt;br&gt;• Social justice rationale&lt;br&gt;• Business case rationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artful Science Principles</td>
<td>Core principles that should guide the actions of strategic diversity leaders as they pursue an agenda of change on their campuses</td>
<td>• Diversity defined as excellence&lt;br&gt;• Focus on enabling the entire institutional community&lt;br&gt;• Robust and integrated approach to building diversity capacity&lt;br&gt;• Focus on innovation and institutional transformation&lt;br&gt;• Leading with a high degree of cultural intelligence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exhibit 4. Strategic Diversity Leadership Model


management science, and engage others in moving the notoriously complex and tradition-bound cultures of academic institutions forward.

Exhibit 4 presents the Strategic Diversity Leadership Model as a set of overlapping and integrated concentric circles that flow from an understanding of the environmental context to the artful principles required to lead on issues of diversity in the new economy. This challenge requires leaders who recognize that changing demographics, persistent societal and educational inequities, the emergence of the global knowledge economy, workforce demands for culturally competent graduates, turbulent political dynamics, and other forces are making diversity a top priority for all institutions of higher education. In what follows, several aspects of the model are highlighted, focusing on the environmental and internal dynamics that define the context for leading around issues of diversity, diversity leadership strategies, and inclusion strategies in the academy, before shifting to a discussion of accountability and the Strategic Diversity Leadership Scorecard, which serves as a guide for leaders to assess and enhance their progress over time.
Environmental and Institutional Context

In its classic sense, the heart of strategy is positioning an organization for success in response to its environment and its internal values, goals, resources, priorities, and infrastructure (Alfred, 2005). Accordingly, this discussion of strategic diversity leadership begins with the premise that leaders must understand and learn to navigate the dynamics that elevate the importance of diversity in the new economy. Exhibit 5 presents an overview of critical issues that strategic diversity leaders must keep on their radar of leadership.

Institutional Context

The next sphere of the model displays the complex historical, financial, cultural, and structural forces that form the campus environment.

Exhibit 5. Critical issues that strategic diversity leaders should have on their radar

- **New economy educational imperatives:** The Great Recession has only amplified the need for a more educated workforce, as the economic downturn hit the educationally disadvantaged hardest, especially Asian Americans, African Americans, Latinos, older workers, and young people. Our ability to recover will depend on preparing students for a world in which nearly two-thirds of new jobs in the next decade will require at least some college education. To compete globally, significantly more Americans will need to obtain a college degree. Yet current trends suggest that only 46.4 percent of individuals in the critical 25-34 age demographic will have earned a college degree by 2020, leaving the nation nearly 24 million degrees short of the 60 percent needed to surpass countries such as South Korea and Japan.

- **Continuing threats to race-conscious policy:** In October 2012 the Supreme Court heard arguments in Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin, the most recent conservative challenge to affirmative action and race-conscious admissions policies in higher education. It is possible that the Supreme Court may further limit the admissions tools available to public and private colleges and universities that consider race and ethnicity as part of their admissions processes.

- **Male-youths-of-color crisis:** The challenge of attending college for young men of color is nothing less than a national crisis, in which an alarming number of young men live in poverty and are either unemployed or incarcerated. Entire generations have been pushed to the margins of society, living on the outskirts of the economic, social, and cultural mainstream. The failure to educate and empower all our young people is a massive cost shouldered by our whole society. Colleges and universities have a vital role to play in developing targeted efforts focused on these challenges. It is for this reason that national organizations like The College Board, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and others have prioritized the male-youths-of-color crisis as a critical national issue. This is a challenge that numerous institutions, including The Ohio State University, Clemson University (SC), Morehouse College (GA), Philander Smith College (AR), The City University of New York system, the University of Georgia, and others have responded to with black-male and males-of-color initiatives.

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3 The Great Recession commonly refers to the period from December 2007 to June 2009, when the labor force lost around 8.8 million jobs, while the unemployment rate climbed from 45 to 19.5 percent. In addition, long-term unemployment increased sharply, so that by the summer of 2012, people out of work for more than six months constituted more than 40 percent of the unemployed. The Great Recession has dramatically reshaped the foundations of the American economy, making even more urgent the need for postsecondary education and skills relevant to success in the global knowledge economy (Grusky, Western, & Wimer, 2011).

4 The case is Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin (docket 11-345). Justice Elena Kagan recused herself from participation, as she was U.S. solicitor general when the U.S. Justice Department filed a brief in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in March 2010. As a result, the court’s decision will be made by eight justices. For more information, please see “Affirmative Action Review Due Next Term,” by L. Denniston, on SCOTUSblog at http://www.scotusblog.com/2012/02/affirmative-action-review-next-term/.

As this level of the model indicates, a number of factors create obstacles and opportunities for implementing a strategic diversity model. The most prominent factors include the institution’s history of inclusion and exclusion; its diversity brand; senior leadership; its fiscal reality; its mission and selectivity; and its geographic location and cultural setting.

History of Inclusion and Exclusion

As challenging as the task often proves, effective diversity leaders must be well informed about both the historical context of inclusion and exclusion at their institution and its broader strategic reality. Strategic diversity leaders must have a strong sense of the historical, cultural, and political dynamics associated with inclusion.

Exhibit 5. Critical issues that strategic diversity leaders should have on their radar (continued)

Women in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) disciplines and leadership: Female students currently out-perform male students at every educational level and in every racial and ethnic category from elementary through graduate school. The gap is most pronounced at the postsecondary level. However, even with these gains, women remain underrepresented in the science and engineering disciplines, earning only 17 percent of all bachelor’s degrees in engineering-related fields and 18 percent of all bachelor’s degrees in the computer and information sciences. Ingrained stereotypes and glass-ceiling effects contribute to the absence of women in positions of senior leadership across many industries and sectors—a point that further emphasizes the need for a strategic diversity leadership approach to engaging issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Educational exclusion of the undocumented: The rising number of undocumented students is presenting a particularly thorny civil rights challenge for colleges and universities. In 2010, an estimated 66,000 undocumented students graduated from high school, only to find the doors to postsecondary education closed. Many of these young people have lived in the United States nearly all their lives and consider this country their home. These young people aspire to contribute their talents to our country. In 2007, a bipartisan coalition of federal legislators introduced the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act.

If passed, the DREAM Act will establish a new pathway for academically prepared, undocumented students to gain access to higher education and ultimately achieve eligibility for permanent residency. Upon completion of further conditions, these residents could eventually apply for full citizenship. In 2012, the Obama administration offered policy guidance that stopped the deportation of undocumented immigrants who came to the United States as children and were successful students, or who served in the military with clean records.

Rise of the strategic diversity leadership movement: In recent years, a growing tide of individuals, institutions, and alliances have collaborated in a higher-education diversity ecology that has established a growing set of norms and expectations of what strategic diversity leadership should look like, expanding the diversity conversation to include ideas about academic excellence and organizational performance. Six isomorphic forces are shaping this work: 1) diversity research; 2) diversity officer affinity organizations; 3) diversity management and certification programs; 4) diversity conferences and symposiums; 5) higher education policy organizations; and 6) cross-sector partnerships among higher education institutions, government agencies, and the private sector.


7 In a memorandum titled “Exercising Prosecutorial Discretion with Respect to Individuals Who Came to the United States as Children,” issued June 15, 2012, Janet Napolitano, secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, provided guidance stopping the deportation of young people who had been brought to the United States as children and who meet certain criteria. This memorandum was retrieved from www.dhs.gov at http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/st-exercising-prosecutorial-discretion-individuals-who-came-to-us-as-children.pdf.
historically underrepresented racial/ethnic groups, members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) community, women, faculty leaders, and student organizations at their institution. By consistently developing an understanding of these communities across campus, leaders are able to serve the entire campus community.

Diversity Branding

This effort necessitates not only knowledge of an institution’s history, but also awareness of how history and context shape perceptions of the institution’s brand. Put simply, your “brand” is everything that institutional citizens and the broader public think they know about your institution, both factual and emotional, whether it’s true or not (Iacobucci, 2001). Your institutional diversity brand is a specific component of your overall brand, as it is defined by the cumulative stories, images, experiences, feelings, messages, articles, websites, myths, and beliefs associated with issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion at your college or university, whether intended or not.

When diversity is thought of at your institution, is the first thought of white students dressed in blackface at a campus Halloween party, a high profile discrimination case won by an LGBTQ member of the faculty who was denied tenure because of sexual orientation, a successful campus diversity implementation effort, or perhaps a feel good-story about a blind student who started a nonprofit organization that creates youth programs for students with visual disabilities?

Examples such as these, and the extent to which they are known, inform an institution’s diversity brand, collectively defining what campus diversity means in the minds and hearts of students, parents, faculty, staff, alumni, community members, and others who come into contact with the institution’s brochures and websites. In a world where the Internet has created a permanent footprint for positive and negative stories, savvy leaders are constantly building their institutional diversity brand so it can withstand the negative attention and scrutiny that will inevitably occur during moments of diversity crisis and sensationalism.

It is for this reason that institutional leaders must embrace a strategic diversity leadership approach to building their institutions’ diversity brand by proactively disseminating their diversity commitments, successes, and message points both internally and externally before any crisis moments emerge. This approach is important in connecting with students, attracting and retaining top-level talent, and building important strategic partnerships with companies and other organizations that may not recruit or partner with your institution if diversity is not a visible strategic priority. Exhibit 6 outlines an approach to building the diversity brand of your institution.

If perception is reality, then diversity branding is, too. In the new economy, diverse communities are essential if we are to meet our education attainment
goals and remain globally competitive. Campus leaders must adopt broad and varied marketing strategies that enhance their institutions’ diversity brands with all communities.

**Senior Leadership**

Probably the most important variable determining the success of a campus diversity effort is the degree of commitment and support from senior leadership. Many committed diversity champions have watched premier diversity programs wither in the face of administrative turnover, institutional reorganization, or economic downturns, because the engine driving the initiative—the president’s personal commitment—had evaporated.

Although senior institutional leaders cannot lead change all on their own, unless they are invested in campus diversity efforts, the chance of implementing new policies and programs diminishes significantly. At the same time, when these leaders are committed to enabling new possibilities, then new resources flow to drive change and support diversity efforts as institutional priorities. For these reasons, institutions must formalize their

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**Exhibit 6. A strategic diversity leadership approach to building the campus diversity brand**

- Create a campus diversity website to communicate programs and priorities and provide an overall portal to connect institutional stakeholders to diversity programs, offices, policies, and reports.
- Infuse diversity themes and priorities into campus communications, reports, presidential speeches, commencements, convocations, and meetings.
- Include diverse images and perspectives in all campus media and publications.
- Host diversity-themed yield events for parents and admitted students who are members of ethnic and racially diverse groups and students with an expressed interest in issues of diversity so they can learn more about campus diversity issues.
- Establish a dedicated role in the campus communications office or chief diversity officer department to serve as a primary point person in developing campus diversity articles, press releases, and responses to request for information regarding diversity.
- Maintain a chief diversity officer social media strategy that includes a blog, Twitter use, a Facebook site, and email groups to assist the campus’s dedicated diversity leadership in maintaining a strong relationship with campus community members deeply interested in issues of diversity.
- Develop a campus diversity video that can be used to showcase programs, plans, priorities, and stories of impact.
- Maintain a campus diversity blog that is regularly updated by the president, provost, chief diversity officer, campus diversity committee chairs, and others.
- Host diversity town hall meetings and symposiums to create opportunities to both communicate and learn about campus diversity priorities, successes, and challenges.
- Establish diversity brochures, newsletters, and magazines to highlight campus diversity efforts in a dedicated manner.
- Showcase the accomplishments of diverse students, faculty, staff, community members, and programs in all campus media.
- Establish diversity-themed alumni associations, creating visible opportunities for these communities to participate in the institution in both traditional and culturally relevant ways that appeal to their identities as minorities.

diversity efforts in more meaningful and enduring ways, such as mission statements, budget protocols, shared governance infrastructures, strategic and academic plans, external advisory boards, public-accountability scorecards, chief diversity officer divisions, and other techniques highlighted throughout this brief. This moves diversity from being personalized, at the discretion of the president alone, to being institutionalized as a strategic priority that exists even during times of leadership transition and change.

Fiscal Reality
Close behind leadership, the fiscal health of an institution is one of the most powerful obstacles to diversity-themed change. As I travel to different institutions, I hear a common refrain: “That is a good idea, but we just don’t have the money.” The reality is that colleges and universities are resource dependent, and only a miniscule number of the best-resourced institutions have funds to meet all of their needs. For all others, budgeting is invariably an exercise in managing competing priorities and determining what funding needs hold the political high ground of resource allocation.

The Great Recession has put tremendous pressure on colleges and universities to develop creative approaches to finding the necessary resources to support institutional diversity. Exhibit 7 provides several examples of approaches to securing financial resources to support campus diversity efforts.

Geographic Setting
Location is commonly one of the most misunderstood aspects of an institution’s diversity context. Too often, campus leaders identify their institutional locations as a barrier to achieving diversity, particularly among faculty. At rural institutions, university leaders often claim, “We can’t diversify because no one would come here.” At urban institutions,

Exhibit 7. Potential financial approaches to driving the institutional diversity agenda

- Develop a diversity fundraising campaign targeted at companies, small and large donors, and foundations.
- Create an alumni fundraising strategy that specifically asks minority alumni to support programs and policies from which they benefited.
- Establish a philanthropic affinity group of major donors who have an expressed interest in diversity issues.
- Reallocate resources campus-wide to create a centralized funding source for new diversity initiatives.
- Exempt institutional diversity programs from campus budget cuts.
- Audit all campus diversity spending to ensure that it aligns with the institution’s diversity priorities.
- Develop a tuition-differential project to charge higher tuition prices for students from more economically advantaged backgrounds.
- Hire a dedicated development officer/grant writer who focuses solely on securing public and private funds for diversity efforts.
- Divert revenue generated from sports merchandising and related agreements to partially support campus diversity efforts.

they often state, “They won’t come here because it’s too expensive to live in the city.” While location is a variable that campus leaders cannot change, they can manage this reality by focusing on any larger metropolitan areas that neighbor their towns, subsidizing living expenses, and most importantly, intentionally recruiting and trying to attract and retain diverse talent. One of the clearest findings in the faculty diversity research base is that institutions often fail to put meaningful strategies in place to recruit diverse candidates and, as a result, fail to hire any diverse candidates (Smith, Turner, Osei-Kofi, & Richards, 2004). The key is to look creatively for ways to leverage the power of the environment in ways that are strategic assets to engaging issues of diversity, whether this involves developing “host-family” strategies to assist diverse students to find community in neighboring areas, or partnering with local churches and community organizations to create intergenerational mentoring and outreach initiatives.

**Mission and Selectivity**

Another powerful institutional dynamic that must be considered when developing a diversity strategy is an institution’s mission and selectivity. Mission is key, whether at an open-enrollment or a highly selective institution. Indeed, open-enrollment community colleges and less-selective institutions are poised to play a special role by preparing economically vulnerable and minority students for productive roles in American society. Diversity is the lifeblood of these institutions, whether defined in terms of race and ethnicity or in terms of learning styles, educational aspirations, and life circumstances. As our nation’s population becomes more diverse, these institutions are particularly well positioned to capitalize on the benefits of educating a growing population of historically underrepresented and minority student populations.

Meanwhile, more-selective institutions can play a role by using their resources to create dynamic partnerships and bridges between themselves and two-year colleges. By expanding the admissions options for historically underrepresented and minority student populations, more-selective institutions can give diversity a central role in creating a more competitive, better-educated workforce. Indeed, an ethic of inclusion and emergent possibilities sits at the center of our ability to integrate racial and ethnic diversity into a holistic, competitive, and multidimensional admissions process. Only by thinking more creatively and broadly about educational potential will selective institutions be able to access the untapped potential of diverse students. Only a few institutions can capture the top minority high school graduates. The overwhelming majority of colleges and universities, whatever their admissions criteria or financial standing, must do more to enroll, retain, and graduate students who have great potential but who may not have received a top-tier education because they come from low- and middle-income backgrounds.
Diversity Leadership Strategies

The basic challenges that can cripple aspiring diversity innovators are built into the daily lives of higher education administrators at every level, from presidents to department chairs/directors in academic, student, and administrative affairs. No one leader or group can control the entirety of what takes place at a college or university, so leaders across all of higher education must be skilled and versatile in their ability to handle the complexity of diversity crises, fiscal deficits, cultural resistance, and the need to build institutional clarity and capacity around issues of diversity.

Scholars have developed a variety of multidimensional models of leadership and organizational change that shed considerable light on the structures and processes of colleges and universities (Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 2003; Kezar, 2001; Williams, Berger, & McClendon, 2005). Now more than ever, leaders at all levels must have command of these perspectives in order to implement disruptive and innovative approaches as part of their institutional diversity efforts.

The compass image in Exhibit 8 and the strategic diversity leadership tactics detailed in Exhibit 9 present a number of powerful tools for higher education leaders to reframe diversity issues from a number of different locations or coordinates (Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 2003; Williams et al., 2005). Leading in this manner, one can anticipate a challenge, whether it is developing a new chief diversity officer position, picking the symbols used in a new multimedia publication, or creating the collaborative energy and buy-in needed to get a new policy adopted by the faculty or student senate.

To be effective, strategic diversity leaders must know how to dynamically move across their institutional environments, which requires mastery of a full complement of organizational learning, structural, political, symbolic, and collegial approaches to leading diversity-themed change. The most sophisticated leaders will apply particular combinations organically and fluidly as called for by the situation or—following the metaphor of the guiding compass offered here—depending upon their location in the diversity change journey. The key is for strategic diversity leaders to master each of these approaches and use them when exploring the opportunities and challenges of leading diversity-themed change.

A range of strategies is necessary because colleges and universities are complex environments that require their leaders to focus on a variety of different issues, particularly those concerning diversity. Therefore, successful diversity efforts require a solid, varied infrastructure—rules, roles, policies, procedures, committees, and task forces; an understanding of the strategic environment; and a number of applied research efforts—to learn what does or does not work, and how to make changes accordingly.

Innovation emerges from creatively shifting resources, reframing past
ways of behaving, building powerful relationships, going against the norm, and managing the political dynamics at the heart of most institutions (Christensen & Eyring, 2011). Finally, to advance diversity requires a number of push-and-pull techniques to align values, create expectations, offer incentives, and build the symbolic adobe required to create a shared understanding of diversity’s importance. Leaders must be able to make decisions using a sophisticated and multi-dimensional toolkit that allows them to see all of the angles while remaining focused on the big picture. To do anything else will send academic leaders down the wrong pathway, oversimplifying complex challenges and wasting time, credibility, and resources along the way.8

Exhibit 8. Strategic Diversity Leadership Compass


8 For a brief overview of this style of leadership, please see Reframing Academic Leadership, by L.G. Bolman and J.V. Gallos, which is excerpted at http://www.leebolman.com/RALIntro.htm.
To break the cycle of flawed diversity implementation efforts, strategic diversity leaders must change the normal behavior of their institutions. To do so, leaders must have a philosophy of diversity leadership that focuses on learning from past successes and failures, asking hard questions, and moving beyond previous approaches that yielded inadequate outcomes.

The ability to frame diversity challenges and submit them to rigorous evaluation is a core skill of strategic diversity leaders, because institutional database research, program evaluations, benchmarking activities, climate and retention studies, appreciative inquiry, and other techniques are fundamental to understanding which strategies are needed to accomplish new campus diversity outcomes. It is not enough to simply conduct research—it’s important for leaders to host learning forums, town hall meetings, and dissemination meetings to translate campus research into impactful initiatives.

### Exhibit 9. Diversity Leadership Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change Strategy</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sample Tactics</th>
<th>Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Organizational Learning  | Applying research efforts to build new or revise existing initiatives to advance institutional diversity goals that can achieve meaningful institutional changes | • Benchmarking studies  
• Environmental scans  
• Diversity brand monitoring studies  
• Campus climate and culture studies  
• Evaluation of campus diversity programs  
• Institutional database studies (e.g., achievement in STEM courses)  
• Diversity scorecards | Essential to breaking flawed diversity implementation efforts that lead to sub-optimal institutional outcomes and stand in the way of institutional transformation |
| Structural Leadership    | Developing formal organizational structures, leadership roles, resources, and policies to advance campus diversity goals | • Mapping campus interests  
• Exchanging resources  
• Leveraging expertise  
• Cultivating relationships  
• Building partnership and coalitions | Essential for building relational capital and navigating the turbulence that comes with attempting to advance a campus diversity agenda that will invariably fly in the face of other competing priorities, units, initiatives, and efforts |
| Collegial Leadership     | Focusing on collective planning, decision-making, and implementation activities to advance campus diversity efforts | • Town hall meetings  
• Social networking  
• Committees and taskforces  
• Incentive programs  
• Targeted communication | Essential for achieving deep, transformative change by engaging multiple stakeholders, expanding consensus, and building strong coalitions, while remaining sensitive to divergent opinions, the democratic process, and shared decision making |

efforts into tactics that ultimately drive change and create new possibilities. One of the most important organizational learning strategies, highlighted in the third section of this brief, is focusing on diversity accountability and creating some form of scorecard for strategic diversity leadership. Those outside the academy often criticize higher education for its failure to hold individuals accountable for their actions. To make diversity a matter of excellence requires more than increasing the number of minority students. It demands that we hold ourselves to the highest standards of accountability through systems of performance management that help us understand the implications of our efforts for many facets of our institutional diversity agenda, from access and equity initiatives and faculty’s scholarly efforts to leaders’ roles in creating a new context in which enhanced diversity efforts become possible.

**Structural Leadership**

Strategic diversity leaders must implement change efforts at the level of formal structures and policies that can act as conduits to institutional change and innovation. The importance of structural leadership cannot be overemphasized, because financial resources, permanent staff positions, mission statements, training programs, formal organizational charts, and strategic plans are powerful indications of what an institution values and prioritizes. If change efforts are to be successful, senior administrators must be willing to reengineer existing institutional processes, infrastructures, hierarchies, and resource allocations to drive the campus diversity agenda. Some of the most common formal structural strategies are reviewed next with a focus on their relationship to diversity strategic planning initiatives and formal offices.

**Strategic Planning for Diversity**

Successful diversity leaders understand that diversity planning must be aligned with the overall vision and goals of the institution. An effective place to begin this process is to write diversity into the formal mission statement of the institution, as well as into the statements of departments, colleges, and divisions. Given the prominence of an institution’s mission statement, its reference to diversity reflects commitment. These statements should provide a clear definition of diversity and its implications for fulfills the institution’s educational aspirations. By prioritizing diversity, institutional leaders create a lasting symbolic context for investing energy, resources, and time into specific diversity activities. It also creates a powerful institutional foundation for building admissions, hiring, and scholarship programs that require institutions to satisfy exacting standards that exemplify how diversity is part of the institution’s educational mission (Coleman et al., 2007).

A common approach used by many institutions is the integrated diversity...
planning approach, where diversity is included as a priority in either the academic or strategic plan. Integrated diversity plans are woven into the goals, tactics, rationale, and operational focus of institutional strategic plans. While centralized plans give dedicated focus to issues of diversity as the core subject matter of the plan, integrated plans infuse diversity into the broader goals of the institution’s strategic plan. A campus strategic plan can provide an effective avenue for addressing diversity issues (Kezar & Eckel, 2005). Strategic plans provide a rationale for the allocation of resources, propel faculty and staff toward new initiatives, provide a framework for accountability, and serve as a unifying force that rallies the campus community around a number of strategic themes (Alfred, 2005).

Many institutions have adopted the integrated approach to making diversity a part of their campus strategic plans. However, at some institutions, campus diversity champions have expressed the feeling that because diversity only exists as part of the overall strategic plan, their diversity efforts are “floating.” This feeling inevitably arises from academia’s long history of acknowledging diversity as an institutional priority only grudgingly and intermittently. The symbolic infusing of diversity into the campus strategic plan can become a smokescreen, offering grandiose gestures but doing little to commit resources, create accountability, or take action. For this reason, campus leaders should consider supplementing their strategic plan with a centralized diversity plan focused specifically on building a campus-wide infrastructure for further planning and implementing activities that serve the institution’s diversity agenda.

A powerful technique for implementing diversity as a major priority is to develop a centralized strategic diversity plan authorized at the highest levels of the institution. Although no panacea, such a plan can capture both the broad diversity vision and the specific programs and policies designed to help the institution reach its goals. In order to implement these plans throughout the academic environment, academic deans, vice presidents, and department chairs must own the process in their specific domains. Doing so allows campus stakeholders to define the diversity challenge and steps for change from their unique perspectives. For example, how is diversity appreciated differently in the schools of nursing, business, and engineering, or in the college of liberal arts? Take, for example, medical education: Charging the school of medicine and public health to develop a diversity plan centered in their reality allows them to create an operational definition of diversity that may take into account ethnic and racial health disparities, the need to educate a
culturally competent workforce, or even the need to improve gender equity in the health professions. Helping specific entities to move from an abstract to a concrete understanding of diversity has important consequences for developing diversity strategies that are anchored in the specific teaching, research, and professional standards of particular disciplines and academic departments.

Diversity Accountability

Finally, diversity accountability techniques should be integrated throughout an institution’s various organizational planning and learning systems. Establishing accountability processes is essential to strategic diversity leadership and is the focus of the final section of this brief. One of the most powerful ways to ensure accountability at multiple levels of the institution is to connect campus diversity efforts to budget allocations, performance reviews, bonuses, and merit promotions—the financial systems at the heart of a college or university (Rowley & Sherman, 2001). While annual diversity reports are part of the accountability continuum, the most rigorous forms of institutional accountability hold people responsible for making progress. Unless tied to the financial infrastructure, true organizational accountability is impossible to achieve, not only for diversity but for any other institutional goal.

Such an aggressive strategy will no doubt meet resistance in higher education, where, apart from the tenure and promotion processes for faculty, performance review and accountability systems are notoriously weak. Implementing robust diversity accountability requires a senior leadership team that is deeply resolved to achieve institutional goals and willing to experience the discomfort that the most powerful accountability systems create.

Diversity Offices, Units, and Roles

Often an institution’s first steps toward building a campus diversity infrastructure include developing campus diversity offices, units, and staff resources. These units can take a myriad of forms, from global experience programs to ethnic studies, from health disparity research centers to affirmative action offices, and from LGBTQ support services to service-learning mentorship programs. The immediate challenge presented by such a diverse array of services is to ensure not only that they are effective, but also that they are integrated with other institutional resources in meaningful and lasting ways.

One way to accomplish these goals is to develop a position for a chief diversity officer that supports, evaluates, and strengthens this infrastructure. That said, creating a high-ranking role that has no staff, direct reporting units, or material resources contradicts the very premise of the structural frame of leadership. Furthermore, to effect transformational change, this infrastructure must be broadly empowered within the administrative hierarchy, have a host of leadership
partners, and build on a foundation of resources, sending a formal and symbolic message that these efforts are a strategic priority. Otherwise, the chief diversity officer role may amount to little more than an unfunded mandate. For an overview of several key principles for developing a successful chief diversity officer position, see Exhibit 10.

**Political Leadership**

Like boxing and mixed martial arts, promoting diversity is a contact sport full of diverging perspectives and colliding interests. Strategic diversity leaders must engage with these politics if they are going to be successful. Savvier stakeholders will likely outmaneuver the leader who is unwilling to deal with these threats.

Strategic diversity leaders must build alliances and coalitions if they are going to advance their campus agenda (Bolman & Deal, 2003). As a result, the ability to bargain, negotiate, and build relationships is invaluable for individuals seeking to advance campus diversity efforts. Coalition building is even more essential on campuses where decisions are not made through open and transparent mechanisms but instead hinge on long-standing interpersonal relationships. To navigate in these potentially treacherous waters, strategic diversity leaders must place a strong emphasis on building partnerships,

### Exhibit 10. Strategies for developing effective chief diversity officer infrastructures

- When developing or reframing your chief diversity officer role, conduct an internal audit of current diversity capabilities and priorities to establish a plan for how various offices, units, and initiatives might fit together in the same leadership portfolio, as part of a collaborative partnership between the chief diversity officer and other leaders, or as members of a committee or taskforce.

- Consider developing the chief diversity officer role so that the position can influence the most critical diversity issues, such as curriculum reform; recruiting, retaining, and hiring diverse faculty; establishing community partnerships and a diverse vendor program; and enhancing the campus climate and culture.

- Title the chief diversity officer at the vice president and/or vice provost/dean level, and place the officer in the president’s leadership cabinet, visibly engaging with the institution’s most senior leadership team as a peer of equal status and stature.

- Provide the chief diversity officer with sufficient financial resources to build partnerships, spark new initiatives, and work creatively with internal and external stakeholders to advance issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- Hire leaders who possess the competencies and skills required to serve as a chief diversity officer, balancing the presence of a particular type set of leadership skills and competencies against the desire to hire someone who may bring great scholarly or legal experience to the role of chief diversity officer but who is new to the process of leading broad-scale organizational change.

- When hiring a new chief diversity officer, ensure that everyone on the senior leadership team has a clear understanding of the new officer’s role and priorities, particularly if it is a newly designed or reframed position.

- Empower the chief diversity officer to lead with the reflective voice of the president, strengthening the officer’s effectiveness within the organization.

- Develop a transition plan to help new officers get off to a fast start, building strong collaborative ties and learning about critical operational issues involving the new chief diversity officer.

creating collaborative traction, and galvanizing support for their agenda. Only by building key partnerships can strategic diversity leaders alter the campus power structure and acquire visibility, support, and resources. This skill is particularly necessary for chief diversity officers whose primary role is to effect diversity-themed change on campus. **Exhibit 11** presents some useful strategies for negotiating campus politics.

**Symbolic Leadership**

Throughout the change process, leaders should use clear and compelling symbols to create positive associations with their diversity efforts. This symbolism is accomplished by tapping into the rich myths, rituals, and traditions that are already a part of the campus culture (Bolman & Deal, 2003). The multilayered and multifaceted quality of the institution’s governance and mission has profound implications not only for decision-making but also for the perception of those decisions by the campus community. The result is an organizational environment in which symbolic leadership is incredibly important to achieving one’s ultimate change agenda.

Simple day-to-day decisions on issues of diversity send powerful symbolic messages about an institution’s commitment to diversity. Routine decisions can convey both intended and unintended messages about priorities. From the perspective of symbolic diversity leadership, organizational change involves understanding the messages given by one’s actions and creating a shared covenant that elevates diversity’s importance and connects it to core institutional beliefs about excellence. While structural leadership is focused on the material aspects of diversity budgets, symbolic leadership is most concerned with knowing what these tactics imply about institutional commitment to a

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**Exhibit 11. Strategies to successfully navigate campus politics**

- Learn the political landscape early in your tenure. Who are the players? What are the issues? How do your priorities fit into the matrix?
- Even if just mentally, form a list of your allies and supporters. How can you help them? And how can helping them help you?
- Seek to build strong coalitions across diverse constituencies, leaving no stone unturned. Potential partners include not only members of the academic community, but also more indirect contacts, such as alumni networks, influential donors, public officials, and media contacts.
- Look for creative partnerships that at first glance might not seem like obvious choices for promoting diversity but which have the potential to create real movement on your issues.
- Develop a powerful advisory board to guide the efforts of your office.
- Use informal networks to gather information and share ideas and resources.
- Develop relationships of trust with those whom you know will support you.
- Help others freely, but do not pass up the opportunity to call in a favor if you need to.
- Know when to be the public face of your efforts and when to work behind the scenes.
- Minimize drama in your leadership style, favoring concrete, well-researched, and meaningful engagement on the issues.

cohesive campus diversity agenda. 
Exhibit 12 presents several symbolic diversity leadership strategies.

**Collegial Leadership**

Finally, diversity leaders must manage multiple relationships and involve the broader campus community in a conversation about diversity, finding ways to create buy-in from all stakeholders. Similar to the political approach, the collegial model of leadership places an emphasis on consensus and shared power (Bolman & Deal, 2003). In this model, administrators, faculty, and students make up a collegium that shares responsibility for leading their institution. The collegium is built upon the formal structure of shared governance and limits status inequalities among faculty, students, and administrators.

Collegial strategies require diversity leaders to constantly engage in efforts to build relationships with their colleagues in various formal and informal leadership roles on campus. Hence, a major tactic of this style of leadership is to provide regular updates to the various shared governance communities of the campus. Depending upon the strength of the shared governance infrastructure, it may be necessary for leaders to develop personal relationships with individuals in different leadership roles, so that, again, they can utilize these relationships to move a particular diversity effort forward. Another common tactic is to develop diversity committees and taskforces as important sites for shared decision-making and engagement on campus diversity issues. While websites, email listservs, and annual reports are important methods of communication, the most powerful strategies are built around creating opportunities for dialogue between the campus community and institutional decision-makers. Successful efforts include drawing

**Exhibit 12. Symbolic diversity leadership strategies**

- Reinforce the importance of the diversity agenda with messages from the president, chancellor, provost, chief diversity officer, board of trustees, and other senior leaders.
- Encourage diverse stakeholders to participate in all stages of revising or developing a new strategic diversity plan.
- Develop a campus diversity vision statement that receives input from multiple stakeholders and is then adopted as part of the formal vision for diversity efforts on campus.
- Coordinate high-profile campus diversity events that present diversity in both serious and celebratory contexts, fostering a sense of diversity’s academic, cultural, and social importance on campus.
- Include diversity in prominent speeches, events, and initiatives that are not directly focused on diversity.
- Create a hybrid chief diversity officer division that helps integrate diversity into other core institutional responsibilities, including student and undergraduate-affairs offices. Include this division within the chief diversity officer’s portfolio (e.g., vice president for diversity and student development or vice president and vice provost for diversity and institutional research).
- As indicated previously, include diverse images and content in traditional campus outreach and branding efforts.
- Celebrate high-profile diversity successes as significant institutional accomplishments

on campus faculty expertise for consulting purposes, hosting regular meetings with key stakeholders, and holding town hall meetings with faculty, students, and staff. These mechanisms allow institutional leaders to engage the campus community in a conversation about any proposed changes. Even if individuals disagree with the changes, they will respect senior leaders for acknowledging their views and respecting campus traditions of collegial engagement. By giving the broader campus community an opportunity to participate in the process and to give feedback, diversity leaders simultaneously address the symbolic and political realities of institutions and the need to operate collegially and work toward consensus (Birnbaum, 1988).

**Artful Science**

Whether at the highest levels or at the base of institutional life, strategic diversity work is the artful science of anticipating change, framing efforts in ways that others can understand, and managing the journey of change. At its core, this philosophy of leadership involves chief diversity officers, senior leaders, deans, department chairs, faculty, students, alumni, and other diversity champions actively working together toward one goal: to move beyond the cycle of diversity crisis, action, relaxation, and disappointment that has been repeated so frequently on college and university campuses. Achieving this goal and making diversity a matter of excellence requires a focus on five key principles:

- **Principle 1**: Redefine issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion as fundamental to the organizational bottom line of mission fulfillment and institutional excellence.
- **Principle 2**: Focus on creating systems that enable all students, faculty, and staff to thrive and achieve their maximum potential.
- **Principle 3**: Achieve a more robust and integrated diversity approach that builds on prior diversity models and operates in a strategic, evidence-based, data-driven manner that holds accountability paramount.
- **Principle 4**: Focus on diversity-related efforts that innovate and transform the institutional culture, not merely on tactical moves that lead to poorly integrated efforts and symbolic implementation.
- **Principle 5**: Lead with a high degree of cultural intelligence and awareness of different identities and their significance in higher education.

This discussion of strategic diversity leadership is grounded in the assumption that effecting pervasive change on issues of diversity, like any other domain, is both art and science. Diversity goals are never easily achieved. Consequently, campus diversity champions, regardless of their institutional role, must be sophisticated in their approach and willing to cut against the grain of tradition, artfully navigating issues both anticipated and unanticipated and applying the best diversity science possible to move the campus diversity agenda.
Section 3: Developing a System of Diversity Accountability and Performance Management

High-performing organizations use data to understand where they are and to align action and intention in order to achieve even greater impact. Diversity efforts should operate no differently. Without clear systems of alignment and accountability, any diversity strategy will achieve only marginal success. To drive the campus diversity agenda, therefore, leaders must develop a system for measuring their diversity performance over time. To assist in this process, the author offers a tool grounded in concepts drawn from the “Balanced Scorecard” (Kaplan & Norton, 1992), the “Diversity/Equity Scorecard” (Bensimon, 2004; Bensimon & Malcom, 2012), the “Diversity Scorecard” (Hubbard, 2004), and what in the author’s own research has been called the “Inclusive Excellence Scorecard” (Williams et al., 2005). The tool is scalable, fluid, and contextual, helping institutions understand what they are doing well and what they need to improve on.

Generally speaking, an organizational scorecard operates like a balanced and carefully selected set of performance data that helps leaders understand the impact of tactical activities and how these ultimately drive the big-picture strategic diversity agenda. More than simply compiling data, the scorecard identifies key performance measures and aligns the institutional change vision with the formal, day-to-day realities of the institution. The scorecard can function as the centerpiece of an institution’s campus diversity agenda and, in this way, should resemble the ways the institution measures other aspects of its broader vision and mission. Additionally, the scorecard offers a way to communicate progress to stakeholders.

Deployed as part of a larger process of introspection, dialogue, and action, the scorecard serves as a rallying point to deepen an institution’s commitment to change and as an organizational learning approach to strategic diversity leadership. Constructed to generate success, the scorecard enables campuses to move from simply checking off diversity outcomes as part of a diversity head-count game to managing a holistic and integrated plan to reach diversity and educational quality goals as a matter of institutional excellence.

Scorecard Dimensions

The Strategic Diversity Leadership Scorecard (SDLS) is a multidimensional performance-measurement tool designed to drive change from a number of related perspectives:

1. Achieving access and equity;
2. Fostering a multicultural, inclusive campus climate;
3. Learning and diversity, preparing the entire institutional community to lead, learn, and live in a diverse environment; and
4. Enhancing diversity-themed research and scholarship.
Exhibit 13 offers a visual representation of these four perspectives. The use of the word “perspectives” is intentional and meant to reinforce the idea that a strategic diversity effort works best if pursued from a number of different viewpoints. At the core of the model, the diversity leadership commitment operates as the key ingredient for accomplishing the other four dimensions of the model. That said, the perspectives offered here are not meant to be exhaustive. A particular institution might develop others, such as strategic partnerships and communication or marketing. Finally, an institution might even split a perspective into multiple perspectives, such as examining access and equity from a gender perspective, then an economic perspective, and finally a minority perspective.

For a scorecard to be meaningful, it must be framed within the unique vision and strategic goals of a particular institution’s diversity efforts. If preparing students to join a diverse, global workforce is not an institutional goal, then it should not be included as a perspective in the framework. Conversely, other required perspectives should be developed as appropriate. The four baseline perspectives offered here represent the big-picture diversity priorities of most academic institutions. This framework has proven helpful as a starting point for developing a balanced diversity performance-measurement system. Exhibit 13 presents each of these perspectives as a balanced set of dimensions of diversity that an institution can use as a basis for moving forward in an effective, coordinated fashion. This model complements previous discussions.
of strategic diversity leadership, presenting a performance management tool that captures the various threads of an institutional diversity strategy, however it is defined.

**Objectives, Goals, Tactics, and Indicators**

Diversity leaders must define the objectives, goals, tactics, and indicators (OGTIs) that indicate progress for each perspective. OGTIs offer an effective way to make specific an institution’s efforts within a particular area of diversity, applying an institution’s big-picture vision to a particular perspective. This part of each scorecard should be extremely selective and as well defined as possible.

A learning and diversity objective might endeavor to ensure that every graduate is educated for a diverse and global world. The specific action objectives are then translated into goals. For example, an institution might decide that all students will participate in a study abroad program and fulfill a campus-wide general education diversity requirement by the end of their junior year. Tactics include the specific programs, initiatives, and actions necessary to accomplish the goals and, by extension, the big-picture objective. In this example, the tactics might include creating a new diversity requirement, developing a plan to market the study abroad program, and training advisors to present these initiatives and their importance to students. Other possible tactics include allocating more financial resources to those departments that teach the general education diversity requirement and more funding to the study abroad office to help economically vulnerable student populations participate.

The indicators are the specific measures or themes used to track progress. In this context, indicators can be qualitative or quantitative, because the aim is to have enough evidence to allow leaders to understand the changes, make adjustments, and lead change over time. At times, leaders will quantify their indicators, because it will be important to express equity progress in terms of where the indicators are (baseline) versus where they ultimately should be (target). Leaders can also define indicators in terms of progress and outcome. OGTIs can cascade down through the institution. Once the overall OGTIs are outlined, individual departments can create their own OGTIs to match the objectives articulated at the institutional level.

**Strategic Diversity Leadership Scorecard Progress and Outcome Indicators of Organizational Diversity**

Progress and outcome indicators define ways of thinking about developments within and across each perspective on your scorecard. Simply defined, indicators are the specific criteria used in a performance management system or scorecard. A description of potential progress and outcome indicators is presented in Exhibit 14. As this exhibit illustrates, the scorecard functions as a tool for taking an accurate snapshot of multiple dimensions of an institution’s diversity.
Exhibit 14. **Sample tactics, progress, and outcome indicators to be used in an institution’s Strategic Diversity Leadership Scorecard**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Sample Tactics</th>
<th>Sample Progress Indicators</th>
<th>Sample Outcome Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Access and Equity | Achieve access and equity for historically underrepresented minorities and women, boosting attendance, graduation, and promotion rates at levels comparable to the majority population | • Curriculum transformation efforts in courses with the greatest academic disparity  
• Diversity-themed scholarships  
• K-12 pipeline programs  
• Learning communities  
• High-impact learning experience programs  
• Retention programs  
• Staff and administrator hiring initiatives and leadership development programs  
• Diverse faculty hiring initiatives  
• Targeted recruitment efforts  
• Targeted STEM programs and initiatives | • Yield rates of ethnically and racially diverse applicants to undergraduate and graduate programs  
• Yield rates of Pell grant recipient students  
• Number of women in STEM and business majors  
• Number of men in education majors  
• Ethnically and racially diverse students and Pell grant recipients in the honors program  
• First-year and sophomore retention rates  
• Gateway course achievement levels  
• Number of students from historically underrepresented populations (e.g., African American, Latino/a, Native American, and Southeast Asian) enrolled  
• Number of non-athlete males of color enrolled on campus  
• Diversity levels in the search processes for faculty and administrative positions  
• Levels of minority participation in high-impact learning experiences (e.g., first-year experience)  
• Number of community college transfers  
• Pell grants by race/ethnicity  
• Percentage of minority and low-income students receiving merit-based scholarship support  
• Percentage of students receiving need-based financial aid  
• Ratio of student retention staff to number of student participants in the retention program  
• Employee turnover  
• Levels of diversity in different majors, particularly STEM and professional disciplines  
• Levels of unmet financial need by economic background  
• Number of first-generation students on campus | • Six-year graduation rates for minorities, women, students with disabilities, first-generation students, Pell grant recipients, and others  
• Graduating minorities and women in the professional schools at rates commensurate with their presence on campus  
• Graduating minorities, women, and first-generation students in the STEM majors at rates commensurate with their presence on campus  
• Presence of minorities and women in significant leadership positions at all levels  
• Advancement of minorities and women to full professor at rates commensurate to all members of the faculty  
• Minorities and women’s tenure rates  
• Percentage of minorities and women graduating with a 3.0 GPA or higher  
• Graduation rates for African-American, Latino, and Native American males  
• Percentage of minorities, women, students with disabilities, first-generation students and Pell grant recipients graduating with honors |
### Exhibit 14. Sample tactics, progress, and outcome indicators to be used in an institution’s Strategic Diversity Leadership Scorecard (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Sample Tactics</th>
<th>Sample Progress Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural,</td>
<td>Establish a multicultural campus climate of inclusion, in which every</td>
<td>- Diversity-affinity professional organizations for faculty and staff</td>
<td>- Number of diverse student organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive</td>
<td>member feels a sense of belonging and can participate fully in the life of</td>
<td>- Diversity-themed student organizations</td>
<td>- Number of course syllabi that include a diversity-, inclusion-, or campus-climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>the institution</td>
<td>- Diversity awards ceremonies</td>
<td>statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Climate</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Diversity training programs for students, faculty, and staff</td>
<td>- Number of campus climate incidents (e.g., a homophobic letter put on the door of a</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Domestic partner benefits</td>
<td>member of the LGBTQ community)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Family-friendly work policies</td>
<td>- Number and presence of diversity-related articles in campus media</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- LGBTQ-ally training initiatives</td>
<td>- Number of faculty, staff, and administrators who have attended diversity training,</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>education, and leadership training events</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Level of participation and vitality of professional diversity-affinity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>organizations (e.g., LGBTQ faculty and staff associations)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Level of participation and vitality of minority student organizations</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Minority student participation in campus-wide student organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning and</td>
<td>Ensure that students, faculty, and staff are prepared for a diverse,</td>
<td>- Diversity content infused in every course</td>
<td>- Levels of use and participation in diversity and campus-wide activities and initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>global, interconnected world</td>
<td>- Ethnic and gender studies</td>
<td>- Perceptions of belonging</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- General education diversity requirements</td>
<td>- Perceptions of engagement</td>
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<td>- International area studies</td>
<td>- Perceptions of satisfaction</td>
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<td>- Service learning initiatives</td>
<td>- Perceptions of the campus climate</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Study abroad programs</td>
<td>- Perceptions of work-family conflicts</td>
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<td>- Number of lawsuits and/or settlements</td>
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<td>- Number of sexual harassment cases</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Number of racial discrimination cases</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Participation of students in intergroup relations experiences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Participation in service learning and other volunteer activities</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Participation of students in advanced foreign language courses</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Presence of diversity in courses across the curriculum</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Number of students participating in diversity-themed courses by school, college, and</td>
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<td>department</td>
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</table>

- Social and emotional intelligence indicators
- Democratic outcomes indicators, such as the ability to take on the position of the other and look at the world from multiple perspectives
- Measures of cognitive complexity
- Measures of essential learning outcomes
and for understanding progress and outcomes over time.

The mix of progress and outcome indicators included in a diversity scorecard should give a clear sense of not only where an institution stands in regards to a particular effort (outcomes), but also where it stands in the formative processes of change (progress). Progress, or formative data, allows strategic diversity leaders to understand how to improve the impact of a particular program, process, or initiative. Giving an early indication of where the institution stands in various performance measures, formative data enables the evaluation of the worth of the process or activity being used to drive diversity-themed change.

For example, if a faculty search committee and the office of affirmative action collaboratively monitor the diversity of pools of prospective applicants, a department chair could obtain valuable information that suggests the need to modify the search committee’s process for identifying and recruiting diverse talent. Progress data of this kind (detailing the diversity of contacts, applicants, and interview participants) is an important complement to outcome data (the hiring decision), because it helps academic leaders understand whether their hiring initiatives are on the right track, especially if their efforts are failing to generate diversity in even the applicant pool. By comparison, summative or outcome data answer final questions such as: What does this educational initiative add up to? How many first-generation students did we graduate? How many female STEM faculty members did we hire? Does our leadership commitment meet our expectations as a campus community?

Summative measures provide the bottom line in a particular dimension of the scorecard, but need to be understood in a context that also measures progress.

### Exhibit 14. Sample tactics, progress, and outcome indicators to be used in an institution’s Strategic Diversity Leadership Scorecard (continued)

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diversity Research and Scholarship</td>
<td>Advance scholarship and research on domestic, international, and intersectional issues of diversity</td>
<td>• Diversity research institutes and centers&lt;br&gt; • Ethnic and gender studies efforts&lt;br&gt; • Faculty exchange programs&lt;br&gt; • Global research partnerships&lt;br&gt; • International studies centers&lt;br&gt; • Visiting diversity scholars programs</td>
<td>• Number of ethnic, gender, and international area studies programs with departmental status&lt;br&gt; • Number of full-time and affiliated faculty in ethnic, gender, and international studies&lt;br&gt; • Presence of diversity-themed research centers and institutes&lt;br&gt; • Faculty participation in international research experiences&lt;br&gt; • Presence of innovative urban partnership efforts focused on access, equity, and continuing education for underserved populations</td>
<td>• Total number and value of grants designed to drive research and scholarship in areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion&lt;br&gt; • Research and scholarly output (e.g., articles, books, and chapters)&lt;br&gt; • Presentations at national and international meetings focused on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion</td>
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The Importance of Disaggregating Data

When assessing campus performance along any number of different dimensions, it is important to reflect upon the extent to which embedded benefits may exist for some groups to the exclusion of others who continue to struggle. Campus leaders can only understand the differences in the experiences of different subgroups by disaggregating quantitative and qualitative data at every opportunity.

The campus experiences of students, faculty, and staff take place in a broader social-historical context of difference defined by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and other dimensions of the evolving idea of diversity. Despite some positive steps, most institutions have embedded processes that sustain the advantage of majority groups. Unless the campus experience is analyzed through the lens of identity and disaggregation, these advantages usually go unrecognized (Duster, 1993). Disaggregating data for women, LGBTQ individuals, those with disadvantaged economic backgrounds, and racial/ethnic minorities is particularly important to establish authenticity in establishing the campus diversity scorecard. Whenever possible, it is vital to disaggregate information, although this task might not always be easily accomplished with any given data collection activity.

The key to overcoming these challenges is to use a culturally aligned research process. If not approached with sensitivity, discretion, and confidentiality, individuals within a particular group might ignore invitations to participate in surveys, focus groups, and research projects. All too often, campus leaders either resist disaggregating data or limit their analysis to the most obvious indicators, such as representation and graduation rates. Other times, leaders lump different groups together in an effort to provide an aggregate number of minority students who can be contrasted with the majority white population. While using aggregate numbers can be helpful, institutions should disaggregate whenever these breakdowns are meaningful for generating strategic understanding, even if the cell sizes may be small and not have statistical significance.

In the author's experience, campus leaders often hesitate to study their own data in particular ways, for fear of reinforcing widely held stereotypes about the competitive abilities of minorities compared to the majority population. Well-intentioned administrators will sometimes say, “Aren’t we just reinforcing a message of racial or ethnic inferiority by highlighting these differences?” These individuals worry that highlighting the disparities between minority subgroups and the majority culture sends the discouraging message that minority individuals cannot perform as well as their majority peers, colleagues, and coworkers. Campus leaders also worry that disaggregation will bring negative media attention to the institution by
highlighting any persistent challenges to achieving greater equity of outcomes. Finally, they resist disaggregation, because it may call attention to particular academic departments in which minority and female student achievement is apparently lower, implying a systemic challenge they wish to ignore and leave undisturbed.

These fundamental challenges, however, will be overcome only by openly and honestly examining the unique experiences of different groups. Thus, it is vital not only to disaggregate data by as many factors as necessary, but also to distinguish the subtle nuances in particular subgroups. Broadening the discussion of diversity as a matter of excellence means that scorecard data disaggregation cannot be wholly focused on equity for diverse, cultural identity groups. The process must also be aimed at understanding the experiences of those in the majority population—a goal particularly important to a learning and diversity perspective and to preparing students for a knowledge-based, global economy. As the promise of our global community unfolds, it is increasingly vital to understand the experience of majority white students, faculty, and staff and the ways that they are developing the skills necessary for thriving in an increasingly diverse society.

Exploring and communicating the findings, however modest, will be a welcome gesture for minority communities that have often seen their particular concerns and interests either ignored or subsumed by majority white society.

**Structured Learning Forums as Tools of Engagement**

Structured learning forums are among the useful tools for leaders to cascade their scorecard throughout their institution and create space for constructive dialogue. Simply sharing data from a strategic diversity scorecard is not enough; stakeholders should be brought together in a series of discussions in which evidence can be shared, analyzed, and used to drive new initiatives (Moynihan, 2008). Moynihan argues that the “gap between dissemination and use [of data] occurs partly because of an absence of routines in which data are examined and interpreted” (p. 205).

Learning forums provide opportunities for students, faculty, and other members of the campus community to consider the information from the various dimensions of the SDLS, analyze its importance, and choose methods to use this information to make adjustments. Only by engaging community members in this process will individuals be empowered to take actions on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

One type of learning forum involves members of the campus diversity committee responsible for implementing the scorecard in the first place, while another forum could involve senior leaders and the campus deans. These forums should be confidential and limited in size to allow for open and honest dialogue. Ideally, they would involve a blend of informal conversations and formal presentations.
Forums should involve key participants who can play an important role in utilizing the data to create greater impact. For example, the learning forum might involve multiple academic deans; department chairs in courses with a high level of grade disparity among groups; faculty engaged in teaching, learning, and curriculum reform efforts; campus diversity professionals; members of academically themed student organizations; and leadership in high-impact learning experiences. The key is to expose and engage leaders with the data so that they can confront the reality it represents, consider new possibilities, and develop new initiatives to drive change.
Section 4: Conclusion

Diversity is no longer an issue that can be swept under the table, underfunded, or ignored until a crisis occurs. On the contrary, diversity in its myriad forms must be engaged daily and, from an institutional perspective, strategically. In many ways, the United States system of higher education continues to set the standard for the world. Nevertheless, the way that this system prioritizes racial, economic, gender, LGBTQ, and other forms of diversity remains limited, particularly in light of powerful environmental forces that are reshaping the strategic context of the academy in terms of the values that power its hiring practices, pedagogy, and budgeting priorities.

In the current era, we do not have to guess at how to diversify our faculty applicant pools, create powerful general education diversity requirements, eliminate retention and graduation disparities, establish diversity plans that work, or document diversity’s educational benefits (Allen, Epps, & Haniff, 1991; Bauman, Bustillos, Bensimon, Brown, & Bartee, 2005; Bensimon, 2004; Chang, Witt, Jones, & Hakuta, 2003; Clayton-Pedersen, Parker, Smith, Moreno, & Teraguchi, 2007; Gurin, Lehman, & Lewis, 2007; Harper, 2008; Hurtado, 2001; Jackson, 2007; Kezar, 2001; Tierney, 1992; Williams et. al, 2005). For more than 50 years, scholars have dedicated their lives to creating an evidence-based understanding of how to do strategic diversity leadership work in the academy. Truly disrupting the status quo and creating new possibilities in our institutions will require leaders who understand this literature, as part of a strategic diversity leadership approach, whether they are presidents, provosts, chief diversity officers, administrators, faculty leaders, or students.

The material commitment to action must be put into place daily if we are to represent higher education diversity efforts as more than simply high-profile window dressing. As the late Frank Hale Jr., former vice provost and professor emeritus at The Ohio State University, said, “Commitment without currency is counterfeit, and don’t let anyone tell you differently” (Hale, 2004). Until the values, leadership practices, budgets, pedagogy, symbols, and priorities of our institutions are focused on diversity, the challenge and opportunities of diversity will continue to confound and elude us.
References


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