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Stulberg, Lisa M. and Weinberg, Sharon Lawner. (Eds.) (2011)
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Diversity initiatives have expanded on college campuses over the years from discussions of race to less obvious forms such as the diversity of ideas. Inclusion should be encouraged in all of its forms but there is a danger of using more palatable forms of inclusion such as class or political viewpoints to evade uncomfortable conversations about race and ethnicity. When discussions of diversity exclude race and ethnicity, the fundamental purpose of the civil rights movement to integrate all facets of American society to include its schools is lost. Because America remains a race based and ethnocentric society, all forms of diversity including gender, sexuality, and physical abilities are interconnected by race or ethnicity. Ethnic discrimination among white Americans is not as prevalent as it was in the past. However, white Americans still celebrate and preserve their ethnic heritages as evident by museums, festivals,

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libraries, television shows, movies, publications, and even religious organizations.

Multiple perspectives on inclusion are given in the book, *Diversity in Higher Education: Toward a More Comprehensive Approach*. The book in its entirety presents a broader perspective than other works which tend to isolate one or two factors in analyzing diversity. However, other works tend to present a more in depth discussion of their singular topics. Each chapter in *Diversity in Higher Education* has a distinct argument while chapters within other books tend to support one overall argument. The book also has four sections which describe the issues and initiatives involved in the recruitment and preparation of diverse students to attend college; and the past, current, and future directions that universities have undertaken to ensure diversity on their campuses. In order to make the book a more coherent body of work, an introduction and conclusion is needed to provide a framework for the macro themes discussed throughout the book. Introductory and concluding statements containing the unifying themes for each section would have also been useful. Another shortcoming is the outdated sources used throughout the book. For example, in chapter 1, 16 out of the 23 references listed were older than 5 years. Of the 16 outdated references, 10 of those were 12 years old or older (pp. 22-24). In chapter 2, compelling arguments were presented regarding school segregation in today's society using an article that was written a decade ago in 2001 (p. 27). However, this could indicate a need to conduct more research studies in order to create a more contemporary body of literature.

Although each chapter had a different topic relating to diversity in higher education, several of them addressed recruiting and the experiences of minority students and faculty. The book began with the argument that a k-12 pipeline should be created which expanded on the idea that high schools can serve as filter schools to local universities (Siegel, 2010). The research on the impact of teachers in creating a viable k-12 educational pipeline for minority students was inconclusive. The research results cited in various chapters showed that teachers could be a positive, negative, or not a factor at all in regards to closing the achievement gap between white students and minority students. Among Latino and white students the

gap initially lessens but then levels off in elementary school but the achievement gap widens among African American and white students in elementary school (p. 15). According to this research, teachers are not able to level the playing field for minority students. In fact, over time the problem becomes even more exacerbated because the achievement gap gets wider the longer children are enrolled in school. When parents are taken into account, “Test score disparities between children of the most and least educated parents start out larger than ethnic disparities, may narrow somewhat during the early grades, but remain large throughout elementary and middle school....Students who start out behind are very unlikely to catch up to their peers in later years” (p. 15). Since the achievement gap begins before formal schooling, students who have an educational advantage tend to keep their advantage (pp. 16-17). Other factors such as teacher quality and how time is spent outside of school tend to reinforce the achievement gap (p. 20).

Setting a national standard will probably not make the rate of academic achievement equal for all students but it may help students by mandating basic skill levels appropriate for each grade level. There should be an emphasis placed on bringing students who are underachieving up to grade level and beyond rather than inviting university recruiters to become involved in preschool classrooms (p. 21). The research indicates that having a good teacher for three years in a row can overcome any deficits that low income children acquire from their home environment (Hanushek, 2002, p. 3). In fact, the power of teachers to influence student achievement can also be seen in postsecondary education. Open admissions policies and remedial programs offered by historical black colleges and universities support the theory that a deficit is a missing skill that once identified can be taught (p. 217). Educators can overcome disadvantaged home environments and school environments at any point in a student’s educational journey.

The negative influence of teachers on student achievement was caused by racism. Lowered expectations for black students; racial stereotypes creating self-fulfilling prophecies; blaming the student and home environment for underachievement were cited as factors which contributed to the underachievement of minority students (pp. 28-29).

Other reasons included the experience and skill level of teachers (p. 30). The data on teachers spanned across the spectrum. None of the book's chapters reinforced an overall view regarding teacher influence nor disputed the results of the other chapters in the book.

The strategies used by colleges to recruit eligible minority students to their campuses were also reviewed. However, parents were an important but overlooked factor in how minority students select which college to attend. Efforts to diversify college campus have moved from race-based admissions policies which increase the number of minorities to advocating the benefits of adding different viewpoints with structural changes to integrate different viewpoints (pp. 76, 96). Minority students are actively recruited using various approaches such as outreach, minority scholarships, and articulation agreements with two-year colleges (p. 80). In spite of these efforts, financial concerns prevent academically qualified students from low-income families from applying to selective colleges (p. 233). Inadequate high school advising was also a hindrance (p. 239). However, the recommendation that there needs to be more academic preparation to increase the number of applicants seems to contradict the major arguments presented in the chapter which focused on the financial needs of academically prepared students from low income families (p. 239). Other more relevant factors in selecting a college include proximity to parents, extracurricular activities, the length and complexity of the application, relocation and travel costs, and the type of degree programs offered. The education level of parents also impacts college attendance. Students with parents having only a high school education are less likely to attend college than students whose parents have graduate degrees (p. 10). The academic achievement of students did not appear to overcome this factor (pp. 13-14). College recruitment efforts focus on the student but outreach to parents is needed. Information about selecting college, application materials, and deadlines should be given to parents.

In the past, female students of all races were considered a numerical minority on college campuses. The argument that female students now have an advantage in college enrollment seemed ambitious. It was written that women now comprise 57 percent of the student body at colleges

and universities (p. 118). 57 percent is hardly a numerical advantage. Enrollment in college is roughly equal with women being slightly higher except among Hispanic students in which there are significantly more female than male students. Moreover, women like Asian students are still underrepresented in certain majors even though they are not a numerical minority on college campuses (p. 119, 161). The graduate school and professional degree statistics indicate that women and men are roughly equal with the exception of master's degrees. Women earned 51 percent of doctoral degrees, 47 percent of law degrees, 49 percent of medical degrees, and 45 percent of dentistry degrees in 2008 (p. 120). There was substantively more women, 61 percent, earning master's degrees (p. 120). Without factoring out race, there is no gender gap in higher education. The sexes are equal.

There were unsupported statements explaining the gender gap. It was reasoned that "...after controlling for the overall educational level of the parents, daughters should fare better in households with a better-educated mother than in households with a better-educated father, and sons should be affected more negatively than daughters by the absence of a father in the home" (p. 121). History demonstrates the opposite. Before it was acceptable to educate women and men equally, women were allowed to become educated because of their father's or husband's support (National Women's History Museum, n.d.). The premise that there is a reversal in the gender gap giving female students an advantage was faulty. The statistics indicated that the gender gap has closed for the general population but female African American and Latino students attend college in higher numbers than their male counterparts. The explanation that females with an educated mother have an advantage over males with an absent father or uneducated father as a role model disregards other factors such as familial obligations to support the family, problems with the law, and the desire to save up for college which can delay entry.

Although women are attending college at about the same rate as men, there are still disparities in their experiences. It was argued that women experience marginalization which prevents them from entering male dominated fields (pp. 195-196). The marginalization can be in the form of seemingly innocuous images but have hidden meanings

behind them. This is similar to the arguments made regarding the micro-aggressions experienced by racial minorities (DeAngelis, 2009). Past discriminatory experiences caused a heightened awareness among the victim but the perpetrator may not necessarily be aware of that they are insulting anyone because their behavior is normalized by society (p. 198). The book argued that it is a perception of bias but there are triggers which are tangible such as turning away from a person while they are speaking (p. 198; Wing Sue et al., 2007, pp. 273-274). There was example of invalidation called gender rejection sensitivity in the book in which a female student had her hand raised but was never called on while there was a male student who was called on twice (p. 203). Her race was not mentioned nor was the race of the other males and females in the class who were called on. She attributed the experience to the males being more aggressive (p. 203). Having had similar experiences in school and in the workplace, I was not convinced that it was a matter of being more or less aggressive. After having my hand raised for more than 20 minutes, I would often enlist the help of white male students or coworkers to ask questions and to make statements on my behalf by passing notes. They were called on immediately. Whatever the instructors' or administrators' intentions were, the message that came across to me was that you are not supposed to know the answer. You are not the person who has something to contribute to this discussion.

There was also a study cited which stated that "African American students at historically black colleges who were high in race-based rejection sensitivity did not experience the same levels of academic and social disengagement as their peers at a PWI [predominately white institution] with similar levels of Race RS [race sensitivity]." I maintain that African American students and other racial minority groups are not being sensitive. They are responding to incidents that are happening to them. They have no recourse or a forum to safely express themselves. Within the classrooms, they are subjected to stereotypes and expected to represent their entire race by their professors and in the dorms, they experience open hostility (Winkle-Wagner, 2009, pp. 69-89). I have heard African American students and have been told myself as an instructor by white students in the class that we were here because of affirmative action or to fill a racial quota. I have observed

racial minority students including Asians in certain majors such as education being excluded from fully participating in class groups and being isolated by other students. Moreover, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students told me that they have been physically attacked in the dorms, but were afraid to officially report it. They believed that no effective action would be taken to protect them and that the violence against them would escalate.

The need to diversify faculty is an important issue addressed in the book. The arguments presented, which recommended structural and policy changes in order to incorporate different points of view, apply to the recruiting faculty as well (pp. 76, 96). Efforts to recruit minority faculty without creating a collegial environment with adequate pay will be negated by low rates of retention. Young faculty members are vulnerable to incivility in their classrooms (Royce, 2000). Some recommendations were given in the book for faculty whom students find distasteful such as having more office hours, encouraging respectful debates and asking different student organizations to co-sponsor events (p. 176). These recommendations were aimed at creating a more welcoming environment for students who are avoiding courses which focus on multiculturalism, ethnic studies, and gender studies (p. 174). There should be action orientated policies in place to support the faculty who teach these courses.

Minority faculty especially first generation college students, who have recently graduated or are career changers, need help establishing networks within the university and their field. These networks should lead to publishing opportunities; invitations to participate in projects and programs; sharing information about useful resources; and offers to join panels at conferences. The long term gains of assisting minority faculty in establishing networks may lead to retention which should be more beneficial than utilizing special hires and hiring groups to recruit minority faculty (p. 148). Special hires would be dependent the ability to establish a sustainable course load and the departmental budget.

Lastly the recruitment of racial and ethnic minority faculty has been avoided by hiring international faculty. Universities combine the numbers of native born racial

and ethnic faculty members and international faculty members to boast their percentage of diverse faculty (pp. 142-143). The international faculty members are not necessarily people of color. The National Center for Educational Statistics (2010) counts them as non-resident aliens but does not collect information on the race and ethnicity for this group.

In summary, *Diversity in American Higher Education: Toward a More Comprehensive Approach* is a multidimensional volume which addresses a number of issues including policies regarding the recruitment of diverse students and faculty and their experiences on college campuses. Diversity is broadly defined to include various racial and ethnic groups, gender, and political viewpoints. Because there was no overall thesis promoted in the book, it was difficult to draw strong conclusions especially regarding the relationship between teachers and student achievement. However, there were several arguments made in the book which could provoke discussion such as the recruitment of minority students requiring structural changes within the university before the benefits of having a diverse student body can be realized. Although the gains that women have achieved in earning degrees were acknowledged, it seemed overreaching at this time to suggest that female students now have an advantage over male students. Both minority and female students face discrimination while on college campuses. Increasing their numbers does not appear to alleviate it. Efforts to recruit minority faculty tend to overshadow the need for support mechanisms to assist in their retention.

Future research could include a study of Native American students and the experiences of physically challenged students especially in regards to accessibility in college campuses. It is possible that there will be a growing number of physically challenged students attending universities due to current war efforts and the changes that have occurred in regards to education benefits for military service members. I observed a young war veteran who lost his legs because of an improvised explosive device being carried up a flight of stairs by his classmates because the building did not have an elevator. There was also no male restroom on the second floor and the classroom doorways were too narrow for his wheelchair to

pass through. When I was undergraduate student, there was a fire in the library stacks during which the elevators were shut down leaving a wheel chaired bound graduate student trapped. Fortunately she was found and carried out of the building to safety. Studying this population could reveal information regarding their unique needs and the factors that they consider when choosing a university. Nevertheless, the book contained histories and gave unbiased summaries of different topics related to diversity in higher education making it a useful reference book or a supplemental textbook for courses which focus on governance and organization in higher education.

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