IN THIS ISSUE:

Building and Sustaining an Institution-Wide Diversity Strategy
BY ALVIN EVANS AND EDNA BREINIG CHUN

Coping With Behavioral and Organizational Barriers to Diversity in the Workplace
BY ALVIN EVANS AND EDNA BREINIG CHUN

Human Resources Promotes Diversity and Inclusiveness at the University of Arkansas
BY BARBARA TAYLOR

Managing the Multigenerational Workplace: Answers for Managers and Trainers
BY SHARON J. BARTLEY, PATRICK G. LADD AND M. LANE MORRIS

The Bias Response Program at Cornell University: A Metric for Diversity Initiatives
BY LYNETTE CHAPPELL-WILLIAMS

The Chief Diversity Officer
BY DR. DAMON A. WILLIAMS AND DR. KATRINA C. WADE-GOLDEN
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### Table of Contents

**Page 3** - Building and Sustaining an Institution-Wide Diversity Strategy  
BY ALVIN EVANS AND EDNA CHUN  
Diversity strategies on campus have become necessary, but not so simple to create. This article explores how to build the framework needed for a diversity change initiative, how to drive the change effort, and the role of human resource professionals and educational leaders in doing so.

**Page 12** - Coping With Behavioral and Organizational Barriers to Diversity in the Workplace  
BY ALVIN EVANS AND EDNA CHUN  
Some would argue that discrimination is still alive and well in many higher education institutions, although more subtle and covert than in years past. This article examines how minority and female faculty and staff can develop coping strategies to deal with these behavioral and organizational barriers to inclusion.

**Page 20** - Human Resources Promotes Diversity and Inclusiveness at the University of Arkansas  
BY BARBARA TAYLOR  
A few years ago, the chancellor of the University of Arkansas created a task force whose focus was on building a campus environment that would allow university community members to learn from and about varied people and intellectual perspectives. This article describes the institution’s diversity initiative and the role human resources has played in bringing it to fruition.

**Page 28** - Managing the Multigenerational Workplace: Answers for Managers and Trainers  
BY SHARON BARTLEY, PATRICK LADD AND LANE MORRIS  
The average workplace today is made up of employees from several different age groups, from the 20-somethings of the millennial generation to the 75+ year-old veterans of World War II. This article examines the issues created by and associated with managing and training the multigenerational workforce.

**Page 35** - The Bias Response Program at Cornell University: A Metric for Diversity Initiatives  
BY LYNETTE CHAPPELL-WILLIAMS  
All colleges and universities have policies and procedures in place for dealing with overt discrimination and harassment. But what happens when the offensive action or incident is not so clear cut? This article describes Cornell University’s strategy for tracking, addressing and responding to bias incidents on campus.

**Page 38** - The Chief Diversity Officer  
BY DAMON WILLIAMS AND KATRINA WADE-GOLDEN  
Chief diversity officers are becoming common fixtures in higher education administration, yet there is little consensus regarding optimally designed CDO positions. This article presents several concepts to assist human resource professionals in their efforts to design new roles, support search committees, locate the best talent and help new officers hit the ground running.
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Building and Sustaining an Institution-Wide Diversity Strategy

BY ALVIN EVANS AND EDNA BREINIG CHUN

Evans and Chun are co-authors of a new book, Are the Walls Really Down? Behavioral and Organizational Barriers to Faculty and Staff Diversity.

How can educational leaders, human resource professionals and diversity practitioners create the dynamic strategies, structures and policies that will promote the inclusion of diverse and talented faculty and staff? What is the role of the human resource professional in the diversity change process? This article explores how to build the framework necessary for a diversity change initiative, how to drive the change effort, and the role of human resource practitioners in the planning and implementation of such an initiative.

Introduction

Implementing an institution-wide diversity initiative in higher education is a major change initiative: it is neither quick nor simple. It requires systemic, prolonged and intensive efforts to facilitate structural and cultural change. In this process, the role of human resource practitioners is often overlooked, but is nevertheless essential in several important respects. Human resource practitioners are vital to the process of assessing and addressing organizational climate, developing strategies and approaches that will support the transformational change process and promoting institutional dialogue and professional development in support of diversity. In this respect, HR practitioners need to be able to identify behavioral and organizational barriers to diversity, design specific approaches to enhancing a culture of inclusion and ensure consistent administration of organizational policies.

Fundamental Requirements for Implementing a Diversity Change Initiative in Higher Education

Since higher education differs from other organizational environments in many significant respects, key contextual characteristics need to be taken into account when planning and implementing a diversity change initiative. The higher education workplace is comprised of distinct subcultures driven by differing norms, values and operating assumptions. Clear differences exist between faculty, administrators and staff in terms of roles, expectations and terms of employment. Other characteristics of the higher education workplace include shared governance, multiple authority structures, academic culture in which faculty hold tenure, and goal ambiguity (Kezar 2001).

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Essential elements of leadership practices that promote the potential for transformational change include a willing president and active support among senior administrators; visible action; commitment to change; collaboration among leaders across the institution; flexible vision; persuasive communication; a long-term orientation; the necessary professional development for the change process; robust design of goals and objectives; rewards; and development of support structures (Eckel & Kezar 2003; Kezar & Eckel 2002a, 2002b). Furthermore, leadership for diversity involves the practice of empowering individuals as change agents by ensuring that minority voices contribute to decision-making processes and by supporting the role of minority faculty in the governance process (Aguirre & Martinez 2002).

Planning a diversity change initiative requires intervention on the part of institutional leadership to ignite the forces of change, sustain momentum, reward innovation and establish inventive programs and structures. The diversity initiative must be broad-based in order to leverage the capabilities and talents of faculty, administrators and staff regardless of differences in demographics, departmental locations, disciplines and levels and types of positions (Brockbank 1999).

The phases of a diversity initiative demand unrelenting stamina and continuous effort to ensure that one phase seamlessly transitions into the next. Getting the initiative started means capturing the excitement of beginning the process and sustaining that excitement and inspiration throughout the long, slow process of change. Sustaining momentum involves quickly identifying those who are willing to “carry the standard” and visibly rewarding their efforts. Reward strategies are critical and implementing these strategies through both informal and formal processes can serve as a powerful motivational force.

Organizing Principles of the Diversity Framework
A common conceptual framework which captures the key elements of diversity will help guide the change process. To reach conceptual clarity, the framework for a diversity change initiative requires cross-functional, multilevel campus involvement and discussion. To conduct such discussions, human resource administrators need to actively consider how to address managing for diversity within the workplace and the concrete ways in which diversity is supported. Since, at best, such diversity discussions tend to be brief, abstract and without substance (Thomas 2001), a dynamic campus agenda coordinated by the collaborative efforts of key departments including human resources will necessarily draw upon the talents and resources of leaders and committed stakeholders in facilitating substantive dialogue.

In developing a conceptual framework for the diversity effort, several thematic elements can help shape the thought process. The matrix for a conceptual diversity framework reflects the following five organizing principles: (1) holistic and inclusive, (2) challenging the status quo, (3) recognizing the value of differences, (4) promoting organizational consistency, and (5) embracing complexity.

**Holistic and inclusive.** Diversity needs to be understood as a holistic phenomenon, embracing all facets of difference. From this perspective, diversity and difference are not synonymous, but diversity includes and encompasses differences and similarities (Thomas 1995).

**Challenging the status quo.** Implementation of a diversity change initiative may require respectful challenge to traditional ways of thinking and doing. As such, resistance to change can be expected.

**Recognizing the value of differences.** Awareness of the importance of recognizing the value of difference and the need for diversity is critical. In this respect, reaffirming the need for diversity examines the importance of diversity to institutional mission, success and excellence. Furthermore, this concept includes the self-recognition by women and minorities of the value of the differences that they bring to the organization (Thomas 1995).
**Promoting organizational consistency.** The diversity framework must be understood and implemented at all levels and within all subcultures of the institution. As such, the diversity initiative cannot be localized to certain strata of the organization, or to the leadership of one or two individuals. The ultimate aim of a comprehensive diversity initiative is to attain organizational consistency throughout all subcultures of the institution.

**Embracing complexity.** Diversity demands increased knowledge, education and growth to prepare individuals to understand its complexity. Administrative leadership, department heads and chairs, and managers can foster opportunities to advance diversity awareness and expand cultural competencies.

**Driving the Diversity Change Effort**

How can change permeate the multiple layers of organizational culture in higher education? Organizational culture can be described metaphorically as a complex hologram that reflects different angles of light illuminating unconscious beliefs, tacit assumptions and hidden cultures that provide shared but unwritten rules for behavior (Kilmann 1984). The metaphor of the hologram captures the existence of assumptions and attitudes which only become visible when exposed to the appropriate angle of light. Organizational culture, in fact, is driven by powerful phenomena that exist below the surface, have significant impact, are invisible, and often are unconscious (Schein 2004).

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From this perspective, institutional culture can be understood as comprised of three layers: the top layer is the visible artifacts or processes, rules and structures; the second layer reflects “espoused values;” and the third layer is composed of underlying assumptions (Schein 2004).

Bringing about cultural change in higher education is a challenging and even daunting process. Cultural rigidity and inflexibility can make breaking through cultural strata to address underlying assumptions extremely difficult. Due to the fragmentation of the culture in higher education and the existence of multiple subcultures, readiness may vary widely among different units, areas and departments.

**Perspectives on Change Strategies**

Different theoretical perspectives address how systematic, organization-wide change can be implemented. The findings from research conducted in six institutions of higher education undergoing major change initiatives over a four-year period indicate that when strategies violate cultural norms or are culturally insensitive, they will not be successful (Kezar & Eckel 2002b). From this perspective, change strategies cannot be generalized or uniform, but instead need to be aligned with the culture.

**Organizational Sensemaking**

Organizational sensemaking is an overarching strategy that involves stakeholders, in a reciprocal and collective process, conceptualizing the change and its institutional impact (Kezar & Eckel 2002a). Through the process of sensemaking, individuals can alter their mental models and develop new meanings that are consistent with changed organizational realities (Kezar & Eckel 2002a).

From a practical perspective, Thomas (1996) identifies three critical tasks which can be linked to organizational sensemaking: (1) talking the talk — gaining conceptual clarity, (2) thinking the talk — internalizing the process through experimentation and initial application to daily realities, and (3) walking the talk — advancing to broad, in-depth application. In organizations that act without adequate conceptualization of diversity goals and processes, sustained institutional transformation will be difficult (Thomas 1996).

**Tracks**

Another theory for implementing change is to do so through tracks that can be deployed either sequentially or simultaneously (Kilmann 1984). This theory proposes that readiness is critical in shifting to the next strategy. In Kilmann’s analysis, these tracks include the culture track that lays the groundwork for mutual respect and trust; the management skills track that addresses management understanding of the complex issues and assumptions involved; the team-building track that allows team members or groups to identify and solve collaboratively the most difficult problems; the strategy-structure track that aligns structure and resources with strategic direction; and the reward system that ties rewards to performance and represents the most important track for an initiative’s success (Kilmann 1984).

**Role and Task Alignment**

In contrast to theories which first address cultural assumptions as fundamental to transformational change, other theorists identify what they call the “fallacy” of beginning with the knowledge and attitudes of individuals. This alternative approach argues that effective change is essentially based upon “task alignment” — focusing on the solving of concrete “business problems” through the reorganization of roles and responsibilities (Beer, Eisentat & Spector 1990). For this reason, each organizational department needs to be allowed to reinvent the wheel and find its own path to the new organization. These theorists assert that forcing change from the top only “short-circuits” the process (Beer et al. 1990).
Given the difficulty of changing behaviors and underlying attitudes, building the diversity effort through role and task alignment is an effective way to begin to increase ownership and build investment in results. Allowing ideas to “bubble up” rather than “trickle down” from the top creates a sense of engagement and greatly reduces resistance. Using the insights from this theory, human resource practitioners can identify departments or areas of the college or university which are successful and reward these visible role models in the diversity change process. Similarly, individuals who make a difference in the area of diversity through concrete role contributions need to be visibly recognized.

Although task and role realignment opportunities are certainly more limited in academic environments than in the corporate world, the idea of building involvement through responsibilities and roles has potential application in the higher education environment. For example, assignments as diversity coordinators, affirmative action coordinators or members of diversity councils, commissions or task forces substantially strengthen stakeholder involvement in the diversity change process.

Any or all of the change strategies listed above may work in concert. Balance among strategies, such as between cultural and structural strategies, is an important principle in effecting transformational change. Balance ensures that disequilibrium is not created by moving too quickly in one area, and the bundling of interrelated strategies allows them to be enacted simultaneously in nonlinear fashion (Kezar & Eckel 2002b).

**How Can the Diversity Change Initiative Take Hold in the Higher Education Environment?**

Four important observations crystallize how and where the diversity change initiative can take hold in the higher education environment. First, the diversity change initiative should be driven below the executive level by departments, areas and individuals through a process of constant innovation and experimentation. Second, successful diversity strategies take hold when originated by a relatively small number of change agents or units. This understanding builds upon Koch’s (1998) 80/20 principle which states that, “a minority of causes, inputs or effort usually lead to a majority of the results, outputs or rewards.” In moving the institutional giant, a relatively small number of key stakeholders within the various organizational spheres of influence in the college or university can spearhead the change, develop and test innovative strategies and carry forward the diversity initiative. Third, the network of change agents that originate strategies needs to be heterogeneous in composition. It should include individuals in different types of positions, representing different viewpoints and backgrounds. Finally, pace, timing and readiness are critical factors in gauging when, how and where to introduce change.

In summary, launching the diversity change initiative involves pursuing multiple channels and strategies and keeping these in balance in order to address institutional readiness. These multiple channels include communication, training, structural changes, role assignments, policies and procedures and new approaches to rewards and recognition. Approaches to diversity change need to be generated throughout the university or college, at all levels, at all strata and within all subcultures. Roles, responsibilities and tasks related to diversity heighten the involvement and engagement of stakeholders. The process is interactive and collaborative and requires utilization of sophisticated research insights, sensitive and non-threatening approaches, and state-of-the-art tools.

**The Road to Diversity Change: Organization Development Intervention Strategies**

During the last 50 years, organization development (OD) has emerged as an avenue for transformational change by focusing specifically on culture and processes. As a starting point for reaching common conceptual understanding, organizational development intervention strategies can provide a window on the culture of the college or university. This window can be the “tipping point” for the change process (Gladwell 2000). Due to its complex and often decentralized environment, higher education seems particularly challenging in this regard. How can organizational development strategies be deployed in higher education with its multiple subcultures? Is this feasible or merely an organizational consultant’s dream?
In recent years, a more specialized field called “multicultural organization development” (MCOD) has emerged that specifically addresses conflicts which have arisen because of monocultural hierarchies and from the differential distribution of power (Chesler 1996). Although MCOD models can take either a consensus or conflict orientation, consensus-driven models that do not explore conflict or challenge forms of subtle workplace discrimination may not lead to required change (Chesler 1996). Gauging which approach to use involves assessment of the particular culture, readiness and openness, and an analysis of the best way to build support in the culture as it exists.

Three prototypes of multicultural OD intervention strategies are: 1) the cultural appreciation strategy, 2) the inclusion strategy, and 3) the social justice strategy (Cross & Conklin 2003). These prototypes represent very different approaches to the issue of diversity. The cultural appreciation strategy addresses the importance of cultural competence in an increasingly multicultural society and links cultural appreciation to the business case for diversity. This approach focuses on skill-building for leveraging diversity and increasing individual flexibility and empathy. Since it does not involve discussion of social justice or values necessarily, the cultural appreciation strategy draws attention to the positive benefits of diversity, while minimizing resistance (Cross & Conklin 2003).

The inclusion strategy highlights the importance of inclusion at all levels of the organization and builds upon the added value that differences can bring in terms of competitive advantage, teamwork and work output (Cross & Conklin 2003). This strategy, like the first, approaches the issue of diversity in a more consensus-oriented fashion, and can draw on the wide variety of experiences of those who are not part of the mainstream.

The social justice strategy is a more confrontational and conflict-oriented approach which focuses on historical injustice and its manifestations through exploitation, marginalization, subordination and cultural imperialism (Cross & Conklin 2003). This strategy can involve conflict and may generate resistance, if not approached with sensitivity and attention to the research supporting the concepts used.

All of these approaches are simply starting points on the road to organizational learning. They can be utilized in a planned effort to reach common conceptual understandings on the issue of diversity; surface hidden and suppressed conflict; and generate creative strategies for moving forward. These diversity intervention strategies, in and of themselves, will not effect change, but can begin the process of thoughtful examination and discussion of issues.

In assessing the viability of these different approaches, educational leaders can expect some degree of defensiveness, denial and resistance. How does the organizational consultant charged with implementing such interventions anticipate and handle these reactions? An important observation in this regard is that no single group is monolithic. In this regard, Cross (2000) recognizes the importance of “white men as champions,” noting that just because white males are members of the dominant group, this does not mean that all have power, are accepted by the elite group or even have equal opportunities. Similarly, white women can share the attitudes and behaviors of the dominant group around race, and minority men can share the dominant group’s attitudes relating to gender (Cross 2000).

Diversity intervention strategies that begin with the participants’ own experiences, probe for understanding and engage the participants in discussion are more likely to minimize resistance and defensiveness. In addition, attention must be drawn to the systemic and social framework of racism, rather than adopting too individualistic a perspective that would describe particular persons as “racist” (Feagin & O’Brien 2003). Racism within the context of higher education must be understood in terms of prevailing social patterns and how these patterns have consciously or unconsciously become embedded in institutional culture (Feagin & O’Brien 2003).
Conclusion
In the process of institution-wide diversity change, human resource practitioners can play a significant role in identifying internal barriers to diversity, developing reward programs and institutional policies that support diversity, and facilitating meaningful cross-campus dialogue and organizational learning related to diversity. Furthermore, expertise in the design of programs, metrics, change strategies and organizational development approaches is essential for transformational change related to diversity.

As a result, HR is a logical strategic partner in the diversity change process, due to its close relationship with employees, understanding of workplace climate and culture, and responsibility for human resource-related policies and procedures. In all phases of a systemic diversity effort, human resource professionals can be proactive in forging collaborative alliances with diversity and affirmative action officers and other key stakeholders to plan and implement an institution-specific approach to diversity.

References:


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Coping With Behavioral and Organizational Barriers to Diversity in the Workplace

BY ALVIN EVANS AND EDNA BREINIG CHUN

Evans and Chun are co-authors of a new book, *Are the Walls Really Down? Behavioral and Organizational Barriers to Faculty and Staff Diversity.*

Research in social psychology reveals that discrimination as a stressor is linked to adverse physical and psychological effects on those targeted, through the effects of cumulative, recurring and often ambiguous incidents. Stress that results from the impact of subtle forms of exclusion and discrimination can give rise to increased illness, loss of productivity and escalating health costs. This article explores how minority and female faculty and staff facing subtle behavioral and organizational barriers to inclusion in the higher education workplace can develop effective coping strategies to deal with these obstacles and how human resource professionals can help those affected by discrimination.

Introduction

Just 50 years after the implementation of Civil Rights legislation, women and minorities in the higher education workplace today face the emergence of subtle and covert forms of discrimination and exclusion. Given the long history of exclusion of minorities in the United States, these new forms of marginalization reflect the widespread consciousness of the potential for the use of legal remedies to address forms of overt discrimination. In the past, human resource professionals have dealt with more blatant acts of discrimination and exclusion. Today, everyday forms of workplace discrimination are exhibited in subtle behavioral and organizational barriers that are much more difficult to identify, but nonetheless recurring and cumulative in impact. These repeated, micro-level forms of marginalization lead to the revolving door, high turnover, deleterious psychological and physical effects upon those who experience discrimination-related stress, and the continual need to recruit and hire new minority and female faculty and staff (Evans & Chun 2007).

Organizational barriers to diversity and inclusion in the higher education workplace can include lack of support, failure to empower and include in decision-making processes, differing expectations, stereotyping, lack of mentoring and access to formal and informal networks, isolation and soloing, and tokenism (Evans & Chun 2007). Behavioral barriers may be displayed in many ways, including micro-level incursions, distancing and avoidance, delegitimization, silencing and other subtle forms of exclusion (Evans & Chun 2007).

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**Micro-level incursions** are small incidents with large consequences that occur with greater frequency than severe forms of discrimination (Deitch et al. 2003). For example, a supervisor can provide devaluing feedback or messages that undermine an employee’s self-esteem and work performance (Young 2003). **Avoidance and distancing** have been shown to indicate negative attitudes toward marginalized groups through nonverbal behaviors such as interpersonal distance, lack of eye contact, and body and shoulder orientation (Word, Zanna & Cooper 2000). **Delegitimization** is another behavioral barrier that can occur when individuals or groups are stereotyped into extremely negative social categories and differences are distorted and amplified (Bar-Tal 1989). **Silencing** occurs when women and minorities are interrupted or not allowed to speak or participate on an equal basis. Just as children were once told to be seen and not heard, even though marginalized groups may be present, they may not have the power to speak (Reinharz 1994). For example, a report examining the number of times female attorneys were interrupted in the courtroom revealed that they were interrupted at least six times more frequently than male attorneys (Reinharz 1994).

Documentable health effects based upon the chronic and ambiguous nature of contemporary forms of discrimination include depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and vulnerability to heart disease and other chronic illnesses (Foster & Tsarfati 2005). Prolonged stress can increase susceptibility to autoimmune diseases such as diabetes and myopathy and exacerbate digestive disorders and neurological disease (Sapolsky 1998).

From the perspective of minority and female faculty and staff, awareness of these subtle barriers and the contexts in which they occur can lead to the development of strategies that may be applied to varying circumstances. This article specifically focuses on ways for women and minorities to cope with behavioral barriers in the workplace. We examine findings from social psychological research with a view to applying the results of this empirical research to the higher education environment.

**Building a Repertoire of Coping Strategies**

How can an individual facing marginalization and exclusion in the workplace begin to build his or her repertoire of coping strategies? One of the first steps for the individual affected by discrimination is to understand conceptually the nature of discrimination and its consequential psychological impact.

The process of exclusion and discrimination has four defining characteristics in terms of its psychosocial effects upon members of stigmatized groups: (1) it increases the frequency and intensity of threats to the self; (2) it instills awareness of the devaluation of one’s social identity; (3) it makes the individual aware that others hold stereotypes about his/her social identity; and (4) it elevates stress levels due to the ambiguity derived from uncertainty about the motivation of actions toward stigmatized individuals (Miller & Major 2000).

The second step in developing coping strategies is to recognize when different strategies can be deployed successfully. Coping strategies are a situation-specific means of adapting to the stress caused by perceived discrimination. They are not simply reactive in terms of past circumstances or events, but are proactive and anticipatory (Miller & Major 2000). From this perspective, research has shown that the unpredictability of stressors can increase stress levels (Sapolsky 1998). For example, during the Nazi blitzkrieg of England, London was bombed every night with regularity. Bombings in the suburbs occurred less frequently but also with less predictability. The result was a greater increase in the development of ulcers in the suburban population (Sapolsky 1998). In addition, related experiments have shown that exercising some control over the situation is a powerful way to mitigate stress (Sapolsky 1998).

Adaptive strategies which allow anticipation of stressors through predictability and which permit the individual to have some degree of perceived control will reduce the impact of the stress. In fact, when an individual can appropriately attribute negative outcomes to prejudice, this attribution can serve a self-protective function (Crocker, Voelkl, Testa & Major 1991). In this regard, one study reveals that African-Americans who were prepared by their families to address and deal with racism did not have a significant relation between racist incidents and poorer mental health, unlike those who had lower levels of preparation (Fischer & Shaw 1999).
Since systemic racism has created its own forms of post-traumatic stress syndrome for 15 generations of African-Americans, the transmission of oppression’s lessons from one generation to another has resulted in behavioral strategies and resistance knowledge to cope with racial barriers (Feagin 2006). Other first- and second-generation minority immigrants to this country may have had less opportunity to develop these strategies and pass them on to their families (Feagin, personal communication, February 16, 2007).

Types of Coping Strategies

Two major types of coping strategies can be defined: problem-focused and emotion-focused. Problem-focused strategies involve some type of action to minimize the effects of a problem or situation, and can be directed toward the self, toward others or toward the situation itself (Crocker & Major 1989; Kuo 1995). Emotion-focused strategies assist the individual in regulating or controlling emotions in order to more successfully manage the impact of stress that the problem or situation creates (Crocker & Major 1989). These strategies may be melded, and the distinction between the two is not always clear cut.

Problem-focused strategies. In problem-focused coping directed toward the self, the individual can develop more refined interaction skills and social skills which will assist in achieving goals despite prejudice. These interaction skills include the ability to detect subtle behavioral and situational cues (Miller & Kaiser 2001). By blending the notion of predictability and anticipation with the ability to change behaviors in a socially skillful fashion, the individual can adjust more quickly and mitigate the impact of prejudice. Much like a chess game in which the moves are anticipated and plotted in advance, minorities and women who are aware of and can predict situational challenges are positioned to deploy higher order social and interactional skills to deflect the impact of discrimination.

Problem-focused strategies directed toward situations can aim at structuring the situation to reduce or avoid the opportunity for marginalization. For example, in some cases an individual may be able to structure a situation so as not to be isolated as the solo or token and dilute the tendency for others to attribute his or her behavior to this status. Similarly, in problem-focused strategies directed at others, individuals can participate in efforts to change external conditions and reduce or eliminate devaluation. Examples of these strategies are participation in civil rights activities or attempts to create legislative or judicial remedies to injustice.

Within the higher education workplace, a problem-focused strategy would be to build a network of alliances which strengthens one’s ability to withstand and effectively manage day-to-day workplace discrimination. Participation in campus-based minority focus groups is an example of a problem-based approach. Through resource or support groups, individuals can overcome a sense of isolation and uniqueness and obtain needed support.

Another problem-focused strategy reported by a minority faculty member to counteract marginalization was to focus more attention on her achievements in the national arena and ignore the lack of respect in her own department (Thomas & Hollenshead 2001).

Emotion-focused strategies. Controlling the emotions so as not to directly express anger or frustration represents an important approach to de-escalating a situation that might otherwise result in undesirable outcomes. Humor, sarcasm and concealment of real thoughts from the oppressor have been ways that African-Americans have survived under the threat of retaliation and violence from white oppressors (Feagin 2006). Minorities and women also need to combat the internalization of negative images or stereotypes that can result in self-fulfilling prophecy (Feagin & McKinney 2003).

One interesting study of 499 Asian-American residents of Seattle revealed that Asian-Americans are more likely to use intrapsychic, emotion-focused strategies such as reconceptualization of problems and avoidance to deal with racial discrimination (Kuo 1995).
While the study emphasizes that Asian Americans are not a homogenous group in terms of reactions to racial discrimination, traditional Asian cultural values that emphasize personal responsibility for success as well as the importance of compromise, conciliation and adaptation in the face of conflict may influence the choice of emotion-focused strategies (Kuo 1995). Since a greater degree of awareness of minority status often accompanies the use of emotion-focused coping, the findings of this study suggest that this choice may also be based upon an assessment of the risks of direct confrontation (Kuo 1995).

**Effective Coping Strategies**

Effective coping strategies employ a variety of mechanisms to address the challenges presented by perceived discrimination. Cognitive restructuring is an adaptive strategy that enables the individual to redefine the meaning of stressful and threatening events. Forms of cognitive restructuring can include devaluing the domains upon which stereotypes are made or reframing thoughts by understanding and interpreting patterns of behavior (Miller & Kaiser 2001). Thinking differently about an event or situation can enable the person to contextualize its meaning within a broader framework of understanding. This broader framework helps the individual refrain from dwelling unnecessarily on details and from overreacting to situations.

Depersonalization is an effective coping strategy since it allows the individual subjected to subtle discrimination to understand that similarly situated persons would experience the same thing. If the individual is a solo or token, the process of generalization and depersonalization becomes more difficult. Depersonalization creates distance from an experience and places an event within an objective and intelligible framework. As such, it can be viewed as a successful form of cognitive restructuring.

Spiritual sources and cultural values often provide critical support to many minorities and women facing discrimination. For example, Africultural coping or behaviors that reflect the values of an African-centered philosophical framework based on spirituality, harmony and balance provide a culture-specific resource to buffer the psychological effects of racism (Lewis-Coles & Constantine 2006).

An important question for minorities and women is whether or not directly challenging discrimination can be an effective coping strategy. Potential dangers may arise if, for example, a complaint of discrimination is against someone in power who controls important resources (Kaiser & Miller 2001b). The outcome, as demonstrated in several studies, could be retaliation and negative treatment, and individuals must decide if the cost of claiming discrimination will be worth the consequences (Kaiser & Miller 2001b).

A study of more than 200 undergraduates provides specific evidence of the social costs of making claims of discrimination, since the participants devalued an African-American male who attributed his failure to discrimination, viewed him as a complainer and were insensitive to the amount of discrimination he faced even when clear prejudice was shown (Kaiser & Miller 2001b). Despite the amount of discrimination the individual faced, he was seen as more emotional, hypersensitive, argumentative, trouble-making and irritating (Kaiser & Miller 2001b). This study illuminates the risks and reactions that can accompany claims of discrimination. The stigmatized individual can become typecast and seen as a troublemaker or a liability. The consequences and way of introducing information about discrimination must be considered in light of potential negative personal evaluations that may result.

In this regard, research findings indicate that women often do not directly confront the perpetrators of blatant discrimination or even tell members in positions of authority or higher status that they have been discriminated against (Swim & Hyers 1999, as cited in Kaiser & Miller 2004). Through a process of cognitive appraisal, individuals judge whether events are potentially harmful or beneficial, as well as one’s own ability to cope with the event and increase the likelihood of success in dealing with the event (Kaiser & Miller 2004). Women and minorities facing perceived discrimination often use cognitive appraisals to determine the costs and benefits of directly confronting prejudice. Since the most commonly documented obstacle to confronting discrimination is the interpersonal cost, women tend to avoid confronting sexism for fear of retaliation or being perceived as hypersensitive (Kaiser & Miller 2004).
To counteract perceived discrimination, the individual must bring into play a variety of strategies to assist in successfully meeting the challenge. These flexible and situation-specific strategies will assist the individual in the maintenance of normal, healthy self-esteem. While researchers have identified the importance of cognitive appraisal, situations often arise with only moments or seconds in which to respond. As a result, understanding the dynamics of subtle discrimination in advance and rehearsing or practicing responses will enable women and minorities to respond quickly and effectively.

The theory of behavioral immunization counteracts the learned helplessness that results when individuals believe that outcomes are uncontrollable. This theory rests upon the notion of controlling trauma and protecting the individual from helplessness by forming a cognitive representation of the situation and responding through behavior. A sense of competence also helps avoid the fear and depression caused by helplessness (Seligman 1975). The value of counteracting learned helplessness lies in developing a course of action or response based upon learning about a situation, rather than simply giving up.

Compensation for prejudice is essentially a form of behavioral immunization that is proactive and anticipatory in nature. For example, one study of 134 female undergraduate students found that women who were forewarned of impending prejudice conveyed less stereotypically feminine impressions on written essays (Kaiser & Miller 2001a). This research indicates that women who knew about pre-existing stereotypes distanced themselves from these stereotypes to mitigate the effects of sexism. Instead of waiting for negative outcomes to appear, the women took steps to address the impact of pre-existing assumptions.

Finally, self-blame in situations of discrimination may encourage members of disadvantaged groups to maintain their own oppression and internalize it through a form of hegemony. Self-blame can result in acceptance of one’s lower social status and promote actions that sustain the status quo rather than improve situations of systemic discrimination (Foster, Matheson & Poole 2001).

Conclusion

In reviewing the array of strategies available to women and minorities, the literature suggests that awareness of potential discrimination in the workplace is a prerequisite to developing effective coping strategies and inoculating individuals against the impact of perceived discrimination. A multiplicity of behavioral tools and approaches is needed. Gauging the specific situation (gaining information), not overreacting to it (emotional control) and developing a plan of action to counteract “learned helplessness” are important ways to ensure an appropriate response.

To successfully develop coping and adaptive strategies, preparation provides a clear advantage in terms of timing, practice and anticipation of behavioral obstacles. The research cited in this article validates the need for women and minorities to think through potential strategies in advance to counteract subtle discrimination in the workplace. In examining the repeated and frequent challenges to self-esteem posed by behavioral barriers, a strong reservoir of internal psychological resources is needed to mitigate the stressful impact of discriminatory situations.

The role of human resource professionals is twofold in terms of the issues addressed in this article. First, in order to optimize the talent of faculty and staff in support of institutional excellence as well as attain appropriate representation of women and minorities at all levels of the organization, human resource professionals need to assist institutional leadership in transforming institutional culture to be more welcoming, inclusive and supportive. Until this transformation occurs, human resource professionals can assist minorities and women through building networks, establishing support groups, creating mentoring programs, developing wellness and health-related resources and designing professional development activities that strengthen their capacity to cope successfully with behavioral and organizational barriers to diversity.
References:


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Advancing diversity and inclusiveness on campus is certainly a top priority for many institutions today. The question often is not “Should we promote diversity in our campus community?” but rather “How do we go about doing it?” At the University of Arkansas, the chancellor had long declared that diversity was his first and most important goal. This article describes the university’s diversity initiative and the role human resources played in bringing it to fruition.

Introduction
In early 2000, when the chancellor asked me to serve on a new diversity task force, I agreed, but my expectations were low. Over the past 30-some years at the University of Arkansas, there had been any number of committees and task forces dealing with diversity, affirmative action, desegregation and related issues. All of them had issued reports filled with credible plans, good-faith intentions and high aspirations, but few had produced noticeable change. I assumed that this one would be no different. But now, seven years later, I’m delighted to say that I was very wrong.

From the beginning, there were a number of differences between this task force and others of which I had been a part or been witness to. The chancellor had, for five years, declared that diversity was his first and most important goal, and he tied the work of the task force to that goal. The seriousness of his commitment was clear from the make-up of the new task force: there were 33 members, including four vice chancellors, one dean, three associate vice chancellors, 12 faculty members and four students, as well as researchers, support staff and others. Two attorneys from the general counsel’s staff were made available to consult on legal issues.

The members represented many dimensions of diversity — race, gender, national origin, age, disability and sexual orientation, as well as diverse personal philosophies and perspectives. The chair was a faculty member from management who would soon become chair of her department. Her skill in leading such a large and varied group, in keeping up momentum when it would be easy to get bogged down, and in helping all members to feel that their contributions were heard and valued was a major reason for the task force’s success.

The task force met twice a month and consulted widely with campus constituents. One of its biggest challenges was developing a diversity values statement that was acceptable to all members. The focus was on enhancing the educational diversity of the campus; that is, building a campus environment that would allow University of Arkansas community members to learn from and about varied people and intellectual perspectives. What was finally agreed upon was:

In order to enhance educational diversity, the University of Arkansas seeks to include and integrate individuals from varied backgrounds and with varied characteristics such as those defined by race, ethnicity, national origin, age, gender, socioeconomic background, religion, sexual orientation, disability and intellectual perspective.
This statement reflected a broad conceptualization of diversity and was consistent with definitions in antidiscrimination statements adopted earlier by student affairs and by the campus council.

The plan that the task force developed and presented to the campus in late 2002 was structured on three levels: broad objectives, goals that support each objective and action steps designed to facilitate accomplishment of the goals. Offices or individuals, called “initiating agents,” were identified for each action step, and, importantly, funding requirements were identified. Initiating agents were consulted about and asked for input on each of their assigned activities and their costs. They also were asked to report progress for each action step, an accountability process that ensured continued commitment to the plan’s implementation.

**HR’s Role/Activities**

To suggest the scope and structure of the plan, I will list its four major objectives, but will not go into further detail except in describing the actions for which human resources was the initiating agent. The four objectives were to:

1. Enhance all community members’ feelings of belonging to the University of Arkansas and enhance their involvement in campus activities;
2. Build an inclusive, affirming learning culture for all members of the University of Arkansas community;
3. Create a University of Arkansas community that includes members of diverse groups; and
4. Ensure that the rich and varied perspectives of a diverse university and society are reflected in our curriculum.

Other than recruiting a diverse staff, it may not be immediately apparent how human resources would fit into or be responsible for implementing the objectives listed above; but in reality, HR has played a major and important role, initiating or enhancing nearly two dozen activities. I have been surprised and gratified by the excitement that a number of our initiatives have generated, both among our staff and among members of the campus community at large.

**Orientation Material**

One of HR’s first activities in support of the diversity plan was to revise the video that we used in the weekly new employee orientation. Orientation is a full-day activity, with the morning session providing a broad introduction to the campus and the afternoon focusing on university benefits. The morning session includes a video welcoming new employees to campus and introducing some of the campus history and culture, along with policies, procedures, handbooks and other reference materials and an actual or virtual campus tour.

The video was revised to emphasize diversity and inclusiveness as campus values and cultural components. In order to do that convincingly, we conducted interviews with a wide variety of staff, administrators and faculty, asking them for their thoughts on what made the campus welcoming and what made working and learning there a valuable experience. Many of their ideas and segments of their interviews were incorporated into the video. The chancellor’s welcome was redone to emphasize his focus on diversity and to depict him walking across campus as he spoke, instead of talking behind a desk.

The quality of the new video was significantly better than the one it replaced, not only in content, but also technically, thanks largely to the university’s media services staff, with whom HR partnered in the recording and editing process. It also took longer to make than we anticipated, but the time and effort felt worthwhile, and enabled us to make it available in several formats for group and individual use.

In order to help improve the entry experience for new employees, HR also incorporated a variety of information about diversity-related campus organizations, activities and information sources into the morning orientation session.
New Employee Social
In another welcoming initiative, twice a year human resources invites all employees hired during the past six months to a new employee social where they can meet other new employees, as well as some of those who have worked for the university for a longer time. New people are sent personal invitations, but other employees are encouraged to attend, and there is usually a good mix of new and continuing people and a broad representation of varied areas of the university. Although attendance varies, the socials have drawn as many as 100 people, approximately 70 percent of them new employees. The racial, ethnic, age and gender diversity of those who attend has been surprising, and the food, drink and ice-breaker activities HR provides ensure that people meet one another and interact.

Recruiting/Hiring
Before we welcome new employees, they must, of course, be recruited and hired. Hiring and, to a considerable extent, recruitment for the university has long been decentralized. As the largest employer in Fayetteville and enjoying the reputation of an employer of choice, the university had never recruited intensely for most staff positions, especially those for which the reasonable recruitment area was within a 100 mile radius of the campus.

But under the diversity task force plan, we committed to expand recruitment activities, especially in areas with large populations of under-represented groups. We started sending human resource staff to recruitment fairs in central and southeastern Arkansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Kansas and Texas. We targeted two-year institutions for recruitment visits. We cultivated relationships with area multicultural organizations and with agencies serving people with disabilities. We increased advertising in Spanish-language newspapers and job guides with broad area readership.

We partnered more actively with admissions, especially in its minority recruitment efforts, asking that recruiters seeking students also bring information about employment opportunities. An interesting and unplanned phenomenon at job fairs was that we found people interested in earning degrees at the university who also needed employment. We told them about the university’s 90 percent tuition discount for employees and suggested that they come and work for us full-time while taking courses toward their degrees.

More recently, we brought a consultant to campus to work with academic and administrative units on recruiting diverse faculty and professional and administrative staff. The focus of the meetings with the consultant was on recruitment as an ongoing process, not just something that happens when there is a vacancy. Among the topics discussed were networking, promoting the university in non-recruitment settings, branding, sharing successful recruitment methods with other units and courting applicants and prospects. One subsequent development has been the formation of a campus interest group to work on developing recruitment packets and publicizing successful techniques.

Recruitment Materials
Recruitment materials were revised to incorporate more language and images relating to inclusiveness and diversity and to include the diversity values statement. Brochures were redesigned and booth displays suitable for large floor space and small tabletop spaces have been purchased and filled with attractive photos from university relations archives. These depict not only diverse-appearing employees, but women and men in nontraditional jobs.

Employment Opportunities Web Site
Human resources began revamping the employment opportunities Web site by adding the diversity values statement and emphasizing that the university seeks to be welcoming and inclusive. Later, the entire employment opportunities site was redesigned with the advice of a consultant. The new design, which features images of a diverse workforce, was quickly extended to the rest of the HR Web site.
**Apprenticeship Program**
Facilities management has long sponsored a U.S. Department of Labor-approved apprenticeship program in the skilled trades. In cooperation with human resources, those selecting candidates for the four-year apprenticeship program have made a commitment to seek out women and racial and ethnic minorities, in an effort to bring greater diversity to that segment of our workforce.

**Dual Career Employment Network**
For more than 12 years, human resources has coordinated a Dual Career Employment Network in cooperation with the local Society for Human Resource Management chapter and major Northwest Arkansas employers. When people accept employment with the university or any of the other participating employers, the program helps their spouse, partner, child, parent or other household member find employment in the area.

While the program does not guarantee employment for the second family worker, it does enhance the university's ability to recruit and retain a diverse workforce. The coordinator, who is a human resource staff member, meets with clients and posts summary versions of their resumes on the program's Web page and forwards them to participating employers. Clients are given resources for identifying community and university job opportunities and are given support in their searches.

**Diversity Web Site**
A diversity Web page was created as part of the human resource Web site. It provides information about and links to campus, local, state and national resources related to various dimensions of diversity, including a diversity calendar; information about the university’s multicultural center and other campus diversity-related organizations and events; links to community diversity organizations and events; a link to the HR resource library; employee demographics; and, of course, the diversity values statement.

**Career Development/Learning Resources**
Human resources has, for a number of years, maintained a resource library of books, pamphlets, tapes, CDs, DVDs and other training materials that are available for check-out by members of the campus community, as well as for use in employee development sessions. As part of our diversity initiatives, we have increased significantly and updated the materials relating to diversity and inclusiveness.

Additionally, each spring, HR coordinates a Spring Expo, bringing together on- and off-campus resources that will help current employees advance in their careers. The Expo is intended to build on the welcoming and inclusive campus culture by retaining and advancing a broad and diverse group of employees. Other career advancement assistance on campus is available through the Employee Development Program in human resources and through the Career Development Center in student affairs.

**Training/Certification**
To make sure campus employees fully understand the issues surrounding diversity and inclusiveness, a number of training programs have been implemented. As a result, the employee development function in HR, which was only a few years old when the task force completed its recommendations, has grown significantly during the past five years, going from a staff of one to three dedicated employees. It has been strengthened by the addition of a trainer whose major focus is on diversity issues and programs, as well as the diversity Web site.

**Campus Diversity Education Program**
The largest and most ambitious undertaking for HR was developing a campus education program on diversity and inclusiveness. We partnered with a local chapter of the National Conference on Community and Justice, recently renamed Just Communities, to conduct inclusiveness training for all campus employees. The four-hour sessions,
called Our Campus: Building an Inclusive University of Arkansas, are highly interactive and participation is limited to approximately 30 people per class.

Most have been open sessions, available to anyone who signs up through the employee development Web site. Some have been scheduled for staff from various campus units who work swing shifts. More rarely, we have brought the trainer into one of the larger campus units, such as facilities management. That arrangement tends not to work as well as the sessions composed of people from various units who may have met one another, but who don’t work side-by-side. When the participants are all from the same unit, they tend to be less willing to disclose sensitive experiences and more likely to resist participating fully.

While engaging the entire campus in a uniform training experience is an ambitious project, and requires that sessions be continually offered for new employees, participation thus far has been quite good, with approximately half of the campus faculty and staff having attended a session. The chancellor, all of the vice chancellors and all of their direct reports have gone through the Our Campus training. Most of the vice chancellors have urged their units to achieve 100 percent participation. The primary group that has not participated fully is faculty, many of whom maintain that four hours is too long to commit to the training. That has prompted us to consider an alternate form of training for faculty, to be developed in cooperation with the provost’s office.

Training on Specific Aspects of Diversity
As a follow-up to the general diversity and inclusiveness training offered in the Our Campus sessions, we have developed a series of training sessions on specific dimensions of diversity, such as gender, sexual orientation, age, disability and workplace issues related to race, ethnicity, language and religion. Some of the sessions, such as the ones on religion and sexual orientation, use panels to discuss the topic from several different perspectives. Others may be presented by one individual, but draw upon a variety of training tools.

In addition, the diversity task force recommended development or continuation of a number of training sessions not directly related to diversity but supportive of inclusiveness and employee development and retention. These have focused on teamwork, customer service, communication, balancing life and work, and hiring procedures, among others.

Diversity Training for Supervisors
Human resources had already developed a voluntary, 40-hour certification program for supervisors and those interested in becoming supervisors, called the Supervisor Development Program. Offered at least twice a year, it requires a major commitment from participants and from their sponsoring departments. It has been extremely popular and well-received, and people from all areas of the campus have participated. While the original program had incorporated material related to diversity, including legal issues surrounding diversity, we made a deliberate effort to emphasize diversity and inclusiveness in the program and now require that all supervisors complete at least the Our Campus training before or during the time they participate in the supervisory certification program.

Diversity Certificate Program
A certificate program on diversity and inclusiveness was designed to develop and recognize commitment to diversity by members of the campus community. Participants commit to completing at least 20 hours of training, community service and self-study, with a minimum number of hours in each of the three areas, and some course requirements including Our Campus and four other classroom training sessions on specific diversity topics. Each participant creates a portfolio documenting activities and classes that qualify for the certificate and each writes a personal impact statement that specifies activities she or he will undertake, with a timetable, and what she or he hopes the result or impact will be on campus diversity and its climate of inclusiveness.

Graduates are presented a certificate and a lapel pin in a public ceremony, followed by a reception which features a cake with the diversity logo. Those completing the program also are recognized in photos on the diversity
Web site and in a letter to their supervisor or department head. They become eligible for an annual diversity award or a team diversity award that includes a monetary recognition. Since May 2006, 28 employees have completed the certificate program. Many of the graduates continue to attend diversity training sessions and have been catalysts for their co-workers to participate in the program.

**Performance Evaluations**

All performance criteria for university employees are expected to include credit for diversity-related activities and for contributions toward achieving university diversity goals. Human resource training sessions on performance evaluation emphasize this expectation and provide examples and ideas for how to add and incorporate diversity criteria.

**Diversity Logo Contest**

In order to consistently brand diversity efforts on campus, HR sponsored a diversity logo contest, funded by a corporate partner. We publicized the contest broadly and sought entries from all members of the campus community. The winning logo was submitted by a student, who received a cash award as well as recognition for her work. The logo has been used on posters, T-shirts, mugs, note cards, the diversity Web site, and on certificates and lapel pins awarded to those completing the diversity certification program.

**Programs for Spanish-Speaking Applicants and Employees**

One member of the HR employment staff is a native speaker of Spanish and another is proficient in American Sign Language. Areas that have attracted increasing number of employees for whom Spanish is their first language have also sought to promote Spanish speakers to supervisory positions. English as a Second Language classes are offered on campus, and human resources has begun providing benefits materials in Spanish and plans to translate all of its forms, documents and Web resources into Spanish. As needed, materials will eventually also be translated into Marshallese, and languages used by Cambodian, Laotian, Vietnamese and Thai populations in the area.

**Other Diversity Activities**

Following the recommendation of the task force, the university has hired an associate vice chancellor for Institutional Diversity, who reports to the provost and to the vice chancellor for Student Affairs. Her role is to serve as a catalyst for enhancement of diversity on campus, with a special emphasis on academic areas and curriculum transformation. HR has worked to coordinate diversity efforts and activities with her and to develop staff initiatives that will support the academic and student affairs components of the campus diversity and inclusiveness effort.

The R-Team, a group of students, faculty, staff, administrators and community members, has been formed to review progress toward implementing the task force recommendations and to look at what comes next. The “R” in its name stands for Reinitiating, and I have been an active member of the team, in part as a follow-up to my work as a member of the diversity task force.

**Results**

It is still too early to see the full results of the university’s diversity and inclusiveness measures (we are able to track the racial, ethnic, gender, national origin and age characteristics of students, faculty and staff; but religion, disability, sexual orientation, marital and parental status, learning styles and other dimensions of diversity are not tracked, so they have to be estimated more subjectively), but there has been a steady increase in the diversity of the campus workforce, both faculty and staff. Student diversity also has increased, although not at the rate that the chancellor had hoped.
There also seems to be a change in atmosphere on campus. More people are taking responsibility for campus diversity and inclusiveness; more are thinking about what they can do to contribute to the effort. More people are speaking out about issues relating to diversity and about the needs of specific groups. There appears to be a cautious optimism that the campus truly can become more diverse, more welcoming and more inclusive.

While there is a great deal of work yet to be done, human resource staff are proud of what we have been able to contribute to the university’s diversity efforts and are committed to developing new and more effective initiatives. We feel like change agents and that, by contributing to the campus diversity effort, we ourselves have been changed.
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Managing the Multigenerational Workplace: Answers for Managers and Trainers

BY SHARON J. BARTLEY, PATRICK G. LADD AND M. LANE MORRIS

“How do I get through to this new gang of Millennial workers?” “Why can’t my boss just lighten up?” Employees and managers ask questions such as these from all sides of the generational battle lines forming in workplaces today. The emerging trend of what we have called “generational diversity” in the workplace is a growing challenge for managers and learning officers. Veterans, Baby Boomers, Generation Xers and Millennials bring diverse morals, values, opinions and work ethics into their work environments. This article defines each of the four generations and examines the issues created by and associated with managing and training the multigenerational workforce.

Introduction

In today’s diverse business environments, employees face new challenges emerging from diversity issues surrounding race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and most recently, the emergence of generational misunderstandings. These challenges pose problems in the workplace as employees from four distinct generations come together on work-related choices and ethical decisions. Many managers parallel this new generational diversity with the ongoing struggle for women’s equity in the workplace and other issues of diversity facing organizations today.

Human resource departments nationwide are beginning to recognize the need for workforce learning programs to educate employees about their intergenerational counterparts and to bridge those generational gaps while increasing cohesion through an understanding and awareness of the needs and desires of generationally diverse mixes of employees. Although some authors in the more practitioner-related literature and a growing amount of popular literature have called attention to issues associated with generational diversity and the multigenerational workplace (Zemke, Raines & Filipcï¿½ak 2000), these issues have yet to be empirically researched.

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The Four Generations and Their Unique Characteristics
The generational problems plaguing today’s workplaces originate in the moral landscape of the four main generations represented in today’s business environments: Veterans, Baby Boomers, Generation X and Millennials. The current corporate landscape itself has been shaped by cataclysmic upheavals — major wars that redefined maps and cultures, multiple minor conflicts, the emergence of terrorism as a global and homeland threat, economic booms and busts, ethical dilemmas, social upheavals, rocketing technological achievement, presidential impeachment and even space travel (Zemke et al. 2000).

Each generation that tries to work and succeed in today’s marketplace harbors starkly different attitudes and morals, evident when one studies workplace interactions and business environments. The job of managers is to first understand the phenomenon of generational diversity and recognize the unique characteristics each generation brings to the marketplace before developing strategies to foster communication and understanding between these generations and identify and solve the underlying problems that are causing headaches for employees and employers worldwide.

Veterans
The oldest of the four generations represented in today’s workplace are the Vets, who are well into retirement age. While no concrete beginning or end to any generation’s timeline exists, Vets are those born between approximately 1922 and 1943. The Vets value a collective sense of dedication and sacrifice, hard work and respect for authority (Zemke et al. 2000). The ideals and morals of the Vets were molded by childhoods spent in the hard times and personal sacrifices of the Great Depression and by service as soldiers in World War II. These times taught the Vets to “believe in logic, not magic … [and to be] disciplined” at everything they do (Zemke et al. 2000).

Furthermore, major events such as the Great Depression shaped Vets to be very conservative in their workplace actions as well as their recreational behaviors. This conservative nature, together with a grounded, logical attitude causes many younger employees to view Vets as harsh, gruff and rigid in their professional relationships and decisions in an organizational setting.

Baby Boomers
The Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, were raised by parents who had made the world better for them and who instilled in them that they too could make the world a better place (Lancaster & Stillman 2002). Boomers tend to be driven by the mentality that the possibilities are endless. Eager to succeed and with a strong work ethic and great determination, Boomers were raised and educated during a period of strength and stability in America’s economy. Boomers occupy many of the middle- and upper-management positions in organizations today. As managers, Boomers retain their determined, strong work ethic in the workplace and expect similar views of their younger employees.

Labeled as competitive, Boomers aim to do their best to prove themselves and their talents in the workplace. This competition is manifested in what Douglas Coupland calls “clique maintenance,” which is a generation’s view of subsequent generations as inferior in order to bolster their own collective ego and maintain their imposed supremacy (Giles 1994). Although not empirically tested, this self-fulfilling prophecy of belittling future generations may help to explain many of the misconceptions held by Boomers toward later generations, and may help us to understand what fuels much of the conflict concerning generational diversity.

Generation X
The uncertain economy of the latter part of the twentieth century led Generation X to be uneasy with and insecure about Corporate America. Born between 1965 and 1980, Gen Xers were raised knowing the last thing they could trust was the permanence of the workplace (Lancaster & Stillman 2002), and were told they could never do as well as their parents. These feelings of inferiority and economic instability led the Gen Xers to also adopt clique maintenance, which had major effects on their opinions and values.
Together with an economic downturn in the early 1980s, bad employer-employee relations, and a perhaps terminally ill Social Security system, Gen Xers’ feelings of insecurity and ambivalence set the stage for a generation that would desire a hands-off, self-reliant work environment. According to Thielfoldt & Scheef (2004), despite their cries for independence, Gen Xers demand immediate and ongoing feedback, and are equally comfortable giving feedback to others. After experiencing the job terminations and insecurities that their parents faced, the Gen Xers reject what they view as their parents’ misplaced company loyalty for what they perceive as a more realistic view, with commitment focused on their work, their team and their boss (Thielfoldt & Scheef 2004).

Gen Xers, through their different life experiences, forged a different path than did the Veterans and Boomers and have been mistakenly labeled by them as lazy and arrogant. As children, Gen Xers experienced the social changes of the 1970s and 1980s, when escalating divorce rates and women’s emergence in the workforce recreated the structure of middle-class American families. Many Gen Xers were left alone at home as “latch-key” children while their mothers and fathers worked outside the home, and as a result developed their own styles of handling situations with little or no parental supervision (Keaveney 1997). Gen Xers also were commonly labeled as languid and egotistical, stereotypes that subsided when managers realized Gen Xers desire more flexible schedules, not the nine-to-five workday to which most Boomers adhere. Unlike previous generations, Gen Xers don’t live to work; they work to live (Keaveney 1997).

Some authors note that Gen Xers prefer help, guidance and inspiration from their managers during the planning stage and prefer to be left alone between goal setting and deliverables (Keaveney 1997). Because of this need for independence and the desire to create their own success, Gen X employees tend to perform better with a manager who acts as teacher, mentor or facilitator (Keaveney 1997), an interesting challenge for the controlling, diligent, overworked and focused Boomers who enjoy receiving feedback only after working individually to a conclusion.

**Millennials**

The newest generation to begin entering the workplace also brings many misunderstandings, but again with a slightly different generational slant. The Millennials, born between approximately 1980 and 2000, were born to the most child-centric parents in history, receiving showers of attention along with high expectations from their protective parents. This parental government leaves Millennials feeling over-managed and pressured to excel in anything and everything possible — often simultaneously. These parents often plan and re-plan every aspect of their children’s lives, from toddler play dates to college majors and beyond (Carroll 2005).

Many practitioners feel that this parental over-involvement has created a generation with a great deal of what may be misplaced self-confidence and perhaps to their detriment appear to be cocky (Thielfoldt & Scheef 2004). The Millennials have had technological innovation readily available to them with cellular telephones, the Internet and personal computers, which molded them into team-oriented, interpersonal and gregarious new workers. Thielfoldt and Scheef (2004) note that as Millennials enter the workplace, they expect to see some sort of structure, and although good at multitasking, they acknowledge authority and want a relationship with their boss. Millennials will take on many responsibilities and work as hard as or harder than is necessary to succeed, an attitude reminiscent of the fiercely competitive Boomers.

These moral and developmental differences between the different generations in the workplace foster the situations facing managers and trainers today when dealing with issues of generational diversity. Each generation has been influenced by certain social and economic transitions, technological advancements and organizational developments that led them to develop different views of work and work-life balance. Figure 1 illustrates what conventional wisdom assumes to be the characteristics of each generation in today’s workplace.
Solutions for Managers and Learning Officers

Organizations that can understand and bridge generation gaps will have the edge in the retention game (Lancaster & Stillman 2002). Managers can take steps to address the issue of generational diversity in the workplace. Although some authors have determined that the first step to success for many managers is to patch the rifts between the competing generations (Lancaster & Stillman 2002), we pose that managers must first be made aware of generational diversity and its impact on workplace cohesion. Emphasis on understanding the different generations in workplaces today must begin with the education of managers and continue through building a focus on teamwork and group cohesion among generationally diverse employees. Such directives should perhaps be a goal for the new wave of managers flooding into workplaces. A term many practitioners are using is “cross-generational management” to create positive interaction and communication between different generations. These cross-generational managers work through learning officers to educate employees on and facilitate cooperation with the different generations and the diverse values that they hold.

Zemke et al. (2000) define two keys to creating a successful intergenerational workforce: “aggressive communication” and “difference deployment.” Aggressive communication deals with making intense, over-communication the norm, with a focus on the emergence of underlying biases between generations. Zemke et al. point out that over-communication would take a giant step toward resolving problems associated with generational diversity. They suggest that the fresh and different perspectives of the young combine with the conventional wisdom of older, more experienced workers to greatly increase understanding across generational gaps. Difference deployment refers to the deliberate structuring of teams to take advantage of the diverse experiences, skills, knowledge, backgrounds and viewpoints of the different generations in an attempt to develop strong project teams, customer contract functions, and departments and units (Zemke et al. 2000).

Innovative managers ensure that employees can share organizational knowledge through development and sponsorship of appropriate intergenerational education and the formation of well-designed and productive cross-generational employee teams. Such educated and organized work teams can allow for a free flow of opinions and insightful ideas and increase cohesion of employees by setting the stage for effective professional communication. Learning officers must also work to implement a component of their training programs that focus on fostering mutual respect through understanding morals, ideals and work ethics across generational boundaries.
Another main issue surrounding the rifts between generations in the workplace may simply lie in the need for employees to feel trusted in the organization (Muetzel 2003). New employees seek empowerment within the workplace while older managers may view empowerment of subordinates as giving up too much control. Employees across generations may not understand one another’s work ethics, morals and ethical standards, which may in turn lead to situations where trust becomes the victim of competing generations in a hostile work environment. This trust can be built by utilizing cross-generational work teams to achieve project goals. Placing a generationally diverse group of employees on a work team will allow further education and training regarding work ethics and styles between each of the four generations as they gain confidence and understanding of one another’s work styles, morals, ethics and values.

Lancaster and Stillman (2002) outline the core of many effective learning programs: setting, style and substance. Setting refers to the physical learning environment. Learning facilities must be up-to-date, utilizing the latest available technology. Physical needs become a priority with an aging workforce. Handouts and screen images need to be visible; considerations that may have a greater impact on the older employees but are common attributes of any good learning setting (Lancaster & Stillman 2002). The style of a workforce learning program refers to the information presentation method. While no single method of presentation is considered best, allowing learners to somewhat dictate the method of delivery ensures a higher level of training transfer. Trainers who can closely fit the learning with the needs and learning styles of the individuals involved ensure a stronger bond with employees (Lancaster & Stillman 2002).

Finally, the substance of the material deals with the actual content of the programming. Trainers must offer a variety of courses on a variety of topics in a variety of ways to reach their diverse audiences. With assortment in training programs and platforms, more employees, regardless of their generational identity, will take interest in the content. Utilizing these three criteria will provide trainers with diverse training options to pique the interests and reach the learning styles of the multiple generations.

Practitioners themselves also are working to develop programs to bridge the gaps between the generations in today’s business environments. Many managers include cross-generational training and generational understanding initiatives in the diversity training already in place in their organizations. Managers who implement technology into their programs not only keep up with the latest innovations, but also allow differing and perhaps opposing generations a constant and stable communication medium. Workforce learning programs may now include online lectures and notes, online assessment and evaluation, and multimedia presentation of materials.

Practitioners have moved ahead of the academicians on the issue of generational diversity. We must move beyond anecdotal evidence to provide empirical data for solutions to issues associated with generational diversity. We submit one possible theoretical model illustrating the relationship between desire and need for independence and feedback in the workplace based on practitioners’ observations. As expected, feedback and independence are inversely related and, generally speaking, when a generation prefers high levels of independence in the workplace, those employees desire a hands-off working environment and low levels of feedback and evaluation. Naturally, this creates the potential for problems in the workplace as managers (often from a previous generation) disagree on how much hands-on interaction is appropriate with employees. Levels of the desire for independence and need for feedback may also be cyclical over the four generations represented in today’s workplace. Figure 2 illustrates what may be the inverse, cyclical relationship between these two factors.
Conclusion

Generational clashes in today’s workplaces are a relatively new phenomenon that causes managers to adapt their management philosophies and learning officers to scramble to adapt their programming materials and messages. Older, more experienced generations are joined in the workplace by younger, more technologically savvy employees, all forged in different fires by different life challenges. Managers must first work to understand the phenomenon of generational diversity — unique generational characteristics formed by a plethora of factors including economic, social and political influences. Managers must develop strategies to bridge the generational gaps and build trust, respect and understanding between these workers who can work well together with proper guidance, direction and education. Managers can utilize programs to get diverse ideas and combine experience with innovation. However, these promising attributes are useless if effective workforce learning is not in place to facilitate cooperation between the clashing and competing generations.
References:


The Bias Response Program at Cornell University: A Metric for Diversity Initiatives

BY LYNETTE CHAPPELL-WILLIAMS

As universities strive to create an inclusive environment and ensure a fair and pleasant working climate for all individuals, new strategies must be developed for tracking and responding to issues that do not rise to the level of discriminatory action but nonetheless impact the university’s commitment to diversity. This article examines Cornell University’s mechanism for addressing bias incidents on campus — the Bias Response Program.

Introduction
Cornell University’s commitment to diversity dates back to 1865 when the founders created a university for “any person, any study.” At a time when the American Equal Rights Association was being formed as a coalition between women’s rights and anti-slavery organizations in 1866, and prior to the adoption of the 14th Amendment in 1868, the university cofounders were committed to creating a university that was open to all individuals, regardless of race or gender.

The university’s commitment to diversity and inclusiveness has continued over the years. Cornell was one of the first co-educational institutions; the founding institution for Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, the first undergraduate African American fraternity; home of the first Asian fraternity in the Ivy League; and the first university to have an interfaith department for religious affairs.

In January 2000, Cornell University renewed its commitment to diversity and inclusiveness by developing its vision statement: Open Doors, Open Hearts, Open Minds. The goal was to address this vision from a holistic perspective through a number of efforts, including: (1) implementing work/life and diversity initiatives, (2) providing diversity training opportunities to the entire workforce using an interactive theatre format, (3) keeping the commitment to diversity and inclusiveness at the forefront of the Cornell community through a diversity Web page, (4) developing a federally mandated affirmative action plan that incorporates diversity and work/life/family goals, and (5) implementing a bias response program that supplements established discrimination procedures.

In the fall of 2000, the university developed its bias response program as a mechanism for reporting and tracking activities that impacted its commitment to diversity and inclusiveness, with the goal of being proactive in addressing such actions. Unlike discrimination complaint procedures, the bias response program is not punitive or adversarial in nature but provides the following advantages:

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1) In a de-centralized environment, it provides a mechanism for knowing the “pulse” of the organization as it relates to diversity and inclusiveness.

2) It provides an additional mechanism for members of an organization to seek redress when traditional complaint mechanisms are not available because a respondent has not been identified.

3) It provides a mechanism for connecting with individuals who are not direct recipients of bias-related activity but feel that they have been impacted in some manner.

4) It is an additional way to demonstrate the organization’s commitment to diversity and inclusiveness by going above and beyond what is legally required.

One challenge that a bias response program can present is that information collected can, in some cases, create an obligation to take action when there is insufficient information to do so. For example, a report may be submitted that indicates that an individual has experienced behavior that may constitute sexual harassment, but it is not clear when and where the action took place or who was involved. As a result, organizations considering the development of a bias response program should consult with legal counsel prior to implementation.

**Overview of Cornell’s Bias Response Program**

Cornell University’s bias response program consists of three parts: (1) identifying discriminatory actions and referring these matters to the appropriate office, (2) determining whether there has been a hate crime and working with the local police to address the matter, and (3) investigating bias incidents. **Discriminatory action**, defined as behaviors that allegedly violate federal, state or local antidiscrimination laws such as race, sex, national origin, religion and disability status, are addressed by most organizations through standard discrimination procedures. In these situations, the complaining party identifies the person or process that has resulted in discriminatory behavior and seeks a remedy to the situation. When discriminatory actions are brought to the attention of the employer through established procedures, the employer is obligated to respond in some manner. **Hate crimes** have been defined by the U.S. Congress in H.R. 4797 as criminal acts or attempted acts against a person, institution or property that is motivated, in whole or in part, by a bias, hatred or prejudice based on an individual’s or group’s race, color, religion, gender, ethnic or national origin, disability status, gender identity or sexual orientation. Hate crimes are generally referred to the local police jurisdiction. A “**bias incident**” is a term that was developed by Cornell University for purposes of the bias response program. It refers to acts of bigotry, harassment or intimidation that can reasonably be concluded to be directed at an individual or group based on that individual’s or group’s actual or perceived age, color, creed, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity/presentation, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status or any combination of these factors. In a bias incident, the identity of the alleged perpetrator is unknown or is not reasonably identifiable.

For example, when an offensive statement is written on a bulletin board or when someone in a group yells out a derogatory comment, the victim(s) in such a case cannot use a discrimination procedure to address the concern because the individual who engaged in the activity cannot be identified. The bias response program does not require a known perpetrator, so responsive action can still be taken. In addition, the bias response program can be used as a mechanism to connect with an entire community that has been impacted by the bias activity.

**Components of the Bias Response Program**

When an employee feels that he or she has experienced treatment based on a protected aspect of diversity but cannot identify who has engaged in the behavior/action, the employee contacts a bias reporting team member. These are individuals identified throughout the organization who have been trained in diversity awareness and in detecting discrimination. These individuals are generally the human resource representatives.

When a reporting team member is contacted by an employee about possible bias activity, the team member completes a written bias report to collect information, including the date of the alleged bias activity, the general
location of the alleged bias activity, the nature of the alleged bias activity and the type of activity (such as physical confrontation, verbal confrontation, vandalism, graffiti, intimidation or damage to or destruction of property). In addition, the report contains information about other individuals that may have been involved in the bias activity (direct participants, other victims or witnesses) and the victim’s desired outcome or resolution of the bias activity.

Within 24 hours of completion of the bias report, the reporting team member faxes the report to a central administrative office through a dedicated fax line. The reporting team member’s responsibility is thereby completed. The central office determines, based on the information submitted in the report, whether the activity constitutes discrimination, a hate crime or a bias incident. If the action constitutes discrimination, the university’s equal employment office or other relevant office takes responsibility for the action. If the action appears to constitute a hate crime, the police department is contacted. If the activity constitutes a bias incident, in which the alleged respondent has not been or cannot be identified, the central administrative office contacts a bias response coordinator.

These bias response coordinators are trained in counseling and also have a certain level of expertise in one or more aspects of diversity. Some have an expertise or substantial understanding of issues facing people of color, some have a similar expertise or understanding of gender issues, and some have expertise or understanding of other aspects of diversity that are represented within the workforce. The bias response coordinator is responsible for making contact with the individual(s) impacted by the bias activity to reiterate the university’s commitment to diversity and inclusiveness; determining what assistance the employee needs as a result of the bias activity; and keeping the individual(s) impacted by the bias activity aware of any subsequent actions that have been taken, including attempts to locate the alleged perpetrator and proactive measures taken to prevent future bias activity.

**Tracking Bias Activity to Support Diversity and Inclusiveness Efforts**

As reporting team members submit bias reports, the bias activity is classified as discrimination (and reported/summarized through Cornell’s existing reporting systems); a hate crime; and/or a bias incident. Information from these reports is then summarized and shared on a secure Web site that university employees can access. This summary report provides information on the date and location of the bias activity as well as the action that was taken to address the activity. At the end of the year, a confidential statistical report of all discrimination, hate crime and bias incident activity is prepared and information from this report is used to develop proactive efforts to prevent future bias activity.

For example, at Cornell, the summary report identified that sexual orientation was one aspect of diversity that had been asserted as a basis of bias activity. As a result, training sessions were modified to include scenarios related to sexual orientation. Based on the presence of religious bias-related activity, the university established a religious accommodation process for employees.

**Conclusion**

As universities are implementing diversity initiatives, it will be critical to collect metrics to determine the success of their efforts. Although many organizations track the number of discrimination complaints that are filed by employees, this is not an accurate reflection of the level of activity that is occurring that can impact the organization’s commitment to diversity. Since discrimination complaints require that you name the alleged respondent in a matter, those instances in which the respondent cannot be named frequently go unreported. The bias response program, in which employees can bring forth matters even when there is no known respondent or perpetrator, is an effective tool in tracking other activities that may be occurring in the workplace that can negatively impact the university’s commitment to diversity.
Numerous institutions are moving toward the chief diversity officer model of leading and managing diversity in higher education. These officers carry formal administrative titles and ranks that range from vice president for institutional diversity to associate vice chancellor for diversity and climate and dean of diversity and academic engagement. Yet, if one asked these officers what they do, most would respond that they are the institution’s “chief diversity officer,” using the descriptor more commonly found in the corporate world. This article summarizes key findings from a national study of these officers and presents several concepts to assist human resource professionals and others in their efforts to design new roles, support search committees, locate the best talent and help new officers launch to a fast start.

Introduction
In a national study of the structure, background and key strategies of diversity capabilities, we interviewed more than 70 individuals, conducted numerous site visits, collected more than 100 hours of audio-recorded data and gathered 1,000+ documents to develop a comprehensive understanding of the roles of chief diversity officers (CDOs) in higher education and other areas of organizational life. This article summarizes key findings from our study and presents several concepts to assist human resource professionals and others in their efforts to design new roles, support search committees, locate the best talent and help new CDOs launch to a fast start.

The CDO Trend in Organizational Life
In many respects, the development of chief diversity officer roles in higher education follows the same meteoric path that recently took place in the corporate environment and is beginning to emerge in other nonprofit sectors (Dexter 2005). During the 1990s and into the 21st century, chief diversity officers emerged at numerous Fortune 500 companies like IBM, MTV and Kraft to help them understand and capitalize upon the “business case for diversity.” Where diversity issues were defined previously in terms of moral and humanitarian purposes, the new millennium corporate diversity rationale centers on retaining diverse talent, competing in a globally interconnected economy and capitalizing on the nearly $2 trillion domestic spending power of ethnic and racially diverse groups (Thomas 2004).
These forces and others drove the emergence of the corporate CDO, just as changing demographics, the emergence of a knowledge-based economy, a focus on the educational benefits of diversity flowing from the University of Michigan Supreme Court admissions decisions (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado & Gurin 2002), persistent societal inequities, and the corporate community calling for graduates prepared to lead and follow in a global and interconnected world provided strategic impetus for the emergence of the CDO in higher education (Williams, Berger & McClendon 2005; Williams & Clowney 2007). This point is echoed by a higher education recruiter who has conducted several prominent CDO searches in recent years: “Presidents and provosts are really trying to get out in front of diversity issues and be more strategic. They are tired of being reactionary. They want to move first and not wait for a campus incident or scenario to happen that forces them to confront diversity as a challenge. They want to confront diversity as an opportunity.”

The quickening pace of change has resulted in the University of California, Berkley; Wesleyan University; University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Xavier University; Berklee College of Music; Rochester Institute of Technology; University of Virginia; Harvard University and other institutions developing inaugural chief diversity officer roles.

**Defining the Role of the CDO**

Where others work on issues of diversity as a matter of second or third priority, CDOs concentrate their efforts on diversity as the primary focus of their administrative practice. While the combination of titles and structures is nearly endless, coupled with the fact that many have adopted the CDO nomenclature without a clear understanding of its definition, there is little consensus regarding optimally designed CDO positions. However, our research identified the following defining characteristics across the majority of officers in our study:

*Change agents on campus.* Chief diversity officers are “change management specialists.” Among other activities, the CDO leads campus-wide diversity planning and implementation efforts, seeds new diversity initiatives and develops diversity educational strategies for executives, faculty, staff and students.

*Point leaders on issues of diversity.* Although duties may include affirmative action/equal employment opportunity or the constituent needs of minorities, women and other bounded social identity groups, CDOs provide point and coordinating leadership for diversity issues broadly defined to include the entire institutional community.

*Relational leaders.* Given the complexities of campus diversity initiatives, CDOs serve as powerful integrating forces for diversity issues, collaborating and working through the lateral networks and relationships of the institution regardless of staff size.

*Rely upon status and influence to encourage and drive change.* CDOs generally have little authority outside of their formal span of control and leadership. As a result, their source of “power” is grounded in status, persuasion and symbols (Williams & Wade-Golden 2006).

**Organizational Design**

Organizational design is time-consuming and usually involves a number of discussions involving difficult organizational politics and questions of strategy, structure, processes and requisite skills required to perform in the role (Gailbraith 2002). Inevitably, institutional leaders begin with questions like: At what level should we rank the position? Whom will the person in the position supervise? How large should the budget be? Should we restructure any current diversity offices like women's studies, multicultural affairs or disability services? Should the CDO have tenure and serve on the faculty? Should he or she have a legal or academic terminal degree? What duties should form the core of the CDO’s job responsibilities? These issues and others can consume senior leadership, planning teams, human resource professionals and search committees developing CDO roles at their institutions.
In a forthcoming book on executive-level diversity professionals, *The Chief Diversity Officer: Strategy, Structure and Change Management*, Williams and Wade-Golden (at press) respond to each of the above questions and the process of designing these roles in terms of the Chief Diversity Officer Development Framework and its explication of: (1) a strategic diversity platform, (2) archetypes of vertical structure, (3) the lateral diversity dynamic, (4) skills and backgrounds of officers, and (5) change management principles and strategies.

A full explanation of the framework is beyond the scope of this article; however, what follows is an overview of key design principles, institutional rank and archetypes of vertical structure which challenge human resource professionals and search committees developing these roles on campus.

**Institutional Rank**

A primary source of influence for chief diversity officers is their location at the presidential or provost level of formal administrative hierarchy. This positioning sends a powerful message to the entire campus community and allows CDOs to infuse diversity into highly politicized discussions. If these officers were not present, these issues may not be mentioned or understood in a manner consistent with institutional diversity goals.

Some of the most influential CDOs often have titles centered around academic affairs, student development, international affairs or faculty development in addition to their “diversity” titles. According to one officer we interviewed, the presence of a title like “vice provost for diversity and academic affairs,” in combination with a portfolio of units and responsibilities in both areas, signals that the officer is “more than simply a resource on matters of diversity and suggests a fundamental connection between diversity and academic excellence.”

One point of caution is that a simple change in title is not enough. For example, merely naming the vice president of Student Affairs as the institution’s chief diversity officer is insufficient to fully operationalize the CDO role on campus. By definition, CDOs make issues of campus climate, infusing diversity into the curriculum, faculty development and other diversity matters a top priority. A hybrid role should only be configured after an in-depth analysis determines that this is the most feasible course of action. Failure to engage in this self-study may result in a chief diversity officer in title only. If not carefully configured, a portfolio may result that is too broad and precludes the prioritization of diversity as a matter of institutional importance. Whether in a hybrid or a tailored CDO role, diversity must remain at the center of role responsibility.

Given the importance of leveraging symbols to influence campus dynamics, it is critical that the “chief diversity officer” nomenclature be used to describe campus function and not rank. Providing a formal rank such as vice president or vice provost clarifies the officer’s position in the hierarchy of the institution and provides him or her with maximum positional capital associated with operating at the highest levels of the institution. The absence of this clarity is an impediment to leading change, especially for those officers with few staff, no direct reporting units and limited resources.

**Three Organizational Archetypes of Vertical Structure**

The vertical authority of CDOs ranges from basic one-person offices to more complex multi-unit configurations that may include more than 20 direct reporting units and multimillion dollar budgets. Mintzberg (1979) argued that the process of designing organizations is simplified by determining organizational archetypes which categorize the basic permutations of a particular organizational role. Though many decisions are necessary to design a highly effective organization, only a few archetypes exist for most (Mintzberg 1979). Our research identified three basic archetypes of the CDO structure (see Table 1): the Collaborative Officer Model, the Unit-Based Model and the Portfolio Divisional Model.

Each archetype presents a general template for how an institution might design the vertical capabilities of the CDO’s role. Each model represents a general organizational type rather than a defined set of organizational mandates. In some instances, a particular unit may not easily fit into one category and may possess hybrid characteristics of multiple models.
Collaborative Officer Model

By definition, individuals operating in the Collaborative Officer Model may have little formal power in terms of possessing staff, units and direct supervising authority over others (Galbraith 2002). Generally, officers in this model have a small support staff, commonly defined by administrative personnel, student employees and perhaps a special assistant. Projects and initiatives are implemented nearly exclusively through collaborative relationships and lateral coordination.

Because of limited human resources, these officers have a restricted ability to independently implement programs and initiatives through their formal authority as executive officers of the institution. The only notable exception is when the officer controls a sizeable budget and is able to temporarily outsource services and support for events and initiatives implemented through his or her office. Successful officers in this model rely nearly exclusively on the reflective power of senior leadership, the ability to influence change through personal charisma and the ability to leverage relationships and offer financial resources to broker new alliances. These officers commonly led campus-wide diversity planning committees and task forces.

These officers mentioned being stretched thin because of their non-existent staff and the requests to participate in every initiative, committee, banquet, search and conference. In response to the environmental press for their involvement, it may be important to narrowly define the area of responsibility for officers operating in this model. A number of officers in this model focused on a narrow span of priorities like diversity faculty recruitment or infusing diversity into the curriculum. Typically, they coordinated information and were not involved at the ground-level of executing campus diversity initiatives and projects.

Table 1. Archetypes of CDO Vertical Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archetype</th>
<th>Key Characteristics</th>
<th>Sample Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Collaborative Officer Model | Limited human resources characterize this model as officers may only have administrative and student support in their immediate span of control. In the absence of a staff, high-ranking titles, charismatic leadership and the ability to negotiate with financial resources become even more important. | Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute  
Miami University  
Berkeley College of Music  
Xavier University |
| Unit-Based Model            | This model requires the same type of leadership as the Collaborative Officer Model but is distinguished by the presence of a central CDO staff of administrative support professionals, programming and/or research professionals and/or other diversity officers of lesser rank. | University of Denver  
University of South Florida  
Trinity College  
Wesleyan University |
| Portfolio Divisional Model  | This model is characterized by aspects of both the Collaborative Officer and Unit-Based Models. It is distinguished by the presence of several direct reporting units in a vertically integrated portfolio. | University of Connecticut  
Indiana University  
University of Michigan  
University of Washington |

1 Note that these institutions were selected as examples of vertical structure, not to illustrate optimal or suboptimal design. Comments noted in the text of each archetype description are not necessarily attributed to these institutions, as several institutions which do not appear in this example set were included in the study.

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Although officers operating in the Collaborative Officer Model clearly felt they were effective, they did find it paradoxical to be high-ranking officers with no staff or direct reporting units. When lower-ranking diversity officials exist in academic, student and administrative affairs and the CDO has no formal authority over these areas, institutions may experience organizational dissonance and a strategic misalignment of dedicated diversity capabilities. This is particularly true when institutions use nebulous language like “the CDO will coordinate the work of diversity offices across campus to ensure that their work is consistent with the institution’s overall vision for diversity.” Similar statements often appear in job descriptions describing the relationship of Collaborative Officer Model CDOs and other diversity units on campus.

How does one coordinate the work of others if they are not in that person’s administrative portfolio? What happens when existing diversity units resist a new vision calling upon them to develop new programs and initiatives designed to impact all students, and not just students of color? How do CDOs convince areas like ethnic and gender studies that these academic diversity capabilities must be closely aligned with the work of the CDO and may operate in a more powerful manner by collaborating with one another? These are the questions that institutional leaders must ask themselves when developing the Collaborative Officer Model CDO structure. Otherwise, campus diversity units may at minimum not align with the CDO, and even worse, operate at cross-purposes when their relationship to the CDO is nebulous.

Unit-Based Model
The Unit-Based Model is characterized by a more robust vertical capability than the Collaborative Officer Model. Officers in this model have a central staff that may include other diversity officers at a lesser rank, administrative support staff and perhaps program and/or technical specialists. A number of officers in this model serve as the institution’s affirmative action officer or have undergone a reframing of their roles in recent years to elevate the position and make it more relevant. For example, at the University of Denver (DU), the Office of Minority Affairs was reframed into the Center for Multicultural Excellence, and the CDO position was titled at the associate provost level.

The mission of the unit also evolved to focus on inter-group relations and dialogue, faculty diversity recruitment and retention and the academic success of historically underrepresented students. This solution allowed DU to reframe current diversity capabilities in order to tackle the most difficult diversity issues, build on current diversity budgets and staff and immediately provide the new officer with a structure to guide institutional diversity efforts. The budget for the office was consistently increased and new staff added as its efforts affected the entire institutional community.

Portfolio Divisional Model
The Portfolio Divisional Model is the most vertically integrated of the three archetypes and includes characteristics of the Collaborative Officer and Unit-Based Models in addition to a compendium of direct reporting units.

As outlined in Table 2, our research identified 10 potential units located under the direct supervision of the CDO: (1) minority and multicultural affairs, (2) cultural centers, (3) ethnic and gender studies, (4) retention and pipeline initiatives, (5) community outreach, (6) affirmative action and equity, (7) training and development, (8) student support services (e.g. admissions), (9) research centers and institutes, and (10) international affairs.
### Table 2. Chief Diversity Officer Responding Unit Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sample Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural &amp; Minority Affairs Offices</td>
<td>Multifaceted offices focusing broadly on diversity issues and combining a number of goals in their mission including issues of campus climate, retention, student programming, academic support and student outreach. The primary thrust of programming is centered on students of color and/or speakers and lecture series for the broader campus community.</td>
<td>Office of Minority Affairs; Office of Multicultural Affairs; Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives; Office of Racial &amp; Ethnic Student Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Centers</td>
<td>May or may not focus on a particular cultural group and tend to be free standing with space for student meetings, programs, social events and computer usage.</td>
<td>Latino Cultural Center; Rainbow Center; Asian Cultural Center; Women’s Center; Resource Center for Persons With Disabilities; International Student Center; Multicultural Resource Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic &amp; Gender Studies</td>
<td>Dedicated to advancing knowledge in a particular area of race, culture, gender or ethnicity and may offer a major/minor, courses, colloquium and other initiatives for the campus community.</td>
<td>Institute for African American Studies; Institute for Asian American Studies; Center for Institutional Diversity; Women’s Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention &amp; Pipeline Initiatives</td>
<td>Focuses on retention and academic success activities. May include units with special admissions programs for capable but under-prepared students, as well as government programs intended to build the pipeline of talented youth into higher education.</td>
<td>Student Support Services Program; Upward Bound; Academic Support Center; Educational &amp; Support Services; Strategic Faculty Hiring Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
<td>Provide opportunities for students to engage in service learning activities and community service.</td>
<td>Community &amp; School Partnership Program; Service Learning Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affirmative Action &amp; Equity Compliance</td>
<td>Affirmative action and equal opportunity offices that have responsibility for discriminatory investigation, the government affirmative action plan and assuring compliance with all federal and state regulations during faculty/staff search processes. The ombudsman role may be housed in this area of units.</td>
<td>Office of Affirmative Action; Office of Diversity and Equity; Office of Institutional Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; Development</td>
<td>Centers for teaching and learning, offices of faculty development, diversity training units and more recently intergroup relation programs are housed in this general area.</td>
<td>Center For Research on Learning &amp; Teaching; Intergroup Dialogue Programs; Diversity Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Services</td>
<td>Units not typically associated with diversity and multicultural affairs focusing on enhancing and supporting the undergraduate experience, oftentimes irrespective of traditional diversity related identities.</td>
<td>Office of Undergraduate Admissions; Office of New Student Programs; Office of the Registrar; Counseling Center; Scholarship Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Centers &amp; Institutes</td>
<td>Centers and institutes dedicated to researching and exploring issues of diversity, community and difference.</td>
<td>University of Michigan National Center for Institutional Diversity; Indiana University Center on Diversity; Office of Institutional Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Affairs</td>
<td>Areas dedicated to studying international issues and providing students with study-abroad activities.</td>
<td>International Affairs; English Language Proficiency Offices; International Student Center</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
More than any other model, the Portfolio Divisional Model involves a reframing of previous assumptions regarding the institution’s current organizational structure. Institutions interested in reorganizing in this way should take caution that institutional politics and entrenched histories may result in organizational backlash.

The development of this type of archetype of structure parallels other administrative reorganizations, but some may argue that it “ghettoizes diversity” and “removes campus responsibility for others to become involved with diversity work.” To the contrary, when viewed through an organizational rather than symbolic lens, this archetype presents a number of key benefits including: (1) creating a consistent diversity leadership structure, (2) generating synergy between relevant diversity units, (3) enhancing financial efficiencies and achieving economies of scale, (4) extending the academic and administrative diversities capabilities of the institution, and (5) perhaps bringing together domestic and international diversity capabilities under the same organizational structure.

Some CDOs began in one model and evolved over time. For example, at the University of Michigan, the CDO initially had oversight for only one unit — minority affairs. Over time, the divisional portfolio grew as new units were integrated into this officer’s span of control. Similarly, the University of Connecticut CDO assumed oversight for international affairs after nearly five years of providing leadership to a combination of cultural centers, ethnic studies institutes and other units.

Finding the Right CDO

When an institution decides to hire a CDO, great care must be given to finding the right candidate. This task can be difficult and is especially relevant for human resource professionals assisting with the search process. Our research suggests that applicant pools may yield up to 150 applicants and include faculty members with a diversity research agenda, lawyers well versed in affirmative action law, student development diversity specialists, diversity officers from the corporate community, higher education executive-level diversity professionals and others.

In preparing a search, a number of tough issues often are discussed regarding the abilities that define a qualified candidate. These issues include whether the individual should possess a Ph.D. or other terminal degree, qualify for tenure, have a legal background and experience with compliance issues, and whether the person should be a member of a minority group. While these issues remain the source of debate, the ultimate decision must be determined by the institutional context and predicated on factors such as core job responsibilities, span of offices the CDO may supervise and the degree to which the officer intersects with issues unique to higher education, such as tenure and promotion. To say that a person is qualified simply because he or she is a Latino and a tenured member of the faculty in music theory is flawed.

The superordinate goals of providing leadership for diversity and guiding change must direct the selection of the candidate, or institutions run the risk of hiring individuals that are woefully under prepared for the demands of such a complex, high-profile and politically charged position. Although the exact mixture is hard to define, we believe that the most successful officers will illustrate seven key attributes regardless of academic and administrative background:

(1) **Technical mastery of diversity issues.** The CDO should have an excellent command of all aspects of diversity issues in higher education, including faculty recruitment and retention issues, identity development, access and equity, diversifying the curriculum, assessing the educational impact of diversity, measuring the campus climate and the policy and legal dynamics of affirmative action and diversity in higher education.

(2) **Political savvy.** The CDO must be particularly astute at navigating an institution’s political landscape, responding well to politically charged or politically sensitive situations. They must possess an ability and willingness to find win-win solutions when contentious circumstances arise and know how to build consensus, accrue buy-in and work through competing interests.
(3) **Ability to cultivate a common vision.** The CDO must be able to resonate with students, faculty, staff and administrators, and be committed to working collaboratively with other senior executives to build a common vision and direction for the institution.

(4) **In-depth perspective on organizational change.** The CDO should possess an outstanding command of the dynamics of organizational change and have relevant experience leading large-scale change projects.

(5) **Sophisticated relational abilities.** The CDO must possess a high degree of emotional intelligence, charisma and communication abilities. Given that much of the work will be accomplished through lateral coordination, a CDO must have the ability to cross numerous organizational boundaries with fluidity and adapt language and styles to different audiences.

(6) **Understanding of the culture of higher education.** The CDO should possess in-depth knowledge and experience regarding the culture of the academy. Colleges and universities are different from any other type of organization, and to achieve success, the CDO must understand the culture of shared governance, tenure and promotion, multiple and competing goals, decentralized campus politics and the unique needs of all involved with respect to diversity.

(7) **Results orientation.** Although not singularly responsible for diversity outcomes, the CDO must be results-oriented and committed to encouraging the change agenda to achieve significant results. Consequently, it is fundamental that he or she illustrate how diversity is an integral component to the successful fulfillment of the institutional mission and a fundamental aspect of academic excellence in the 21st century.

**Action Steps for a Powerful CDO Launch**

Implementing the CDO capability requires a consistent commitment to supporting campus diversity and the work of this office. Numerous internal and external stakeholders will challenge the validity of the office, its worth to the institution and the resources expended to hire top-tier talent. This is to be expected, as many view the CDO role with skepticism. To ensure that the CDO is successful in overcoming these challenges and others, we offer several recommendations.

**Educate the campus community throughout the search process** to counter flawed assumptions that this new officer will “operate as the campus police telling people what to do.” Unfortunately, these mental models exist because of the compliance and punitive orientation of affirmative action offices historically. Faculty, administrators and staff should broadly understand that the new officer is being hired to enable the institution, not to serve as a “diversity watchdog.”

**Develop a first-year budget and list of resources before hiring the officer to ensure adequate funds are in place to launch the new unit.** This allows the officer to mobilize consultants, visit benchmark institutions, acquire new resources, hire phase-one staff and attend relevant conferences. One of the strongest criticisms of numerous search processes was a lack of clarity regarding the current and potential resource base of the position. By developing a phase-one budget, institutions illustrate a solid commitment that will aid in recruiting the most talented and experienced diversity officers.
Establish a transition team to assist the new officer with meeting key stakeholders, understanding the institutional culture of inclusion and exclusion and developing a better sense of institutional norms. This type of insight will accelerate the new officer’s ability to add value on campus by more quickly sensitizing them to the current reality and needs of the institution.

Immediately charge the CDO to generate a strategic vision illustrating a general framework or template for how the position might evolve, major initiatives that he or she plans to undertake and resources required to accomplish the work. This is an important part of the officer’s first 90 days so that momentum associated with the new hire can be quickly integrated into institutional budget priorities and activities on campus.

The president and/or provost should remain open to a CDO-led institutional assessment to determine the optimal vertical structure and mission/priorities of his or her unit. Indeed, this assessment may be a part of the initial strategic vision and part of a broad diversity capabilities audit which identifies existing campus diversity resources and opportunity areas to create new efficiencies and impact.

The president and/or provost should identify the key lateral relationships in which the CDO must engage to accomplish his or her work, and notify these individuals of the important role they will play in enabling the work of the institution’s newest executive. This might involve having these individuals allocate someone from their staffs as a liaison to the officer with a percentage of time dedicated to institutional diversity matters. One best practice at a large institution in the Northeast involved a staff person in the development office having a dedicated responsibility to work with the CDO. This person was charged with developing new grant-funded projects and initiatives to accelerate the work of diversity on campus.

Conclusion

In the 21st century, institutions will need an evolved and more powerful ability to engage institutional diversity initiatives. Changing demographics, the need to educate all students to lead and follow in a diverse world, and a continually evolving diversity paradigm indicates that top diversity executives will be in high demand as the CDO movement continues.

To create educational and professional environments of the new millennium requires a shift in the organizational culture of colleges and universities. Although no single individual can transform an institution alone, the CDO can play a key role highlighting the priorities of the campus and incrementally moving it toward a long-range vision of inclusive excellence. Successful institutions will design the CDO role as part of a broad system of diversity strategies (Williams & Clowney 2007) and hire officers with a commitment to “interrupting the usual” (Smith, Turner, Osei-Kofi & Richards 2004) and serving as “tempered radicals” (Meyerson 2001).

Though the challenges may be great, the time has come to take this courageous step and develop executive-level diversity roles that are more than symbolic. Diversity professionals have come a long way in the last 30 years and in the new millennium, chief diversity officers will increasingly become an important part of an institution’s standard for excellence.
References:


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