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LEADING WITH MEANING: WHY DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION MATTERS IN US HIGHER EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

In this paper, I review some recent research findings that demonstrate the need to address issues of diversity, equity and inclusion in US higher education contexts so that educational leaders can live out the espoused values of their institutions as they work to transform students into responsible citizens. Articles were selected for review with the intent of painting a picture of how diversity, equity and inclusion work being done across an institution can shape the experiences of persons of colour at these institutions. These findings highlight the need for academic leaders to consider how to best embody the mission and vision of their institutions as they frame diversity issues for the campus community with a few additional considerations specific to religiously affiliated institutions.

Keywords: *diversity, equity, inclusion, leadership in higher education, United States*

1. INTRODUCTION

In *Academic Leadership and Governance of Higher Education*, Hendrickson, Lane, Harris and Dorman (2013) argue that institutional decisions, adaptations and activities of successful academic leaders need to be mission and value focused. Academic institutions value autonomy and expertise in decision-making, which necessitates that academic leaders "create and foster democratic partnerships with myriad constituents" (Hendrickson *et al.,* 2013: 2) and organise their activities around a shared vision based on institutional mission and values. Mission statements are meant "to provide motivation, general direction, an image of the company's character, and a tone, or set of attitudes, through which actions are guided" (Hurt, 1992: 35). Educational institutions that are mission-driven prioritise initiatives and activities that support the institution's mission. Many higher education institutions in the United States (US), particularly those institutions that have been historically white (HWI) or predominantly white (PWI), recognise diversity, equity and inclusion as essential to their institutional missions, creating programmes and departments dedicated to increasing diversity, promoting

equity and enhancing inclusion. In a 2012 study of 80 US higher education institutions, 75% included the term "diversity" within their mission statements (Wilson, Meyer, & McNeal, 2012). However, "supporting a cosmetic desire for inclusion … only serves to make the university appear inclusive but does not illustrate a true commitment to students of color" (Robertson, Bravo & Chaney, 2014: 14). It seems that institutional commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion at many predominantly white institutions (PWIs) can be inauthentic given the extent of research documenting the negative experiences of students of colour at PWIs in the United States (e.g. Engstrom & Tinto, 2010; Morrison, 2010; Robertson *et al.,* 2104; Saufley, Cowan & Blake, 1983; Smith, Allen & Danley, 2007). Students of colour at PWIs perceive campus climates as less welcoming and tolerant of diversity than white students and efforts to increase diversity, equity and inclusion on campus as institutional rhetoric (Harper & Hurtado, 2007).

The aim of this paper is to examine how what institutions in the United States are doing to advance social justice outcomes through infusing diversity, equity and inclusion into academic and social institutional contexts can shape the perceptions of students of colour at these institutions. A small sample of 12 articles were selected for this review to be examined in-depth to tell a story of how diversity, equity and inclusion work being done across an institution can shape the experiences of persons of colour at these institutions. In order to better contextualise the experiences of students of colour, this review includes a sampling of research in three key areas: infusing social justice topics into the curriculum; improving educational outcomes and minimising negative experiences for persons of colour on these campuses and improving relationships between diverse peers. As a higher education practitioner at a Catholic campus in the United States, how to systemically address issues of diversity, equity and inclusion on a Catholic campus community are also explored.

2. SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE CURRICULUM

Many institutions of higher education in the US have been infusing social justice topics into curricular opportunities, but which among them are the most meaningful or impactful for students? Krings, Austic, Gutiérrez and Dirksen (2015) investigated the impact of service learning (SL), intergroup dialogue (IGD) and social justice (SJ) course curriculum on political participation, civic engagement and multicultural activism. Their sample included 653 students who were mostly female (61.7%), white (50%) and middle class (53.4%) from one large Midwestern university. They used a cross-sectional, quasi-experimental research design with repeated measures to evaluate the extent to which student exposure to SL, IGD or SJ courses prepared them for active participation in an increasingly multicultural world. Analyses compared intervention (SL, IGD, SJ course) to non-intervention (Intro to Psych course) groups on pre- and post-test responses on three dependent variables: political participation; civic engagement and multicultural activism. The researchers held race, gender and socioeconomic status constant. Results confirmed a significant intervention effect on overall commitment to collective action ($F(1, 622) = 13.79$, $p < .001$), with specific intervention effects on political participation ($F(1, 622) = 16.38$, $p < .001$), civic engagement ($F(1,622) = 3.19$, $p < .05$), and multicultural activism ($F(1,622) = 8.99$, $p < .001$). While the non-intervention group showed no significant change in their orientation toward collective action, the intervention groups showed significant changes in political participation and multicultural activism ($p < .05$).

Krings *et al.* (2015) found no significant change in collective action orientation within the SL group, perhaps because these students were already highly oriented toward collective action. IGD participants experienced significant change in all three dependent variables ($p <$

.05), while students in SJ courses had significant changes in their orientation toward political participation ($p < .05$) and multicultural activism ($p < .01$). These findings clearly show that mere college matriculation is inadequate to address issues of increased collective action and democratic participation. While the authors believe the study to be large and diverse, it drew only on students from one university and therefore these results may not generalise to other institutions and contexts. However, these results suggest that a more nuanced look at how SL, IGD and SJ education can impact student orientation toward diversity, equity and inclusion issues is warranted. The researchers suggested that future research could include random assignment to course type to minimise the self-selection bias to course type, but this may be impractical. Researchers could examine the effects of course content, structure, experiential learning components and opportunities to engage in discussions and reflect on course content to see how they may orient students toward collective action across multiple universities to identify generalisable findings of what course experiences lead to achieving collective action outcomes.

Kilgo (2015) employed data from the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education (WNS) to understand effects of SL on undergraduate student intercultural effectiveness. She used a longitudinal design with pre- and post-tests to measure changes in cognitive and psychological outcomes. The study included students (n=1934) from 17 US colleges and universities varying in both size and student selectivity. Intercultural effectiveness was measured using the short form of the Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale (M-GUDS), which measures awareness as well as potential acceptance of the similarities and differences in others characterised by interrelated cognitive, behavioural and affective components (Fuertes, Miville, Mohr, Sedlacek & Gretchen, 2000). Variables were dichotomised for gender (male/female), race (white/students of colour), socio-economic status (received federal grants/did not), institution type (regional/research or liberal arts), and SL participation (yes/no); the researchers also included a continuous variable for number of diversity courses taken in the model.

Pre-college levels of intercultural effectiveness were controlled by including pre-test measures and covariates (racial composition of high school, academic ability, academic motivation, volunteerism and teacher interactions outside of class). Students rated courses across seven good practice measures, including: quality of non-classroom faculty interactions; teaching clarity; academic challenge; integrative learning; cooperative learning; diversity experiences and positive interactions with diverse peers. Results indicated a strong, positive effect of SL on student intercultural effectiveness. However, this effect became non-significant when four good practice measures – academic challenge, integrative learning, diversity experiences and positive interactions with diverse peers – were added to the model. Kilgo's findings suggest that it is not the mere experience of SL, but rather how it is structured around good practice, that leads to increased intercultural competency.

Holsapple (2012) reviewed 55 published empirical studies to better understand student outcomes related to participating in credit-bearing SL courses at US institutions. He coded articles based on field/discipline, participants, student characteristics, number of institutions included in study, community service experience and methods/data used in the study. He then used an open-coding process to indicate how authors described their results and how student voices were included in the paper. This process generated 197 individual codes grouped into six main themes: tolerance of difference, stereotype confrontation, recognition of universality, interactions across difference, knowledge about the served population and belief in the value

of diversity. Forty-five studies presented the effects of a particular SL course or programme at one institution; the other 10 studies included students from 2 to 388 schools. Confronting stereotypes was commonly observed across studies (n=32). Holsapple (2012) invited further research that addresses the lack of theoretical models, programme details, external validity and data trustworthiness to answer more fine-grained questions about what specific aspects of SL lead to specific diversity outcomes.

Eyler and Giles (1999) interviewed 133 students at 12 institutions and found a reduction of negative stereotypes as the most common outcome from SL experiences. Knowledge about the served population also increased (n=28) and was more likely when the population was international or immigrant. Eighteen studies found evidence that student belief in the value of diversity increased after SL experiences. Eleven studies found students increased their tolerance for, interactions across, and ability to find common ground with people who appeared at first to be different. Astin and Sax (1998) found SL participants (n=2000+; across 42 institutions) improved their ability to get along with people of different races and cultures. This review mostly included SL programmes unique to their institutions and that hinders the generalisation of these findings to other institutions.

Unlike the SL programmes that are often unique to institutional settings, many IGD courses are designed following a model put forth by the University of Michigan, which facilitates comparison across institutions. The University of Michigan IGD model:

> brings together students from different social identity groups over a sustained period of time to understand their commonalities and differences, examine the nature and impact of social inequalities, and explore ways of working together toward greater equality and justice (Zuniga *et al.,* 2007:2).

Gurin-Sands and colleagues (2012) examined how students wrote about their IGD experiences, analysing papers (n = 739) written in 52 IGD courses from nine universities to determine how IGD encourages social action and collaboration with diverse others. Although these courses were taught by different professors at various universities, the IGD shared many features, such as a balance of men/women or white/black students in the gender/race courses, similar content and processes across courses, and the same final paper requirement. Within each final paper, students were asked to address their hopes and fears about the dialogue; understanding of their own and others' identities, power, privilege and inequality; how conflict was managed through dialogue and the class skills they planned to apply in society. The researchers looked for references to course concepts and coded these responses to test a theoretical model of factors leading to student discussion of actions in their papers. The researchers coded 10% of papers twice with an average inter-rater reliability of 88%. The 11 dimensions coded included: pedagogical features (readings and structured interactions); communication processes (engaging self, appreciating difference, critical reflection, alliance building); psychological processes (emotions, active thinking, and politicised identities); and outcomes (collaborating with others and educating others). These dimensions and dialogue topics (gender/race) were added to the model, while controlling for race and gender.

Gurin-Sands *et al.* (2012) found pedagogy only had indirect effects on educating and collaborating with others, but communication processes had direct and indirect effects. Critical reflection was statistically related to educating others (ß = .099, *p* = 0.01) until psychological processes are added to the model (ß = .065, *p* = .108). Alliance building directly affected educating others (ß = .144, *p* < .001) and was not reduced when psychological processes

were considered (ß = .142, *p* < .001). All three psychological processes directly affected collaborating with others (active thinking ß = .111, *p* < .01; politicised identity ß = .095, *p* < .01; emotions ß = .164, *p* < .001). In this study as well as Holsapple's (2012) review, what students discussed in their papers were used to assess expected future student behaviours. While analysing student papers can lend insight into how students make meaning of their experiences in IGD courses, student beliefs about how they will act may not always match up to how students actually act or use the skills they developed in class. Papers do offer students a chance to reflect, and what commonly arose is that what and how students are taught impacts what they take away from these experiences. The structure of dialogue courses and facilitators' trainings must emphasise communication and psychological processes to maximise the potential for students to find value in educating and collaborating with diverse others in society.

Mayhew and Engberg (2010) included data measuring moral reasoning, interactional quality and educational outcomes to build a statistical model that explains which factors lead to development of student moral reasoning. They compared IGD to an introductory sociology course, both of which offered similar SJ content but differed in how intergroup conflict and difference were addressed and discussed. Students were given pre- and post-tests and completed the Defining Issues Test 2 (Rest, Narvaez, Thoma & Bebeau, 1999) to measure moral reasoning. A measure of classroom moral practices designed by Mayhew (2005) was also given to students at the end of the course to measure negative interactions with diverse peers. While both groups showed significant developmental gains in moral reasoning, the IGD group displayed fewer gains; a chi-square analysis indicated that negative interactions with (racially/ethnically) diverse peers were reported more frequently in the IGD courses ($M = 0.677$, $SD = 0.803$), t (177), $p < 0.001$. Their between-course model indicated that greater reporting of negative diverse peer interactions significantly reduced moral reasoning development (ß = -0.122, *p* < 0.05). With no statistically significant cross-product terms, it seems more negative interactions with diverse peers significantly reduced moral reason regardless of race, gender, political orientation, level of cognitive motivation or previous experience in courses with moral emphases. Negative peer interactions significantly lowered moral reasoning in sociology but not IGD courses, which suggests that not all negative interactions with diverse peers hinder moral reasoning development. Course contexts may mitigate the effects negative peer interactions can have on moral reasoning development if these interactions are managed within the learning environment.

3. RACIAL DISPARITIES IN EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

If negative interactions with racially diverse peers can affect student moral reasoning development, are other racial/ethnic educational outcomes observed as well? Martin (2014) examined the effect of student ethnic identity on educational outcomes in a multicultural classroom. The study was conducted at a large public university in New York City that included students enrolled in a multicultural course with focused content on race, ethnicity and identity (n=68); Martin also included students enrolled in psychology courses (n=49) as a control. The two groups did not significantly differ demographically, but attrition rate was greater in the psychology courses, which explain the difference in group sizes. Students were given pre- and post-test surveys documented as valid and reliable self-report measures of learning, democratic, intergroup and identity outcomes. Although the results did not indicate group differences in learning outcomes, whites in the multicultural course decreased their

active thinking scores (F (1,108) = 4.62, p < .05). The multicultural group showed greater gains in citizenship engagement (F (1,109) = 9.77, p < .001) and when race was factored in, interactions emerged. Whites in the multicultural group increased perspective-taking (F (1,108) = 3.86, p < .05) and their belief that democracy and difference are not incompatible. Those in the multicultural course reported greater discussion and interaction with diverse others (F (1,111) =4.77, p <.05), cross-group contact (F (1,106) =6.62, p < .01), and significant gains in understanding ethnic identities (F (1,111) =5.16, p < .05). These findings led Martin (2014) to look at identity development in relation to democratic, intergroup and learning outcomes. In the multicultural course, whites with increased identity development increased perspective-taking (r (13) = .73, p < .05) and agreement that conflict was a normal part of democracy (r = .70, p < .01). Her results suggest that only white students benefited from taking the multicultural course. Although these results are compelling, it is worth noting the sample was relatively small and from one school.

Roksa, Trolian, Pascarella, Kilgo, Blaich, and Wise (2017) examined racial inequality in critical thinking skills by using data from the WNS of Liberal Arts Education. They used data from 43 US colleges and universities (28 liberal arts, six research and nine regional institutions) and randomly selected participants from large schools or included the entire incoming class from small ones. Participant critical thinking skills were measured three times: in the fall and spring of their incoming year as well as in the spring of their fourth year. At those times, students were also asked about their college academic and diversity experiences. Their models controlled for critical thinking as well as background characteristics upon entrance to college and used critical thinking as the dependent variable, race as the independent variable and academic as well as diversity experiences as explanatory measures. The number of cases in certain racial groups is a limitation as the researchers did not want to group multiple identities into one, non-white category. Also, the WNS includes mostly selective, liberal art schools. The researchers also note there is a long-standing debate as to whether standardised tests used to measure critical thinking skills are biased against certain groups due to the limited learning opportunities afforded to them (Fischer *et al.,* 1996). Results of hierarchical linear models indicate substantial inequality in the development of critical thinking skills between African American and white students (p < .01) and Hispanic and white students (p < .1). Teaching clarity and organisation significantly related to critical thinking development, but time spent studying did not. Most striking in their models was how academic experiences were not as important as diversity experiences in developing critical thinking skills. Negative diversity experiences had an inverse yet statistically significant relationship on critical thinking skills, which mostly affected African American and Hispanic students because they were disproportionately exposed to negative diversity experiences. In other words, negative diversity experiences may similarly affect all students, but occur most frequently amongst African American as well as Hispanic students.

4. NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES OF RACIAL MINORITIES

A major source of negative diversity experiences is a result of microaggressions. Microaggressions are the:

> everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership (Sue, 2010:3).

Boysen (2012) explored teacher and student perceptions of classroom microaggressions. The sample included 222 teachers from 15 institutions in a large state system and 166 students from one medium-sized state college within the large state system. Participants were asked to take an online survey and rate their perceptions of microaggressions based on vignettes of a classroom event as if they were in the teacher/student roles in the classroom scenario. Students rated the effectiveness of teacher responses to the microaggressions on a 6-point scale (very ineffective to very effective) ranging from ignoring the incident to confronting the student directly. Teachers of diversity courses perceived microaggressions more negatively (*F* (2,312) = 6.43, *p* = .002) and were more likely to respond to all incidents (all chi-squares > 6.98, all *p*'s < .008) than non-diversity teachers. Diversity teachers rated ignoring microaggressions as significantly less effective than non-diversity teachers and discussion as more effective than non-diversity teachers (*p* < .05). Students tended to perceive all responses except ignoring the incident as effective. While imagined situations may have inflated student and deflated teacher perceptions, these results do suggest that the students and teachers perceive that responding to microaggressions is essential to effective management of these incidents. Most students sampled were white and may have different perceptions of how best to handle microaggressions compared to non-white students, but this study highlights the need to train faculty members (especially those teaching non-diversity course content) how to identify and manage classroom microaggressions.

What are the consequences for students who are targets of microaggressions? Blume, Thyken, Lovato and Denny (2012) examined the relationship between microaggressions and self-reports of alcohol use and anxiety among minority students at a historically white institution (HWI). College students (n=684) aged 18–20 from the HWI were surveyed and 178 self-identified as students of colour (100 African American, 37 Asian American, 6 American Indian, 35 Hispanic/Latino). Alcohol use was measured using the Daily Drinking Questionnaire (Collins, Parks & Marlatt, 1985) and the Rutgers Alcohol Problem Index (White & Labouvie, 1989). The Beck Anxiety Inventory (Beck, Epstein, Brown & Steer, 1988) was used to assess anxiety symptoms and self-reports of microaggression frequencies experienced by students in the past month and year. The Situational Confidence Questionnaire, Short Form (Annis & Davis, 1988), and the General Perceived Self-Efficacy (Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1992) scale measured levels of self-efficacy to cope with high risk drinking and anxiety-inducing situations. Students of colour reported experiencing on average 290.55 microaggressions in the past 90 days and report significantly more microaggressions than whites in the past month (*t* (592) = -3.292, *p* = .001). While no independent variables were significant predictors of anxiety or binge drinking, both models were significant overall (anxiety: = .20; *p* < .001; binge drinking = .11, *p* < .01). When the interaction of microaggressions and general self-efficacy were removed from both models, lower perceived self-efficacy scores and higher reports of microaggressions were significantly associated with greater anxiety (= .20, *p* < .01) and binge drinking (= .10, *p* < .01). Greater binge drinking, greater microaggression self-reports as well as the interaction of self-efficacy and microaggressions were significantly associated with increased negative alcohol related consequences (= .28, *p* < .001). While methodological limits prevent broad generalisation, these findings demonstrate how students of colour may be at greater health risks at HWI due to their potential for encountering increased incidents of microaggressions at HWI.

Given the impact of negative interactions with diverse peers on learning and the health risks associated with exposure to microaggressions on campus, how can we improve

relationships between diverse peers on college campuses? Glass, Glassf and Lynch (2016) examined the relationship between perceptions of affordance for interaction with diverse peers and patterns of student engagement among students at seven similarly situated universities. The researchers used the Global Perspective Inventory (GPI) to identify seven universities of similar type, size, levels of structural racial diversity (moderate) and opportunities for cross-cultural peer engagement. They invited students (n=16,684) from said schools to complete an online questionnaire. Three validated construct measures of student engagement (multicultural curricular engagement, co-curricular engagement and cross-cultural peer engagement) were combined with perceptions of affordances for interaction with diverse peers as dependent variables in a MANCOVA analysis with race/ethnicity as the independent variable. Glass *et al.* (2016) found a small but significant effect of race on student engagement factors and perceptions of affordances for interaction with diverse peers. Whites reported higher levels of curricular engagement, greater levels of campus support for diversity, and less openness to cross-cultural interaction than their peers from all other racial groups. Students were connected through a network analysis based on their perceptions of affordances for diverse peer interactions, which identified a cluster of core and fringe students with little mixing between them. This pattern was strikingly different from typical network analyses, which led Glass *et al.* (2016) to conclude that institutional context was central to network creation among students. Greater engagement between core and fringe students through curricular contexts such as IGD and co-curricular contexts could promote greater exchange of diverse information and perspectives and ultimately more nuanced and independent minded views of the campus context (Locks *et al.,* 2008).

5. INSTITUTIONAL AUTHENTICITY

If institutional contexts have the power to frame student network creations on campus and greater mixing of core and fringe students can decrease negative diverse peer interactions and their deleterious effects on (mostly minority) students, then it behoves academic leaders to identify the lived and espoused beliefs pervasive within institutional culture surrounding issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. Hoffman and Mitchell (2016) used discourse analysis to critically assess administrator responses to student activism on a large public university campus; whether their responses conflicted with institutional values of equity and diversity and how student campus leaders perceived their responses. Using an intrinsic case study design, the researchers analysed publicly available campus documents, advertisements, transcripts of public conversations, all-campus emails from administrators describing policy changes resulting from ActivistU efforts as well as the student-maintained website and blog for ActivistU. They also interviewed the Chief Diversity Officer, Chief Student Affairs Officer, and seven student leaders of minoritised campus groups.

Hoffman and Mitchell employed a three-step coding process for textual data and figured worlds of "antagonism" and "unwavering support for equity and diversity" (2016:282) emerged, which was then used as a lens to code interview transcriptions. Their analyses showed "the institutional responses to ActivistU's student activism on campus often produced a climate for diversity that directly countered espoused institutional and departmental values" (ibid:283) and that vague notions of academic excellence and failure to define diversity led to paying lip service to these issues while reinforcing institutional power dynamics. Administrators diminished their role as institutional authorities by claiming that diversity and equity were "everyone's ongoing responsibility," thereby placing additional burdens on already minoritised

individuals. Students were further minimised when their request to meet off-campus to reduce power relations was denied by an administrator who said they were "getting caught up in minutiae". ActivistU members tried to use institutional processes to address their concerns but routinely were denied the opportunity to meet and discuss their concerns with administrators, which reinforced institutional power while student frustrations mounted. This article uses perceptions of minoritised students to develop an argument that demonstrates how institutional authority is reinforced through specific actions and rhetoric at one institution.

If staying true to institutional mission is necessary for successful diversity efforts and the "whats" and "hows" of doing diversity work are integral to its success on campus, then peer institutions are excellent sources from which to draw on successful integration of diversity and equity issues through institutional mission. As one example, St. John's University is a Catholic peer institution to Bellard University (BU) and as such is an excellent case to compare to other Catholic universities in the United States. The Sinatra and Mayer (2012) article chronicles the history of St. John's and the formation of its Vincentian Institute for Social Action as a means of integrating scholarly work within a community service framework to positively affect community agencies. In 2010, over $1.5 million in funds were invested in the institute to develop the Ozanam Scholars Program; academic service learning; a Faculty Research Consortium (FRC); student retreats; conference presentations; international service; institutional staffing and additional programme costs. Sinatra and Maher (2012) investigated the service impact of the institute's major programme components through outcomes-based quantitative and qualitative research. Data were collected for the AS-L programme, Ozanam Scholars Program, and the Community Partners Research Program and included survey results from students, faculty, community partners and clients as well as a more in-depth evaluation of the newly instituted Ozanam Scholars Program. Sinatra and Maher (2012) found that the formation of the Vincentian Institute for Social Action was key to the success of its social justice programmes because it served as a central management agency through which students, faculty, administrators and partners could collaborate to support the Vincentian mission. The authors suggested this as a first step to any similarly situated institution to consider strengthening their efforts, as long as the financial and staff resources are available to advance the mission and vision of the institute. They stressed the importance of creating "win-win" situations where everyone (faculty, staff, students, community partners, and clients) gets something out of the social justice programme as academic integrity is preserved and mission-oriented outcomes are met through collaborative partnerships for the common good. Sinatra and Maher (2012) suggested offering rewards or incentives to create buy-in for faculty and students and determining how to best evaluate the success of these programmes.

6. KEY POINTS IN THE FINDINGS

The key overall finding from the 12 articles highlighted in this paper is that educating students toward outcomes that promote diversity, equity and inclusion-related values is highly complex and context dependent. If we do not consider the diverse needs of our student body, we may design curriculum that benefits one (majority, white) identity group over another (minority, non-white) group (Martin, 2014). Evidence seems to exist that SL programmes can lead to the attainment of student diversity outcomes (Holsapple, 2012), but those effects may be tied to the inclusion of best practices such as academic challenge, integrative learning, diversity experiences, and positive interactions with diverse peers in those experiential learning opportunities (Kilgo, 2015). We also cannot ignore the possibility that students who choose to

enrol in SL programmes may already be more oriented toward collective action, as are some students who choose to enrol in other social justice courses such as IGD (Krings *et al.,* 2015). IGD courses can also lead to students attaining educational outcomes toward collective action (Krings *et al.,* 2015) and communication processes such as alliance building may have a direct effect on educating others and psychological processes such as active thinking and engaging politicised identity and emotions directly affected collaborating with others (Gurin-Sands *et al.,* 2012). In this way, it becomes clear that it is not just what is taught to students but how it is taught that determines whether desired educational outcomes (such as commitment to social or collective action) will be achieved.

Furthermore, it is not just academic experiences that affect a student's ability to achieve desired educational outcomes. The quality of diverse peer interactions greatly influences a student's ability to develop moral reasoning (Mayhew & Engberg, 2010) and critical thinking skills (Roska *et al.,* 2016). Faculty should respond to classroom microaggressions (Boysen, 2012) as these subtle prejudices put its victims at increased (mental) health risks (Blume *et al.,* 2012). Faculty, staff and administrators have an opportunity to model what they expect to see in the student body and by effectively managing negative interactions between students (and others, if such occasions arise), they set the stage for doing more than paying lip service as they truly make diversity everyone's business (Hoffman & Mitchell, 2016).

7. DISCUSSION OF KEY FINDINGS AS IT RELATES TO MISSION, ADAPTATION, AND GOVERNANCE

Taken together, these twelve studies highlight how staying true to mission, maintaining good governance processes and adapting to a changing landscape converge on best practices for successful diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives on college campuses. Institutional leaders at predominantly white institutions seeking to embed diversity, equity and inclusion into their mission, vision or values, must engage in a whole-hearted commitment to examine historical legacies, epistemological and societal racisms that pervade their institutional policies and practices (Brayboy, 2003). Academic leaders must do more than pay lip service to diversity, equity and inclusion issues on campus (Hoffman & Mitchell, 2016). For academic leaders to successfully integrate mission and social justice outcomes, they must listen to students, faculty, staff and other relevant stakeholders. Leaders must listen to concerns that their actions do not line up with espoused institutional values and they must reassess how they can adjust their responses. If notions of academic excellence and diversity are unclear, administrators must lead conversations to define them. Administrators cannot diminish their role as institutional authorities by claiming that diversity and equity are everyone's business. If institutional processes routinely deny opportunities for individuals or groups to be heard, more equitable processes are in order.

But leaders need followers and even the greatest academic leaders with the best visions will fail without support from faculty, staff, students and stakeholders. For a leader's actions to stay true to mission while broadening constituent support, they need to find ways to focus mutually beneficial goals (between academic leaders and faculty, staff, students and external stakeholders) on institutional mission and values. Good governance practices will help academic leaders achieve buy-in as they create democratic partnerships and encourage collaboration among constituents. Funding an institute for diversity, equity and inclusion and creating win-win situations where everyone gets something out of our striving for the common good (Sinatra & Maher, 2012) may help centre efforts for students, faculty, staff and community

partners at Catholic universities where these values are supported and strengthened. If academic leaders hold themselves to high standards and act with true democratic intentions (Hendrickson *et al.,* 2013) while adhering to the three p's of persistence, patience and process (Bolman & Gallos, 2011), they will be embodying a democratic process as they create a shared vision and not just paying lip service to espoused higher education values.

What does embodying the mission and good governance practices look like for creating a shared vision around diversity, equity and inclusion issues on campus? First and foremost, it means having diverse voices at all levels of shared governance and ensuring they are heard. This requires including representatives across stakeholder groups and ensuring all perspectives are valued and respected throughout the governance process. The institution must also have an effective organisational structure that empowers diversity officers to perform their work, ensuring issues of diversity, equity and inclusion may be heard at the highest levels of the organisation. Faculty must also be included, as administrative authority is constrained by norms of autonomy and shared governance in higher education. While some may believe faculty are more interested in preserving the status quo, research suggests that shared governance can work when faculty are brought into decision-making roles (Hendrickson *et al.,* 2013). As the makeup of our institutions change, our institutional systems should change with it. Adjusting the number of faculty seats on the Academic Senate to match full-time tenure-track, full-time non-tenure track and adjunct professors in proportion to their makeup is one way to include greater representation of all faculty interests in decision-making. The best academic leaders will know when to be patient, when to persist and when to trust the process. Administrators should use their power and authority to create spaces where democracy plays out, giving a voice to all constituents and encouraging active participation in diversity activities and forums. Research on best practices should be considered along with constituent needs and coalesce around institutional mission and a shared institutional vision.

Mission-driven and democratic institutions survive and weather storms (Hendrickson *et al.,* 2013) and adaptation to external environments is integral to survival. To remain relevant, academic leaders must continually assess the issues facing higher education institutions. The board can help inform the president, but the president and other academic leaders must also convey the urgency to adapt to relevant changes on the horizon. Many factors contribute to a BU's shrinking recruitment pool of students, such as its emphasis on Catholic identity and traditional instruction, its affordability and declining birth rates in the United States. We must attract students as we retain our reputation as one of the best schools in terms of job placement, since it is a major factor families consider when choosing which university their child should attend. The most diverse incoming first year class was welcomed on campus this year (2020) and we can expect this to be the new normal as we work to increase access and affordability in a changing landscape. University administrators need to ensure a culture and climate amenable to the needs of our increasingly diverse student body is cultivated as we embrace the challenges that will come with this trend. Increased diversity will cause greater tension in the short run but can lead to great advantages overall if obstacles can be overcome.

No longer can we make assumptions about the typical college student as they vary in race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and age (Hendrickson *et al.,* 2013). Student persistence is connected to personal characteristics, organisational factors and individual experiences in and outside the classroom (Hendrickson *et al.,* 2013). Using technology to create new types of student-faculty learning communities is one way to meet individualised educational needs. While higher education institutions are getting better at identifying students at-risk, it is not clear if schools are offering adequate resources to help them succeed. Using technology to

create new types of student-faculty learning communities is one way to meet individualised educational needs and developing metrics to evaluate these intervention strategies will go a long way in helping determine what strategies are successful.

Students want and expect diverse collegiate experiences, but they need help navigating these spaces to reduce the likelihood that they will engage in negative interactions with diverse peers. Faculty, especially those without a social justice or diversity orientation, may lack skills necessary to identify or effectively manage microaggressions in classroom settings. Faculty reward structures could be created that offer opportunities to learn the skills necessary to teach in more diverse classrooms. If faculty do not consider microaggressions academic issues, leaders can point to the negative effects these experiences have on student learning outcomes, which may in turn lead faculty to re-centre the mitigation of these negative classroom events as a means of preserving academic integrity and maximising learning outcomes. It may also be important to remind faculty that learning is affective as well as cognitive (Hendrickson *et al.,* 2013). Gurin-Sands *et al.* (2012) reminds us of how important affective components are to reaching diversity-related outcomes focused on commitment to social action, as affective and communication processes were the only direct influencers found to influence these educational outcomes.

8. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACADEMIC LEADERS

- Act with true democratic intention – engage the campus community, create spaces where every constituent voice is heard, model the behaviours and attitudes you want to see and facilitate good shared governance processes.

- Ensure diversity, equity and inclusion is defined around institutional values through an inclusive conversation with campus constituents.

- Align institutional policies, structures and reward systems to support diversity efforts and encourage new initiatives informed by best practices.

- Increase diversity recruitment, retention and representation throughout the institution and be cognisant of how structural diversity shapes collegiate experiences for all.

- Provide resources and incentives for faculty to work towards diversity goals, including encouraging them to create multicultural classroom experiences that support educational learning for all (Martin, 2014).

- Provide adequate resources to at-risk students (including programmes that address potential health risks as well as technology-based student-faculty learning communities) and create metrics to evaluate their effectiveness.

- Cultivate a culture that welcomes and embraces individuals of diverse backgrounds.

9. GAPS, INCONSISTENCIES AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Although informative, the research I present here leaves questions unanswered. Krings *et al.* (2015) found intervention groups led to community action outcomes: SJ courses led to significant gains in multicultural activism and political participation, IGD courses to multicultural activism, political participation and civic engagement, but no gains in SL. Further analysis of the data suggested that students in SL (and to some extent IGD courses) had higher initial levels of community action outcomes, leading the researchers to believe that self-selection bias may have played a part in their results. When Kilgo (2015) looked at the impact of SL, she found a strong positive effect on intercultural effectiveness that became nonsignificant

once good practices were factored into the model. Martin (2014) found that only whites benefited from a multicultural classroom and Gurin-Sands *et al.* (2012) that communication and psychological processes had direct effects on student commitments to social action. Taken together, these results suggest that positive gains in diversity-related educational outcomes can be reached if best practices are implemented in the classroom. But if how we do something is just as important as what we do, then these studies leave much to be desired as information is missing about how faculty led discussions, incorporated pedagogy, utilised communication processes and engaged psychological processes in the classroom. Furthermore, it is one thing to teach SL to a group of students who are already community action-oriented and another to design classroom experiences that improve student outcomes when the students come into the classroom with different orientations. These results suggest there is still much to learn about how to design curricular experiences (and what factors are relevant to those designs) to create optimal learning environments for all students. Future research could investigate how specific course contexts incorporate best practices to create optimal learning environments for all.

Perhaps more important, the research suggests that negative interactions with diverse peers gets in the way of educational outcomes, such as moral reasoning (Mayhew & Engberg, 2010) and critical thinking development (Roksa *et al.,* 2017). Negative interactions can also lead to health risks such as anxiety and binge drinking, especially for students of colour at HWI (Blume *et al.,* 2012). Increasing interactions between students in the core and fringe through curricular contexts may help (mostly white) students develop appreciation for interacting with diverse others, but then negative interactions, such as microaggressions, must be identified and responded to effectively (Boysen, 2012). These findings point to a need for increased faculty training or other strategies, such as inviting trained peer educators to facilitate classroom dialogues and effectively manage microaggressions in the classroom. Peer-led dialogues allow truth to emerge between equals as peers collaborate and bring elements of their own identities, experiences and sentiments to their interaction (Voorhees & Petkas, 2011). Researchers could investigate how faculty teaching diversity courses actually manage microaggressions in the classroom as well as actual student perceptions of their effectiveness rather than rely on imagined scenarios (Boysen, 2012), which may better inform best practices to engage negative interactions with diverse peers in the classroom. In addition, it may be useful for researchers to look at a variety of IGD models to determine whether one is more effective to achieve particular outcomes in certain circumstances or if an overarching best practice can be derived.

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