

Chapter 7

Looking Inside: Administrative Practices That Honor Diversity

ABSTRACT

Running a college is no easy task. Amid complex diversity issues, political turmoil, and ever-changing student narratives, the campus environment represents a sea of countless challenges. To ensure success in the long run, administration officials must construct well-designed plans that review past events while carefully assessing future possibilities. Such plans should include a sustained and comprehensive focus on diversity awareness, implementation of multicultural education frameworks, and additional initiatives such as mentoring and community outreach programs. Above all, administrations must work closely with all members of the university including staff, faculty, alumni, and students to promote positive outcomes despite the inherent uncertainties that lay ahead.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-4069-5.ch007

INTRODUCTION

My own understanding and impact in the conversation around diversity really has been shaped by the stories of others in the early years of my presidency by some really faithful students who came to my office and began to describe their experiences in the classroom or in the living area or in the neighborhoods around the university. And they asked for my voice and they said, "If you are leading us, what does it mean for us to be who we are and who we want to be?" I've gotta say, I feel like they paid too great a price. They didn't ask to be the spokespersons for diversity, for their own ethnicity or culture. They didn't ask to be the ones who were singled out in class. But they faithfully and lovingly gave their voice to a conversation that needed to turn a corner. And those of us in privileged positions needed to make room at the table for others, pulling more chairs up, and in some cases pull our own chairs away from the table so that those voices were first in line, not ours. ~James

The landscape of diversity on college campuses is vast. There are numerous moving parts and institutions often excel in some areas while falling short in others. In previous chapters, we've focused on stories about one university through the lens of videotaped narratives and insights from five interviewees, Lina, Darnell, Alice, Sheila, and Talia. Their voices have educated us about the many nuances of culture in social and academic settings. James, the chief administrator whose narrative opens this chapter, was deeply moved when talking with students of color about the racial injustices they experienced on campus. Later in the interview, he stated "We are not where we used to be, we are not where we want to be," but are moving towards fully reflecting the diversity of the institution and surrounding area.

Many universities continue to fall short in terms of understanding past injustices and their impact on current practices. According to Tharp (2015), problems often stem from differing viewpoints among students and educators about the way diversity practices should be implemented. Factors such as policies that are insensitive to the needs of marginalized pupils and microaggressions committed by instructors in the classroom, (e.g., believing that a student of color represents the entirety of beliefs and worldviews of his or her race), can contribute to student tension and frustration (Caplan & Ford, 2014). Growing mistrust may reach a boiling point if left unchecked.

How can administrative practices lead to a greater investment in cultural diversity on university campuses? The answer depends both on strategic

25 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/looking-inside/256742

Related Content

Multilingualism, Identities and Language Hegemony: A Case Study of Five Ethnic Minority Students in China

Jing Li and Danièle Moore (2017). *International Journal of Bias, Identity and Diversities in Education* (pp. 42-56).

www.irma-international.org/article/multilingualism-identities-and-language-hegemony/182852

Women Millets and Sustainability: Nourishing Health and Empowering Communities

G Sethuram Rao, D. Vydeki and G. Shanmugaraj (2024). *The Role of Women in Cultivating Sustainable Societies Through Millets* (pp. 93-112).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/women-millets-and-sustainability/335137

Classism: Navigating the Hierarchy

Kate J. F. Carnevale, Melissa Armas and Vijay Kumar Rajput (2023). *Cases on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the Health Professions Educator* (pp. 149-167).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/classism/317241

Composing Lives Alongside: Narrative Meaning Making and Life Making in Relation

Derek A. Hutchinson and M. Shaun Murphy (2021). *International Journal of Bias, Identity and Diversities in Education* (pp. 1-14).

www.irma-international.org/article/composing-lives-alongside/282068

Care Work vs. Career: Crisis of Middle Class Working Women

Md. Mynul Islam and Gulay Jannat (2018). *Handbook of Research on Women's Issues and Rights in the Developing World* (pp. 37-51).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/care-work-vs-career/188895