[CAMPUS PRACTICE]

A New Rubric for Assessing Institution-Wide Diversity

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Engagement with diversity is essential for democracy, and learning outcomes for all students improve when a campus community provides opportunities for students to engage with people who are different from themselves (Milem, Chang, and Antonio 2005). Recognizing this, many colleges and universities are making serious attempts to advance their demographic diversity and enrich the diversity content of their curricular and cocurricular offerings. But institutions are at different stages of this process and may be missing opportunities to engage more fully with diversity. To move beyond isolated diversity initiatives marked by what William T. Lewis (2009) has called "islands of excellence" and create environments that are both richly diverse and energized through engagement with diversity, institutions must maximize their effectiveness by continually assessing their progress and realigning their efforts. Campus-wide assessments that take into account all aspects of support for diversity can provide the baseline necessary for designing purposeful diversity work.

How can institutions successfully assess their multifaceted diversity change initiatives? Members of the Multicultural Affairs Think Tank (MATT) at the New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE) focused on this question at a meeting held in 2011. Subsequently, a subgroup of MATT members noted a need for diversity assessment tools that are systemic in nature rather than focused on individual units such as student affairs, academic affairs, or human resources. These MATT members saw a need for a tool that would bring stakeholders together—whether across divisions or within specific units—to gather information about existing diversity efforts. They decided to create a rubric to serve these purposes.

The MATT rubric team envisioned their rubric as a fitting complement to existing assessment tools like Estela Bensimon's Equity Scorecard, which evaluates access and equity for historically underrepresented students (Bensimon 2004), and Damon A. Williams, Joseph B. Berger, and Shederick A. McClendon's Inclusive Excellence Scorecard, which explores how both internal structures and external pressures affect attempts to diversify an institution (Williams, Berger, and McClendon 2005). To create its rubric, the team drew on another existing model: Andrew Furco's Higher Education Service Learning Institutionalization Rubric (2010), a self-assessment instrument measuring the extent to which a college or university has institutionalized service learning. Furco not only agreed to allow the team to use his rubric as a basis for their work, but also offered guidance and support as the rubric team began developing and refining its new tool: the Self-Assessment Rubric for Institutionalization of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Higher Education (the Diversity Rubric).

Rubric Structure and Protocols

The Diversity Rubric examines an institution's relevant accomplishments through six dimensions: (1) Philosophy and Mission of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; (2) Faculty Support and Involvement; (3) Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Research; (4) Staff Engagement and Involvement; (5) Student Support and Involvement; and (6) Administrative Leadership and Institutional Support. For each dimension, the rubric team identified a number of components (see sidebar), which users can modify for use in their own contexts.

For each component, the team established a three-stage continuum of development. Progression from stage one to stage three suggests that an institution is moving closer to fully institutionalizing diversity, inclusion, and equity on its campus. *Stage One: Emerging* identifies a campus that is beginning to recognize diversity, inclusion, and equity as strategic priorities and is building a campus-wide constituency for the effort. At *Stage Two: Developing*, a campus is focused on ensuring the development of its institutional and individual capacity to sustain diversity, inclusion, and equity efforts. *Stage Three: Transforming* indicates that a campus has fully woven diversity, inclusion, and equity into its institutional fabric, but continues to assess its efforts to ensure sustainability in an ever-changing environment.

The Diversity Rubric is designed to be used in a variety of institutional contexts, and the rubric team created several protocols for its use. With the *Small Group/High Level* protocol, senior cabinet members can use the tool to assess their individual divisions and share results with other campus leaders to shape strategic and long-range planning. Using the *Large Group/Multilevel* approach, a team of individuals at many levels (for example, a campus-wide diversity council) can use the rubric to evaluate perceptions of current progress at the institution. With the *Limited Group/Multilevel* protocol, individuals at

many levels in a few areas of campus can use the rubric to self-assess their areas of work and advance their planning and operational goals. (For example, a provost could use the faculty or curriculum dimensions of the rubric in discussions with deans to further teaching and learning goals.) Users have the option of creating their own protocols, and additional protocols will undoubtedly emerge. Like an audit, the snapshot obtained using these protocols can provide baseline data against which to measure progress.

In all cases, the rubric should stimulate conversations and self-reflection that assist university leadership in advancing institutional diversity goals, thus fostering greater understanding of how different areas of the institution align and interrelate. The rubric is only one tool for assessing progress toward becoming a fully diverse, equitable, and inclusive institution, and it may be most revealing when complemented by campus climate surveys, alumni questionnaires, curriculum audits, policy reviews, and other assessment options.

Inviting Participation

At present, the Diversity Rubric is in its final stages of development. NERCHE is planning to pilot the rubric at a range of institutions, including liberal arts colleges, public and private universities, and community colleges. The rubric team invites *Diversity & Democracy*'s readers to read more about the rubric on NERCHE's website (http://www.nerche. org/) and to contact NERCHE to provide feedback. ◎

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Rubric Components

The **Self-Assessment Rubric for Institutionalization of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Higher Education** contains six dimensions (green), each characterized by corresponding components (yellow).

I. Philosophy and Mission	
■ Definition of diversity, inclusion, and equity ■ Strategic planning ■ Alignment with institutional mission	■ Alignment with education reform efforts ■ Accreditation ■ Historical and geographical context

II. Faculty Support and Involvement	
■ Faculty knowledge and awareness ■ Faculty involvement and support ■ Faculty leadership	■ Faculty rewards ■ Faculty development and incentives ■ Academic departments

III. Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Research	
■ Knowledge and awareness of diversity in relation to individual disciplines	■ Faculty teaching and learning strategies and methods ■ Student diversity learning outcomes and assessment

IV. Staff Engagement and Involvement	
■ Staff knowledge and awareness ■ Staff engagement and involvement	■ Staff incentives and rewards ■ Non-academic units

V. Student Support and Involvement	
■ Student knowledge and awareness ■ Student opportunities, involvement, and engagement	■ Student leadership ■ Student incentives and rewards

VI. Administrative Leadership and Institutional Support	
■ Coordination of institutional efforts ■ Policy-making entities ■ Diversity-focused staff positions ■ Hiring and retention ■ Professional development ■ Funding	■ Senior administrative leadership ■ Institutional evaluation and assessment ■ Institutional research ■ Institutional resource management ■ Specialized initiatives