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Editors’ Note

Our New Collaboration With the AAHHE

I t pleases us to announce that the Journal of Hispanic Higher Education has, with the strong support of Sage Publications, Inc., been named as the official journal of the newly established American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education (AAHHE). AAHHE is a national educational organization dedicated to improving the overall quality of higher education, with an emphasis on two primary beliefs that higher education should address the needs of Hispanic individuals, and institutions of higher education can be more effective in meeting the needs of a changing U.S. demography.

AAHHE is focused in large part on the need to develop more Latino/a faculty and senior administrators. AAHHE will serve as a leading research and advocacy group for Hispanic higher education issues.

The focus of AAHHE will be to increase the number of Hispanic students attending and completing graduate programs in higher education, share with the greater higher education community our perspective and value of diversity, assist in shaping the effect of science and technology in the teaching/learning process, prepare a more diverse student population in higher education to work in a global environment, prepare more Hispanic individuals to pursue a career in higher education via faculty and senior-level positions, be an advocate and a convener for public policy and issues in higher education that affect Hispanic individuals by providing testimony to appropriate audiences, and pursue research projects that are pertinent to Latino individuals in higher education.

For those who join AAHHE, they will receive a copy of the JHIHE each quarter. We consider that an excellent benefit of membership!

For more information on AAHHE, visit their Web site at www.aaahhe.org. Mark your calendars for March 2 to 4 when the new organization will host their first conference focusing on policy, research, and practice. The conference will be held in San Antonio, Texas.

Hasta luego, so long, shalom!

Esther Elena López-Muhlnix
Michael William Muhlnix
Editors
Models of Excellence in Multicultural Colleges and Universities

Esther Elena López-Mulnix
Michael William Mulnix
University of the Incarnate Word

Abstract: The authors examine definitions of culture and philosophical and political assumptions that underlie multicultural approaches that facilitate or discourage multicultural competence. The authors discover that campus culture—determined mostly by the dominant coalition or power elite—is critical to success or failure of effective multicultural policies and procedures. In the literature, power is not generally acknowledged when considering multicultural competence. Thus, this preliminary work relating systems theory to institutional culture is unique in determining excellence in multiculturalism.

Resumen: Los autores examinan definiciones de cultura así como supuestos filosóficos y políticos que afectan aproximaciones multiculturales que facilitan o desafían la competencia multicultural. Los autores descubren que la cultura en un campo universitario—determinada mayormente por la coalición dominante o el poder selecto—es crítica para el éxito o el fracaso de políticas y procedimientos multiculturalmente efectivos. En la literatura, el poder no se reconoce cuando se considera la competencia multicultural. Por lo cual, este trabajo preliminar que relaciona teoría sistémica con la cultural institucional es único al determinar excelencia en multiculturalismo.

Keywords: multicultural competence; institutional culture; education; college attrition; Hispanic higher education, open systems; diverse campus; diverse faculty; multicultural faculty

A great deal has been written on the topic of multiculturalism in the nation’s colleges and universities. Although some institutions of higher education appear to have successfully integrated a broad mix of cultures across the curriculum, others continue to struggle to find ways to ensure that students of color are embraced by the mainstream student body. What ideas, strategies, priorities, and programs have helped certain institutions to develop multicultural competence? Precisely what kind of leadership does it take for these colleges and universities to move to new levels of excellence and effectiveness in their multicultural programs?

This is, in essence, a preliminary study for what will eventually be a casebook on multicultural models of excellence. The authors are in the process of conducting in-depth surveys and follow-up interviews at select colleges and universities in an attempt to find verifiable cases of institutions searching for increased levels of effectiveness in their multicultural programming. We are beginning to find, for example, schools that have dramatically improved their recruitment efforts for students of color, reshaped institutional structures to make space for the voices of students of color, brought about major curricular reforms to more fully and wholly reflect changes—and accompanying challenges—in the nation’s demographics, and found new sources of funds or dramatically improved academic quality across a more broadly focused, global curriculum.

Our primary goal is to find commonalities among these institutions. In other words, what are the common characteristics shared among these colleges and universities that have allowed them to develop multicultural excellence? What are the motivating forces for the attainment of new levels of excellence in multicultural programs? What are the overarching leadership styles that allow for excellence? What is the campus institutional culture that encourages such excellence? How do these colleges and universities effectively scan the environment and thus interpret opportunities and threats in an increasingly global society? And, perhaps more important than all, what priorities are placed on developing multicultural excellence by campus leaders—what we refer to throughout this article as the dominant coalition of power elite—and what, precisely, is the relationship of leadership to effectiveness in multicultural policies and programs?

Our primary hypothesis is that there are commonalities among certain educational institutions that have enabled them to develop outstanding multicultural programs. In our search for such institutions, we have found it useful to incorporate key principles of systems theory into a possible model for multicultural effectiveness. In other words, the language of systems theory allows us to construct both a symmetric and an asymmetric model that could be of distinct use to college and university faculty and administrators in designing more effective methods of integrating cultures across the curriculum. Several writers (Douvan, 1981; Gilligan, 1981; White, 1981) have already suggested that for colleges and universities to more effectively serve society as a whole, they need to adopt a more open-systems, symmetrically oriented worldview. We hypothesize here that more symmetrical institutions (decentralized, organic, participative, collaborative, innovative) as opposed to more asymmetrical institutions (centralized, bureaucratic, exclusionary, individualistic, rigid, traditional) are far more likely to have developed multicultural excellence. In other words, an open-systems, symmetrical campus culture should parallel the development of humane, caring educational institutions with campus leaderships that insist on overall excellence in multiculturalism. We are thus hypothesizing that there is a distinct and measurable relationship among campus culture, styles of leadership, and multicultural effectiveness.
Definitions

Throughout this article, several terms are used rather extensively and need to be defined.

Culture

Sue and Sue (1990) define culture as all the customs, values, and traditions that are learned from one’s environment. Sodowsky, Lai, and Flake (1991) state that in a culture there is a

set of people who have common and shared values; customs, habits, and rituals; systems of labeling, explanations, and evaluations; social rules of behavior; perceptions regarding human nature, natural phenomena, interpersonal relationships, time, and activity; symbols, art, and artifacts; and historical developments. (p. 194)

Taylor (1871) defines culture or “civilization” as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (cited in Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 43). Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) write that

culture is . . . a set of attributes and products of human societies, and therewith of mankind, which are extraneous and transmissible by mechanisms other than biological heredity, and are as essentially lacking in subhuman species as they are in characteristics of the human species as it is aggregated in its societies. (p. 145)

R. T. Carter and Qureshi’s (1995) seemingly simple but comprehensive definition of culture as “a learned system of meaning and behavior that is passed from one generation to the next” is particularly useful. We have also been influenced by R. T. Carter and Qureshi’s attempt to define five different types of culture, including universal, ubiquitous, traditional or anthropological, race-based, and pan-national. Universal assumptions that all people are basically the same because intragroup differences are greater than intergroup differences. Ubiquitous assumptions that all loci of identity or shared circumstance are constitutive of culture. In other words, people can belong to multiple cultures, which are situationally determined. Traditional or anthropological assumes that culture equals country, that culture is determined by birth, upbringing, and environment and is defined by common experience of socialization and environment. Race-based assumes that race is the superordinate locus of culture, that the experience of belonging to a racial group transcends all other experiences, and that culture is a function of the values of the racial group and of the values, reactions, and institutions of the larger society. Pan-national assumes that culture is a function of a dynamic other than geosocial, that racial group membership determines one’s place in the distribution of power, and that culture is viewed globally. For the purposes of this article, the authors have adopted the ubiquitous and race-based approaches as defined by R. T. Carter and Qureshi.

We have also constructed our own definition of culture as “the collective mind and behavioral shaping done by elders that distinguish members of one human group from another” (López-Munirix, 2005).

Multiculturalism

Some experts define multiculturalism exclusively around racial and ethnic issues and fear that broader definitions weaken the efforts to eradicate racism from education (Helms, 1994; Locke, 1990). Others adopt a broader definition that expands the definition of culture to include such areas as gender, socioeconomic status, sexual or affectional orientation, and national origin (Pedersen, 1988; Speight, Meyers, Cox, & Highlen, 1991).

According to D’Andrea and Daniels (1991), multiculturalism relates to an individual’s or an organization’s commitment to increasing the overall awareness and knowledge about human diversity in ways that are translated into more respectful human interactions and effective interconnections. For this particular study, we have constructed our own definition of multiculturalism as the effective awareness, sensitivity, and practices that embrace human diversity through recognizing strength in different cultural values, styles of communication, interactions, and time constructions.

Power

The role that organizational power plays in influencing excellence in multiculturalism is a central theme of this article. Mintzberg (1983) defines power simply as “the capacity to effect (or affect) organizational outcomes” (p. 4). Mintzberg treats influence as a synonym of power. Dahl’s (1957) frequently quoted definition is useful: “A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would otherwise not do” (pp. 202-203).

Throughout this article, we utilize the terms dominant coalition and power elite as synonyms of power. The terms are, therefore, used interchangeably and refer predominantly to college and university CEOs (chancellors and presidents) as those most responsible for dictating and defining campus culture that, in turn, influences the effectiveness and overall excellence of multicultural policies and programs.

Initial Review of the Literature

Since desegregation and the passage of civil rights laws during the 1960s, issues surrounding the education of minority individuals have become important to colleges and universities in the United States. As we move into the new millennium and the emergence of a global economy becomes more and more of a reality, public and private institutions of higher education are beginning to realize that educating minority individuals has both ethical and financial implications. As a whole, colleges and universities serve as agents of socialization for the larger society (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1999). Feldman and Newcomb (1969) stated that col-
leges have the task of influencing students so that they leave the campus with improved or different knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values in more or less formal ways. Moreover, Aldwin, Cohen, and Newcomb (1991) suggested that late adolescence and early adulthood are the "impressionable years," a period during the life cycle when individuals may be particularly vulnerable to the formation of attitudes and change.

The importance of the research presented in this article is based on the notion that without a diverse student body, predominantly White institutions of higher education are not wholly able to provide a well-rounded educational experience for their students. Depriving students of a diverse campus environment limits students’ capacities to learn how to communicate and interact with students of color and can arguably be seen as a distinct developmental handicap. Therefore, it is the responsibility of these institutions, first, to ensure that their recruitment efforts include, if not specifically target, underrepresented populations and, second, to facilitate their success once enrolled.

In their attempt to address the need for a diverse campus environment, the dominant coalition (campus president and his or her chief executive officers) at a number of predominantly White institutions of higher education are adopting and implementing sophisticated retention programs for students of color (e.g., Remer, Baldridge, & Green, 1982). Particularly during the past two decades, more and more schools have been seeking effective ways to increase graduation rates, in large part by making college campuses more hospitable to underrepresented students (e.g., Bok, 1982; Keller, 1983). Projections are that by 2010, 30% of students of color will make up 24% of the 18 and younger population (D.J., Carter, & Wilson, 1993).

Although Richardson (1990) stated that graduation rates among students of color have been increasing, their enrollment into baccalaureate degree-granting institutions has never been proportional to their presence in the high school population. In addition, although record college enrollments were reported for students of color at the beginning of the 1990s, gaps in college participation rates and attainment levels among White, African American, and Hispanic students have actually widened during the past decade (D.J., Carter, 1996). In the past, research vested in determining the cause of this phenomenon has focused on factors primarily related to the student’s life during his or her high school years. Traditionally, factors such as parents’ educational backgrounds, family educational values or goals, and high school course work and grades have been related to underrepresented students’ success or failure rates in college (Newman & Newman, 1999).

Some researchers began a number of years ago to adopt a different approach related to underrepresented students and their success rates in higher education (e.g., Grabowski, 1981). Many began to relate success or failure to the overall campus climate and, in particular, to the presence of a diverse student body. Researchers thus began to explore how institutions of higher learning can effectively construct more diverse campus climates. For example, Gilkey, Fulmer, and Reithlinghoefer (1986) surveyed prominent college chancellors and presidents for examples of institutions that were developing welcoming and diverse campus climates. They examined the connected roles of president, administration, trustee, and community in the making of diverse institutions that were succeeding not only in attracting students of color but in retaining them. Their detailed focus on the characteristics of exceptionally effective presidents forms a major part of their book. Similarly, Martin (1982) detailed how the traditional purpose and leadership of colleges and universities can be revised and strengthened with new dimensions and responsibilities related to multiculturalism. Martin challenged all college presidents to reject what he describes as “colleges of convenience” and build instead “colleges of character.” Diversity and excellence in multiculturalism is at the very heart of such institutions.

Increasingly, administrators appear to be motivated to establish excellent multicultural programs in large part by the belief that greater levels of diversity will produce positive changes in our society (Hurtado, Carter, & Spuler, 1996). However, this is not always the case and should be addressed cautiously. For example, Allport (1954) stated that contact among groups can serve to lessen or increase prejudice, depending on the nature and quality of the contact. Thus, how a program is implemented is critical in determining overall success or failure.

As mentioned, we are discovering that the dominant coalition is instrumental in establishing the overall campus culture. In analyzing the impact placed on campus diversity by the power elite, we have found it useful to define our questions based in large part on a multicultural competency model contained in the American Counseling Association’s (1995) ethical standards. The model has three components: cultural self-awareness, cultural sensitivity, and skill. This model considers behaviors, feelings, attitudes, opinions, and assumptions individuals make in their interactions. By cultural self-awareness we are measuring the extent to which college and university leadership are willing to take a hard look at their institutions and gain awareness of the areas where they fall short in terms of multicultural excellence. By cultural sensitivity we are measuring the extent to which the power elite are willing to begin to respect and tolerate differences among underrepresented groups. Finally, by skill we are measuring the effectiveness of multicultural programs, particularly in relation to changes in campus culture from a more traditional, closed systems or asymmetrical approach to a more welcoming, open-systems or symmetrical model.

Symmetric and Asymmetric Models

Building on research that Grunig (1989, 1992) completed on open (symmetrical) and closed (asymmetrical) systems in the corporate world, we argue that the same theories can be applied toward educational institutions and, in particular, toward building a model of excellence in multicultural programming.

According to Grunig (1989, 1992), for organizations to be effective in the United States, they should be operating as open systems practicing a symmetrical style of management—serving the public interest, developing mutual understanding with their publics, and contributing to the overall welfare of society. In other words, to be excellent at what they do, organizations must adopt a symmetrical worldview.
Mulnix (2001) related open-systems, symmetrical theory to marketing in higher education and argued that institutions characterized as being socially responsible, collaborative, ethical, and holistic were far more likely to be viewed in a positive light by their various publics. It is our hypothesis here that such open-systems, symmetrical institutions would, by necessity, strive for excellence in multiculturalism, seeking a diverse and engaged student body. Open systems theory and symmetrical presuppositions should therefore stand as major elements of any theory of multicultural excellence in higher education. The traditional closed-system, predominantly White, and middle- to upper-class institution is suddenly transformed into an open-system learning environment where students and faculty from all economic, social, and cultural backgrounds are engaged as a community of learners. According to bell hooks (1994):

The quest for knowledge that enables us to unite theory and practice is passion. To the extent that professors bring this passion, which has to be fundamentally rooted in a love for ideas we are able to inspire, the classroom becomes a dynamic place where transformations in social relations are concretely actualized and the false dichotomy between the world outside and the inside world of the academy disappears . . . education for critical consciousness can fundamentally alter our perceptions of reality and our actions. (p. 195)

With this in mind, we categorize two models, as seen in Table 1. These models of course are largely theoretical and will need to be validated through both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. However, we have begun to prove that colleges and universities with a symmetrical worldview (holistic, socially responsible, collaborative, caring) are far more likely to encourage diversity and demand excellence in multicultural policies and procedures. On the other hand, those institutions that operate in a more traditional, asymmetric orientation would be less likely to utilize such principles. It is our hypothesis that the dominant coalition (particularly the campus chancellor or president) is the key influence on campus culture (open and symmetrical or closed and asymmetrical) and therefore the primary determinant of multicultural excellence. We are taking steps to test this hypothesis by analyzing retention programs at a select number of institutions, as follows.

**Four Brief Case Studies**

This section examines and evaluates retention programs implemented by institutions of higher education. The purpose of this research is to identify successful or unique components of the retention programs and uncover universal methods or practices that can facilitate the efforts of other institutions in search of ideas or alternatives to addressing diversity on their campuses. Discussion regarding the programs, the implications of utilizing a retention program, and exploring complimentary ways of achieving a proportionate level of diversity in higher education will finally be addressed to provide suggestions of future research.

In the attempt to find research fit for this article, we found little information on programs adopted or developed by smaller schools throughout the United States. This is not to say that these schools cease to provide appropriate resources for their minority students but instead suggests that the need for services is much more urgent at larger institutions that will affect a greater number of students with a wider range of academic abilities. The criteria used in selecting the institutions for the research was based on the following.

**Geographic location.** The schools are located in predominantly White states where a diverse population is traditionally uncommon or very disproportionate.

**School dynamics.** The schools were also selected based on their size, whether they were private or public institutions, and the proportion of their minority student population by percentage.

**Program outline.** The last element of the selection process was the extensiveness of the school’s retention program and/or its philosophy.

It is estimated that there were upwards of 50 programs reviewed using the aforementioned criteria before the final 20 were selected. Moreover, although there are a multitude of extensive and highly successful programs being utilized by schools today, many of the principles are similar to those detailed in this article. However, the schools selected for the research were chosen based on how they utilized these principles in practice or because of the uniqueness of concepts adopted to facilitate their success.

**Iowa State University, Ames**

Iowa State University enrollment is approximately 27,000 students, with a minority population of 3,300 made up of African American, American Indian or Alaskan
Native. Asian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and international students. The school's Office of Minority Student Affairs proposed the Minority Recruitment & Retention program for the university's College of Education in November 2000, to commence in the fall semester of 2001. The College of Education is one of Iowa State's nine campus colleges enrolling a significant percentage of minority students. The mission of the program is to provide minority students with academic, social, and leadership development through personal support from a minority liaison officer (MLO), which will lead to a sense of belonging to Iowa State University; leadership development programs that will provide opportunities for personal growth and empowerment; and multicultural programming that will facilitate understanding and appreciation of cultural differences and similarities. An MLO is a professional staff member who provides leadership in the development, implementation, and coordination of educational, cultural, and social activities for ethnic minority students enrolled in the College of Education. The MLO coordinates programs with students, faculty, and staff to assist the college in its effort to increase minority student persistence and graduation rates.

As part of the initial retention program, the Office of Minority Student Affairs offers three specific initiatives aimed at promoting the success of their minority students. The first is the First Year Learning Team. This is a program in which 1st-year students will benefit from peer mentoring, tutoring, career exploration, social activities, and seminars or workshops. The purpose of the 1st year team is to form a strong academic foundation among new minority students in the College of Education. The Faculty Research Internship Program will assign minority juniors and seniors to a faculty member as a research assistant. Research interns will gain practical experience on the scientific research process. The final initiative organized for the students will be an annual retreat that will provide an opportunity to dialogue about the issues related to minority students. Facilitators will also conduct workshops or seminars that will build leadership skills and self-awareness.

Because Iowa State's College of Education Retention program is still in the development stage, it has not yet been implemented nor has its effect been evaluated, however the principles and rationale used in the construction of the program are sound. For example, the First Year Learning Team is a good concept and should provide a great opportunity for these students to develop a sense of belonging in both academic and social capacities. Dale and Zych (1996) argue that some factors involved with retention include addressing issues of belonging, feelings, and emotional maturity in general. This program would then be a positive, suitable outlet to allow these students to do just that.

The MLO and the Faculty Research Internship Program should also emerge as assets of the retention initiative. Structurally, they are both based on a proven and successful concept often used in retention programs—mentoring. Haring (1997) provided a comprehensive definition of mentoring that occurs when significant assistance is offered by a more experienced person to a less experienced one during a time of transition and can develop into two different models of relationships. Iowa State's MLO fits into the first model identified by Haring that is characterized by a one-on-one relationship whereby a mentor holds position and power over the protégé with unidirectional benefits. In this case, the MLO will provide guidance to his or her student based on training, personal knowledge, or experience. This idea suggests that the students will benefit by having structure in their daily lives surrounding their classes and extracurricular activities and will allow them to develop skills such as time management that could be vital to their success. Haring's second model of relationships used in mentoring, which Iowa State's faculty internship program is based on, is characterized by having a protégé assist a skilled facilitator who is acting as an agent of a program or institution and whose relationship is intentionally deemphasized of hierarchy and power. This type of relationship allows the student to, as the internship program outlines, become empowered and develop a sense of self-concept while gaining scientific research experience and ultimately providing a valuable service to his or her mentor.

Although mentoring has successfully proven to be useful in a number of different capacities including retention, difficulties that may arise with establishing these types of relationships are associated with commitment and participation. The fact that MLOs are responsible for scheduling and managing time for their students may be difficult for some to accept or may possibly be seen as an invasion of their privacy, therefore resistance to the idea may result. In addition, the fact that these representatives have officer as part of their title is enough negative connotation to have even the majority of college students steer clear of them and any advice they have to offer. And although the commitment of the faculty participating in the internship program will not be a concern, finding enough of them with a vested interest in helping these students can be. With close to 1,800 members of faculty employed by the university, certainly there are many opportunities for all students to conduct research in their field of study. However, with the demands and pressure to produce current research for publication, who is to say that professors will not choose students with proven interest and advanced qualifications to help conduct their research over those who are made available simply because they are minority individuals? Overall, this would be an easier task if there were more minority individuals holding faculty or tenure positions in schools, but research has revealed that this is not the case. In fact, Irvine (1988) suggested that such a decline in minority mentors is severe enough that he refers to them as an endangered species.

Texas A&M University, College Station

Texas A&M University is composed of 10 academic colleges with an enrollment exceeding 43,000 and a minority student population of African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, and Asian Americans totaling approximately 5,800. The Department of Multicultural Services (DMS) was established in December 1989 and is responsible for the retention program and additional supporting programs used in assisting the minority student population. The DMS's mission is to "assist the university in preparing future leaders for our increasingly multicultural society." The department fulfills its mission through two main goals. The first is to provide retention ser-
vices to minority students. The second is to promote an understanding and an appreciation for diversity through a variety of educational programs and services.

The DMS's primary retention program is Excellence Uniting Culture, Education and Leadership (ExCEL). ExCEL is an extended orientation program beginning the weekend before fall classes with a 2-day orientation conference for first-time enrolled minority students and their parents. This yearlong student success program is planned, organized, and carried out by a group of upper-class students with a DSM staff member as adviser. The goals of the ExCEL conferences are to help the incoming students and their parents make a smooth transition to the university, establish a firm connection with key faculty, staff, and campus administrators, and become aware of important programs and services that are critical to one's 1st year of success. After the conference, the program continues throughout the freshman year with biweekly seminars on important topics designed to help students adjust and succeed, ranging from effective note-taking to male-female relationships. Upper-class students serve as team leaders to the freshman and provide friendship, academic support, and vital information on understanding and working effectively in the college environment.

In addition to the ExCEL program, the DMS offers several other programs aimed at the success of the minority students. Related programs include the Prime Time Posse, a diverse group of students who present skits to educational groups throughout the community; Ambassadors, a group of students who represent the DSM at university functions; and AggieCulture, a student-run group that produces the DSM newsletter, highlighting multicultural events, issues, and programs.

The university reports that much of their success comes from a number of different resources included in a campuswide commitment to promoting diversity. Noil-Levitz (2000), a consulting firm specializing in retention program development for higher education, stated that having a communal commitment to improve quality of student life and learning is a vital element of a successful retention program. The fact that the DMS claims that they are constantly engaging others to demonstrate and maintain their commitment to the retention effort is a prime example that they have achieved this goal. In addition, to track their progress, the DMS continuously undergoes a threefold evaluation that includes receiving feedback from its students by questionnaire, survey, and processing data collected during organized focus groups. Richardson and de los Santos (1988) identified the task of tracking progress or developing focused strategies, devised by institutions that collect detailed information on minority and nonminority achievement patterns, is vital to maintaining progress and achieving successful programs. Currently, these programs and initiatives have enabled the institution to achieve approximately 81% retention of African American and Hispanic students, the highest percentage among public institutions in the state of Texas for the past 6 years.

Texas A&M's DMS has been successful in its mission and deserves the accolades it receives. The success of the ExCEL program comes from its solid foundation and strength of its supporting programs. Specifically, although it sounds like a logistical nightmare, the unique concept of including parents in an orientation program prior to the fall semester is a great idea. Who better to help motivate these students than their own parents? The better parents are informed of what resources are available to their children, the greater their leverage for influence, which ultimately increases the chances of success. In addition, as identified previously, the fact that the weekly meetings are run by peers allows the 1st year minority students to establish important bonds that reach beyond the classroom setting.

Another vital component of the retention program success is the development, implementation, and strength of additional programs featuring diversity or multiculturalism offered through the DMS. The support received from these programs must be invaluable to these minority students in that it offers them a venue where they can share their own ideas with others of their same background or with others of different backgrounds but who share their same passion. Certainly minority individuals will naturally gravitate to programs such as these, and it is important to note that the school has not mandated their participation.

**University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota**

University of St. Thomas is a Catholic liberal arts university with an enrollment of 11,000 students matriculated in its graduate and undergraduate programs, with a minority population of approximately 1,200 students. The Department of Multicultural Student Services is responsible for providing a "comprehensive system of advocacy and support for U.S. students of color (minority individuals) to improve their prospects for retention and to enhance the quality of the University of St. Thomas experience." Although retention of these students is one of many goals established within the department, other related objectives include identifying and honoring students, faculty, and staff whose actions support the creation and maintenance of an inclusive, civil, and welcoming campus community; monitoring student perceptions of St. Thomas's climate for diversity; creating partnerships with academic and administrative departments to serve students; and promoting multicultural awareness through personal interactions, training opportunities, educational programs, and dissemination of information.

University of St. Thomas uses a unique Reaching Excellence in Academics and Leadership project as a means of promoting success and retention of their 1st year minority students. The project itself is a selective, scholarship-based, 6-week academic and cocurricular orientation program for students who are committed to attending the university. The program is offered prior to matriculation. It is designed to acquaint students with campus life, including resources and services, and to provide experience with college-level course work. A primary activity of the program is to simulate a typical semester as a St. Thomas student. Successful applicants earn a minimum of $1,500 for their participation in program activities. The total scholarship package, which includes free housing and meals, exceeds $2,500.

The academic portion of the program includes classroom experiences focused on enhancing academic success in writing and editing, reading, study skills, computer literacy, math, and library resources. The students also have an opportunity to take part in LINKAGES, a mentoring program provided by members of the faculty and staff.
The cocurricular portion of the program offers opportunities including educational programs, social events, and workshops that help students develop leadership skills. In addition, the students learn how to take advantage of campus resources including careers, academic, and personal counseling, computer labs, commuter centers, post office, and athletic facilities.

Unfortunately there is no information available on the effectiveness of this particular program, but the fact that the program is selective in choosing its applicants would suggest that the success rate of these students would be somewhat skewed. Taking that into consideration, the program attempts to address the retention of their minority students by using an innovative concept that covers areas college students often have difficulty managing by encompassing both academic and social life. Research that supports the inclusion of monitoring numerous aspects of a student’s life found that providing services that aid minority students’ intellectual, psychological, psychosocial, and culture-specific needs are necessary components of a retention program (Taylor, 1997). Therefore, in essentially creating a controlled environment by way of a summer program, program administrators are allowed the opportunity to isolate problem areas that may exist for a given student and in turn teach him or her the proper use of resources that will facilitate his or her learning.

Overall, University of St. Thomas has taken a truly preemptive measure of ensuring the success and retention of their minority students. The only real downside of the program is the fact that it is not available to all minority students attending the university but only those who choose to apply and qualify for participation. In addition, using financial compensation as a motivator may achieve results that do not truly represent or align themselves with the goals of higher education as a whole. Administrators should be cautious of the fact that if this type of program is not implemented appropriately, it may be promoting rewards for complying with the demands of the program instead of teaching the value or importance of education in general. Reevaluating who the program is aimed at helping may need to be done to ensure that they are truly facilitating those minority students in need.

**Georgia College & State University, Milledgeville**

Georgia College & State University enrollment is more than 4,000 students with nearly one third of the total representing minority students. It has been the responsibility of the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) to educate the university’s community about issues pertaining to diversity and multiculturalism since 1995. The department’s current mission is to provide “holistic retention activities from enrollment through graduation for racial and ethnic minority students but also exists to aid in the development of a more pluralistic and welcome environment for everyone.”

Central to the university’s retention initiative is the Minority Advisement Program, a mentoring model that follows guidelines that are meant to supplement, not replace, the normal academic advising and services provided by the institution. Additional services provided for minority students include academic and career advising, counseling related to good decision making and problem solving, academic support, a multicultural resources library, and a community outreach program that aims to invite classes, residence halls, and organizations to educate them on issues surrounding multiculturalism and diversity. Included in the university’s program is an advocacy program that is utilized during times when students, as individuals or as a group, are unable to address a concern sufficiently. In these cases, the OMA may intervene on behalf of the students.

The university provides resources that are established contributors to the retention of minority students mentioned throughout this research or otherwise. Progressive initiatives that are somewhat exclusive to this program include their multicultural library, community outreach program, and advocacy program. Because the multicultural library is available for students to investigate areas related to diversity and multiculturalism, it must provide a valuable source of information for academic-related research, a resource that many libraries would utilize. Reportedly, it is still a small collection of documentation, but future expansion is planned. In addition, educating their campus community through an outreach program is also a great way to inform many individuals who may not otherwise be exposed to these types of issues. This is a task that asks even more of the program’s administrator, however. Bartado et al. (1999) claim that the role of these individuals should include developing a plan to incorporate everyone in their community as important parts of preparing them for the future. This is even more important given the geographical location of the school and the lack of diversity in the cities and towns where the majority of these students live. However, the advocacy program truly represents the support of the OMA department and its staff commitment to ensure that the needs of their minority students are being met. There is no indication as to how often this resource is called on in the resolution of problems on campus, but the fact that it exists is evidence enough to know that every decision related to these students shall be made with the appropriate consideration of their specific needs.

**Discussion**

There have been a number of programs and services created to increase retention rates for minority students. As stated, the number of minority students attending institutions of higher education is increasing each year, and schools are aware of the fact that educating these students is an important contributor to a better society as a whole. The retention of minority students while attending college continues to be the focus of research while schools attempt to introduce or create diverse environments at their institutions.

The main purpose of this article was to identify successful or unique components of the selected retention programs and uncover universal methods or practices that could facilitate the efforts of institutions in search of ideas or alternatives to addressing diversity on their campuses. It is important to point out that although taking some course of action is better than doing nothing at all, some initiatives taken by one school may not in fact render success for others because of specific dynamics that are funda-
mentally different. Sailes (1993), for example, found that at Ohio State University, despite many innovative recruitment initiatives and support services, the graduation rates of African Americans and Hispanics have continued to be about half that of White students during the past 15 years. Although they may have developed their programs from models used by other institutions, speculation as to why Ohio State's efforts were not successful may include one of many factors that can affect the effectiveness of a retention program's success. For example, poor execution or promotion of the program, the geographic location of the school, faculty and community support, or limitations in administration policy can all contribute to the complexity of the problem. However, the importance of diversity in higher education continues to be identified as an important social element, and the need for an effective program must continue to be addressed where problems persist.

Although this article may be limited by the task of detailing the outlines of the retention programs provided by written documentation and research, a more comprehensive study could be conducted by actually evaluating the programs on site. Interviewing the participants and administrators or even evaluating their results firsthand would without question provide more insight on the programs' effectiveness. Moreover, external factors such as an administrator's qualifications, the location of the center in relation to the campus, or even the office hours could be more readily available and accounted for in determining the program's success instead of just concentrating on its structure, as provided in this article. The difficulty, of course, with presenting evidence of this nature is that it becomes increasingly more difficult to quantifiably measure these types of influences.

Additional components of successful retention programs that can facilitate retention efforts of institutions of higher education could also include staffing competent professors, administrators, and other campus professionals who are minority individuals. Their presence on campus would undoubtedly create the image of an institution that practices what it preaches. Although these individuals may or may not have direct contact with the minority students on a daily basis, they would at least serve as pillars of inspiration to those aspiring to achieve similar career goals. Iowa State's College of Education retention program in particular would certainly benefit from these types of initiatives. But the most vital piece of ensuring the success of any retention program, regardless of its extensiveness, structure, or staff, can only be achieved if in fact the institution has unquestionable commitment and support of the school at its highest level. In 1996, for example, the University of Pennsylvania (1996), as part of its Agenda for Excellence, announced its strategic plan to concentrate its efforts in areas the president and provost felt were of critical importance to the institution's future. In an edition of the school's yearbook published that year, the president addressed the topic of the university's diversity as

   central to our institutional commitment and highest calling to provide Penn students with the best possible education. My instincts and experience as an educator tell me that we
   learn much and frequently learn best from those who are different than we are in race, cul-
   ture and beliefs. (p. 25)

The agenda put forth included an extensive outline that detailed a plan of action focusing directly on the recruitment and retention of students and faculty from underrepresented minority groups. This demonstration of firm commitment by institutions across the country would ensure that minority students are given equal opportunity to flourish and excel in the fields of their choice. An unfortunate reality is that retention experts are finding that many colleges and universities lack either the will or the funds to develop truly effective programs. Roach (1999) contended that higher education's commitment to retention is complicated further by an impending enrollment boom on American campuses and an increasingly more hostile climate in the United States toward anything and everything associated with affirmative action.

Future research in the development of retention programs should continue to find ways to effectively determine contributing factors related to the success and failure of the programs used by institutions of higher education or otherwise. Other avenues of interest might also be to look at the economic cost of not recruiting minority students and its effect on the livelihood of institutions that do and do not choose to address the issue. Indeed, with the rise of the minority population, schools are sure to suffer losses by excluding them from their recruiting and admission efforts. One could also attempt to determine those skills developed through retention programs and measure how they have affected the everyday lives of minority and nonminority students during their college years and beyond.

Conclusion

In this article, we began to examine some definitions of culture and some of the philosophical and political assumptions that underlie current multicultural approaches that serve to either facilitate or discourage multicultural competence. We are discovering that campus culture—determined to a large extent by the dominant coalition or power elite—is critical to the success or failure of effective multicultural policies and procedures. In the literature, power is not generally acknowledged when considering multicultural competence. Thus, our preliminary work relating systems theory to institutional culture is unique in determining excellence in multiculturalism. Powell (1997) appears to agree when she writes that "the social constructions of ourselves are deeply affected by relations of power" (p. 316).

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