Overview   *Gabriel Reyes and Robert L. Caret*

Campus Climate and Campus Success

A historical role of public universities in this country, a role that metropolitan universities fully embrace, is to provide broad-based access to higher education in the communities we serve. Our role is to provide the next generation of citizens—educated citizens who will continue to improve and build this society. We can only achieve that goal by continuing to provide the broadest access to education that is possible. If, for whatever reason, we exclude vast numbers of people from the personal and social empowerment that education can provide, we as a nation are doomed. We must nurture campus climates that embrace these tenets (Caret, 1995).

> We will develop living and learning environments that applaud the diversity we reflect and build unity from that heterogeneity. We are a campus that is a model for the nation in this diversity with no majority population, but in contrast, with hundreds of populations living, working, and growing together, we must continue to serve as that model. We are reflective of what this nation will look like in the decades ahead. In many ways, we are serving as the laboratory for that future. We need to continue to embrace that role and through it seek the answers that will make our society successful.

In our implementation of this philosophy at San Jose State University (SJSU), we defined campus climate as a climate that maximizes the potential of success for all individuals. In our efforts, we focus on race, internationalization, religion, sexual orientation, disability needs, and human interaction in its broadest connotation. We do not focus singularly on any one of these complex variables. We recognize that they all relate to the climate we must create and maintain.

Campuses across the nation face similar challenges. And though we have all experienced significant demographic change, there is much more ahead. Recently published projections provide some sense of the magnitude we are, and will be, experiencing:

- By the year 2000, African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Native Americans will constitute nearly a third of the U.S. population and more than 40 percent of the labor force.
- By 2020, persons of color will account for more than 40 percent of the U.S. population.
- By 2050, non-Hispanic whites will account for only half (at the most) of the total U.S. population.
- From 1901-1910, 91.6 percent of the immigrants to this country came from Europe. From 1991-1993, 34.8 percent were from Mexico, 28 percent from Asia, 20 percent from Central and South America and the Caribbean, and less than 12 percent from Europe...the world is changing.

Consider what the SJSU campus already looks like: We are (approximately) 53 percent nonwhite and 36 percent white/non-Hispanic (11 percent unknown). The nonwhite population is (approximately) 27 percent Asian, 14 percent Hispanic/Latino/ Mexican American/Chicano, 5 percent African American, 7 percent other.

Many studies have shown that a positive approach to dealing with diversity and to creating a climate that values diversity works for everyone involved. A recent publication by AAC&U summarizes many of the key findings that are shared by these efforts (Smith, 1997).

- A broad campus commitment to diversity is also related to positive educational outcomes for all students
- Diversity initiatives (in general) positively affect both minority and majority students on campus
- Serious engagement of issues of diversity in the curriculum and in the classroom have a positive impact on attitudes toward racial issues, on opportunities to interact in deeper ways with those who are different, on cognitive development, and on overall satisfaction and involvement with the institution
- Comprehensive institutional change addressing campus climate in the curriculum is the right strategy for (all) students

While the need increases exponentially, and many embrace the diversity that is becoming America—is, in fact, becoming the world—we are also facing the dismantling of much of the progress made in the past 30-plus years. The demise of affirmative action in several states is one of the more obvious outcomes of that societal shift.

In putting this issue together, our first goal was to provide a general overview of the issue(s) of diversity in higher education. Second, we wanted to provide strategies for maximizing the benefits and value of the increasing diversity in higher education, particularly in today's metropolitan universities. The general course for this exploration is very well explored in Carlos Cortes's article, which highlights the increasing impact of demographic changes in our society, and then goes on to identify four key issues directly before us. This expands Carlos' prior work on defining the dual nature of diversity and its challenge of building a unified community from many individual cultures, all different, all maintaining their individual identities, yet coming together to increase their overall value and benefit. He addresses this challenge as four different topics: the proliferation of campus affinity groups; the challenge of facilitating constructive intergroup relations; the emergence and modification of identities; and the reconstruction of knowledge and of curriculum.

His overview is followed by several articles sharing state-of-the-art strategies for maximizing the potential of many of the major diverse groups on our campuses, as Trey Duffy, Sue Rankin, and Naomi Okumura Story provide fully developed blueprints for serving the specific needs of students with disabilities, "queer" students, and Asian student communities. All of these focus on creating a climate for maximizing the success of diverse student groups, as well as maximizing the benefit of education of students from the dominant cultural group .

Trey Duffy's article attempts to demystify the aura of uncertainty and complexity that often plagues colleges as they struggle to understand and respond to the ever-changing issues presented by students with disabilities. He addresses the challenge of identifying methods of providing equal access while maintaining academic integrity, presents an excellent review of the primary ingredients of a DSS program, and concludes with a brief synopsis of the following critical issues: disability documentation; essential requirements and fundamental alterations; responding to students with mental illness; electronic access and information technology; and alternative testing.

Recent research indicates that prejudicial acts against queer students, faculty, and administrators have surfaced with alarming frequency. Queer members of the academic community are often subjected to physical and psychological harassment, discrimination, and violence that obstruct the achievement of their educational and professional goals. In her article, Sue Rankin discusses the importance of campus climate in providing an atmosphere conducive to maximizing knowledge of all minorities, reviews the current national climate for queer members of the academic community, and proposes strategies for implementing change.

In the past three decades, Asian and Pacific Americans (APA) have been the fastest growing population group in the United States. Yet, educators know too little about this multidimensional group to provide good teaching and learning experiences, especially in higher education. Although aggregate data reports often appear to perpetuate the "model minority" myth, Naomi Okumura Story provides an authentic view of three primary elements of the APA population—communication, refugee waves, and generational identity—that can have negative impacts on several APA ethnic groups. Superficial analysis of such factors can critically influence teaching and learning strategies. Clearly, educational practitioners need deeper thinking about and analysis of appropriate strategies, some suggested here, for this often neglected group.

Changes in higher education policy have made it significantly harder for underrepresented minorities in urban environments to gain access to or succeed in California's public universities. In light of these changes, college preparation programs take on added importance and significance. Tierney and Jun establish a framework for identifying effective college preparation programs that serve low-income and minority youth in urban areas. They begin by defining the parameters of college preparation programs, including a brief historical overview, then elaborate on other factors that attribute to programmatic success, and conclude with recommendations for further studies.

Metropolitan universities are in the forefront of developing new administrative approaches to supporting and expanding minority opportunities in higher education. Drawing from his 15 years of experience in a leadership position at a young metropolitan university and in a large, more established urban institution, Samuel Kirkpatrick and Carol Van Natta address the critical issue of how to institutionalize diversity initiatives, and provide us with three essential design principles that lie at the heart of successful efforts to institutionalize diversity. The principles are explained and illustrated with examples from the experience of The University of Texas at San Antonio.

John Hitt, Beth Barnes, and Valarie Green King explore diversity as a very important element of the metropolitan mission of the University of Central Florida, and

highlight UCF's vision, goals, and selected initiatives, especially those relating to partnerships and diversity.

Finally, Emily Moore and Herman Blake address the enduring problem of race and the color line in American higher education, abiding and troubling issues throughout all of American history. Race, racism, and racial relations continue to be the most critical preventive factors in coming fully to grips with the goal of embracing diversity, and the authors highlight some promising efforts towards overcoming the limits of race.

We hope that this issue of *Metropolitan Universities* will help all of us find stimulating and productive ways to create and nurture diverse climates for success for our students, our faculty, our staff, and all the other communities of which we are comprised.

> It would be wonderful to live in a color-blind society, where people were not judged by race or gender; where whites and people of color did not have to compete for scarce resources, jobs, and college slots because there were enough for all; where folks did not believe that Blacks are intellectually inferior or prone to violence; where Affirmative Action wasn't necessary because racism and discrimination were things of the aging past. But we are not there yet. We are not even close (Wise, 1995).

Suggested Readings

Caret, Robert L., "Dream No Small Dream," Inaugural Address at San Jose State University, October 6, 1995.

Smith, Daryl G., Gerbick, G., Figueroa, M., Watkins, G., et al., *Diversity Works: The Emerging Picture of How Students Benefit* (Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 1997).

Wise, Tim J., *Little White Lies: The Truth about Affirmative Action and "Reverse Discrimination,"* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1995): 47.