

# ACADEMIC INTEGRATION OF DIVERSITY AND EQUITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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In the following report, Hanover Research conducts a literature review of various pedagogical models related to teaching diversity and supporting student equity. In addition, Hanover analyzes different mechanisms for evaluating student understanding of diversity, including achievement measures and assessments.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

In this report, Hanover Research conducts a literature review to identify different methods for integrating diversity and equity into higher education pedagogy, as well as possible methods for assessing student understanding of these issues. Additionally, this report analyzes different theoretical teaching models and auxiliary programs which may be used to comprehensively address and assess diversity and equity on college campuses, and improve the academic outcomes of students with diverse backgrounds and identities.

The report comprises three sections, as follows:

- **Section I: Methods for Teaching Diversity and Supporting On-Campus Equity** evaluates different pedagogical models and auxiliary initiatives which may be used by college faculty and administrators to teach diversity and support student equity on college campuses.
- **Section II: Methods for Evaluating Student Outcomes in Diversity and Equity** evaluates several different assessment methods for evaluating student understanding of diversity and student equity outcomes.
- **Section III: Institutional Profiles** provides an overview of three institutions and their different strategies for addressing diversity and equity in the classroom and across their campuses.

## KEY FINDINGS

- **All three models analyzed by Hanover in this report advocate for both curricular and pedagogical changes to support student equity and understanding of diversity.** According to James Banks, many institutions make the error of changing only curriculum content, and fail to include context that encourages students to think critically about diversity.<sup>1</sup> To be most effective, these models encourage faculty to explore different perspectives and encourage students to think critically about any potential existing biases within different academic disciplines. In addition, since diverse students tend to learn in diverse ways, these models encourage faculty to use a variety of teaching methods – including discussions and collaborative learning – to cater to different learning styles.

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<sup>1</sup> Banks, J.A. "Multicultural Education: Historical Development, Dimensions, and Practice." *Review of Research in Education*, 19, 1993. p. 5.

- **High-impact practices and student support teams (SSTs) are effective, co-curricular tools for improving student equity.** According to AACU, these programs give at-risk students (including minority and first-generation college students) increased access to campus resources, as well as additional opportunities academic and career development support.<sup>2</sup> After implementing these programs, California State University – Fullerton increased their graduation rate from 51 percent to 63.3 percent and reduced the achievement gap between underrepresented and non-underrepresented students from 12 percent to 8.7 percent in three years.
- **Diverse faculty members are a key component to improving diversity in the classroom and supporting student equity.** According to Thomas Nelson Laird, female faculty and faculty of color are more likely to include diverse teaching methods and cover diversity issues in their curriculums.<sup>3</sup> In addition, research indicates that students from underrepresented groups are more likely to perceive an institution’s efforts to improve diversity and equity as sincere if diverse faculty are hired.<sup>4</sup>
- **To evaluate diversity initiatives and student equity, institutions may utilize a variety of assessment methods including administrator self-assessments, student campus-wide surveys, and student course surveys.** Administrator self-assessments allow administrators to easily evaluate all aspects of their institutions (including faculty, administrators, students, and campus culture) to set goals, track progress, and make changes. Student campus-wide surveys fulfill a similar function, but allow administrators to gain insight directly from students, including those who may be underrepresented. Finally, student course surveys are a useful tool to evaluate gains in student understanding of diversity within a specific course or curriculum.
- **When developing an assessment on diversity, institutions should solicit a variety of faculty perspectives to avoid implicit bias.** For example, the phrasing of questions and topics covered in an assessment could be influenced by a dominant perspective in the academic discipline or the perspective of the individual designing the assessment.<sup>5</sup> By soliciting diverse perspectives, an institution can ensure multiple perspectives are represented and that the assessment provides insights which are useful to a variety of faculty and administrators.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Kuh, G.D. “High-Impact Educational Practices.” Association of American Colleges and Universities, June 24, 2016. <http://www.aacu.org/leap/hips>

<sup>3</sup> Nelson Laird, T. “Measuring the Diversity Inclusivity of College Courses.” *Research in Higher Education*, 52:6, September 2011.

<sup>4</sup> Williams, D.A., J.B. Berger, and S.A. McClendon. “Toward a Model of Inclusive Excellence and Change in Postsecondary Institutions.” Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2005. p. 23. [https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/mei/williams\\_et\\_al.pdf](https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/mei/williams_et_al.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Bringle, R.G., P.H. Clayton, and W.M. Plater. “Assessing Diversity, Global, and Civic Learning: A Means to Change in Higher Education.” Association of American Colleges and Universities, July 29, 2013. <https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/assessing-diversity-global-and-civic-learning-means-change-higher>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

## SECTION I: METHODS FOR TEACHING DIVERSITY AND SUPPORTING ON-CAMPUS EQUITY

This section analyzes different curricular and co-curricular methods for supporting on-campus diversity and equity. First, this section survey three different methods for teaching diversity in higher education: the Multicultural Education Model (James Banks), the Diversity Inclusivity Framework (Thomas Nelson Laird), and the Inclusive Excellence Model. Second, since many of these models emphasize the importance of using a multi-pronged approach to addressing diversity on campuses, this section evaluates three types of co-curricular auxiliary programs which may further enhance equitable outcomes for diverse students.

### THREE MODELS FOR TEACHING DIVERSITY AND EQUITY

#### MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION MODEL

According to James Banks, “multicultural education” is a process by which academic institutions consider how race, class, and gender impact education, and make a concerted effort to support the educational equality of students with diverse backgrounds and identities. For schools to achieve this goal, Banks identifies five dimensions that institutions must consider to comprehensively implement multicultural education practices: content integration, knowledge construction, equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction, and empowering school cultural and social structure (Figure 1.1).

**Figure 1.1: The Five Dimensions of Multicultural Education**

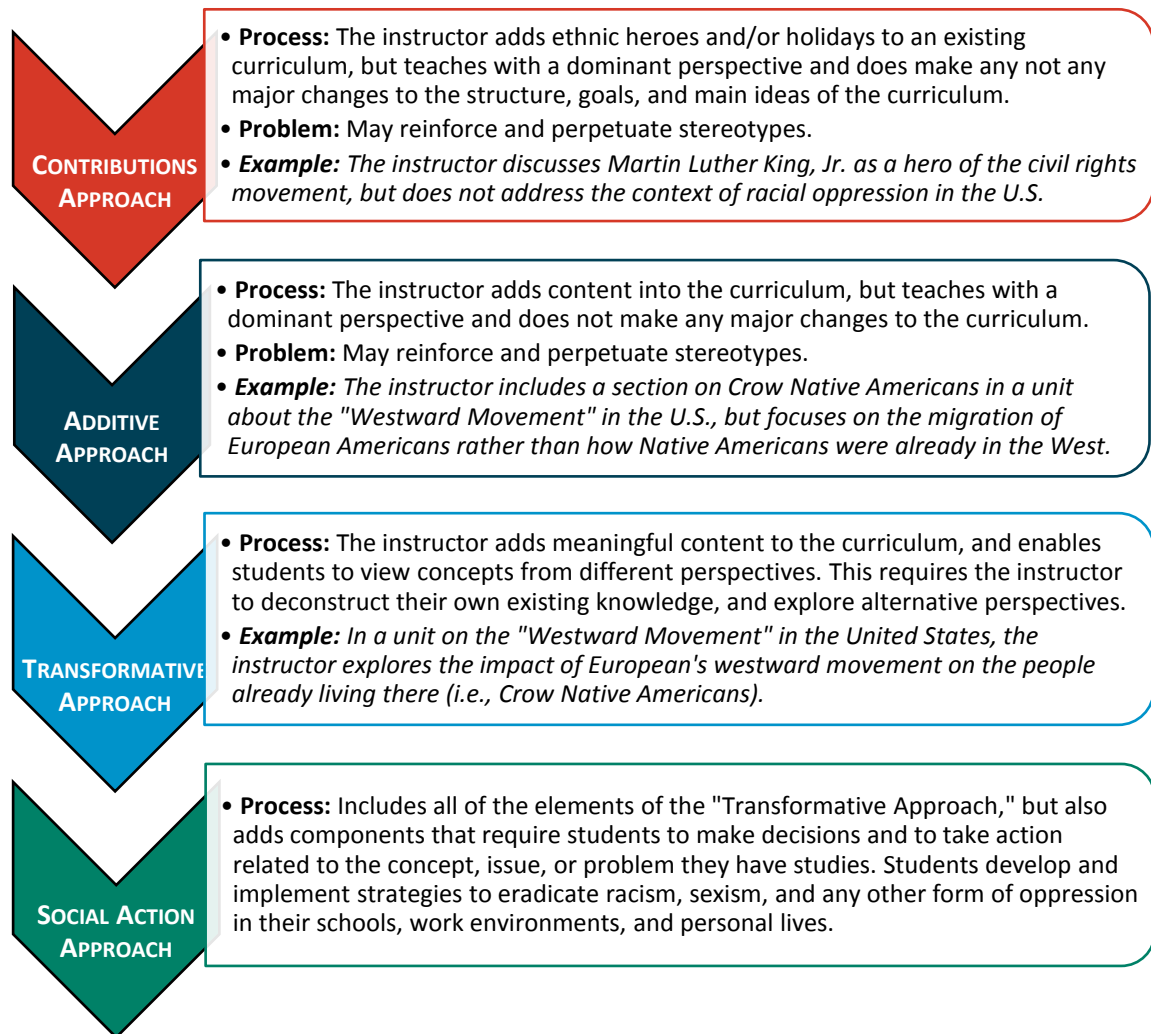
DIMENSION	DESCRIPTION
<b>Content Integration</b>	The extent to which instructors use examples and information from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts and principles in their academic discipline.
<b>Knowledge Construction</b>	The procedures used to create knowledge and how implicit cultural assumptions, frames of references, perspectives, and biases influence the ways knowledge is constructed in each academic discipline.
<b>Equity Pedagogy</b>	A pedagogy in which teachers use techniques and methods that support the academic achievement of students from diverse (racial, ethnic, religious, and economic) groups.
<b>Prejudice Reduction</b>	The strategies that can be used to help students develop more democratic attitudes and values.
<b>Empowering School Culture and Social Structure</b>	The process of restructuring the culture and organization of an academic institution, so that students from diverse groups experience educational equality and cultural empowerment. This includes grouping practices, labeling practices, the social climate of the school, and staff expectations of student achievement.

Source: James A. Banks<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Banks, Op. cit., pp. 5–7.

According to Banks, academic institutions often incorrectly equate content integration with multicultural education, and use curricular changes as their only strategy for addressing issues of diversity.<sup>8</sup> This is particularly problematic since the quality of content integration can vary widely. To expand upon this concept, Allison Cumming-McCann describes four different approaches to content integration in multicultural education (Figure 1.2). These range from the superficial “contributions approach” which adds ethnic heroes and holidays to the curriculum without meaningful context, to the “social action approach” which includes diverse perspectives and challenges students to actively develop and implement solutions to various forms of oppression.<sup>9</sup>

**Figure 1.2: Different Approaches to Content Integration in Multicultural Education**



Source: Allison Cumming-McCann<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Cumming-McCann, A. “Multicultural Education Connecting Theory to Practice.” National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy, February 2003. <http://www.ncsall.net/index.html?id=208.html>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

However, according to Banks, multicultural education reform cannot stop at the curricular level. Banks' second and third dimensions – knowledge construction, equity pedagogy, and prejudice reduction – urge instructors to transform their pedagogical approach to course material. Instructors must acknowledge dominant perspectives which shape academic discourse and knowledge in their discipline, as well as their own preexisting biases. In addition, instructors should seek out new and different perspectives and present those perspectives to students for critical examination. Instructors should also use a variety of teaching techniques to convey course material. Banks asserts this is a more equitable instructional method since diverse groups of students learn in diverse ways. For example, multiple studies (Escalante and Dirmann, 1990; Sheets, 1995; Fullilove and Triesman, 1990; Tharp and Gallimore, 1988) have confirmed that students of color frequently learn better in collaborative settings, since they often grow up in cultural environments that require individuals “to pool resources to solve problems.”<sup>11</sup>

Finally, Banks' fifth dimension – “empowering school culture and social structure” – looks beyond the classroom, and at the academic institution in its entirety. This includes the diversity of faculty and staff, as well as the presence of achievement equity or achievement gaps. According to Banks, to properly implement multicultural education, institutional leadership must lead by example, and “walk the talk” by subscribing to the same principles instructors are implementing in the classroom.<sup>12</sup>

## DIVERSITY INCLUSIVITY FRAMEWORK

Thomas Nelson Laird's “diversity inclusivity framework” builds upon Banks' model, by providing a model for evaluating an entire course's sensitivity to the diversity of curricular topics and the student body.<sup>13</sup> In the framework, Laird breaks down the various components of courses, and evaluates each component on a continuum ranging from monocultural, to multicultural and “sensitive to the diverse learning needs of the students” (Figure 1.2).<sup>14</sup> The left side of the continuum describes courses in which instructors standardize their pedagogy and curriculum towards all students, regardless of perspective or background. While these courses are inclusive towards “mainstream” groups of students, they may marginalize minorities or students with diverse backgrounds. Meanwhile, the right side of the spectrum describes a course in which mainstream ideas and assumptions are acknowledged, and non-mainstream perspectives and values are also considered and brought to light. In addition, instructors on this side of the continuum will consider students' differing needs when designing the curriculum and assessment methods for the course.

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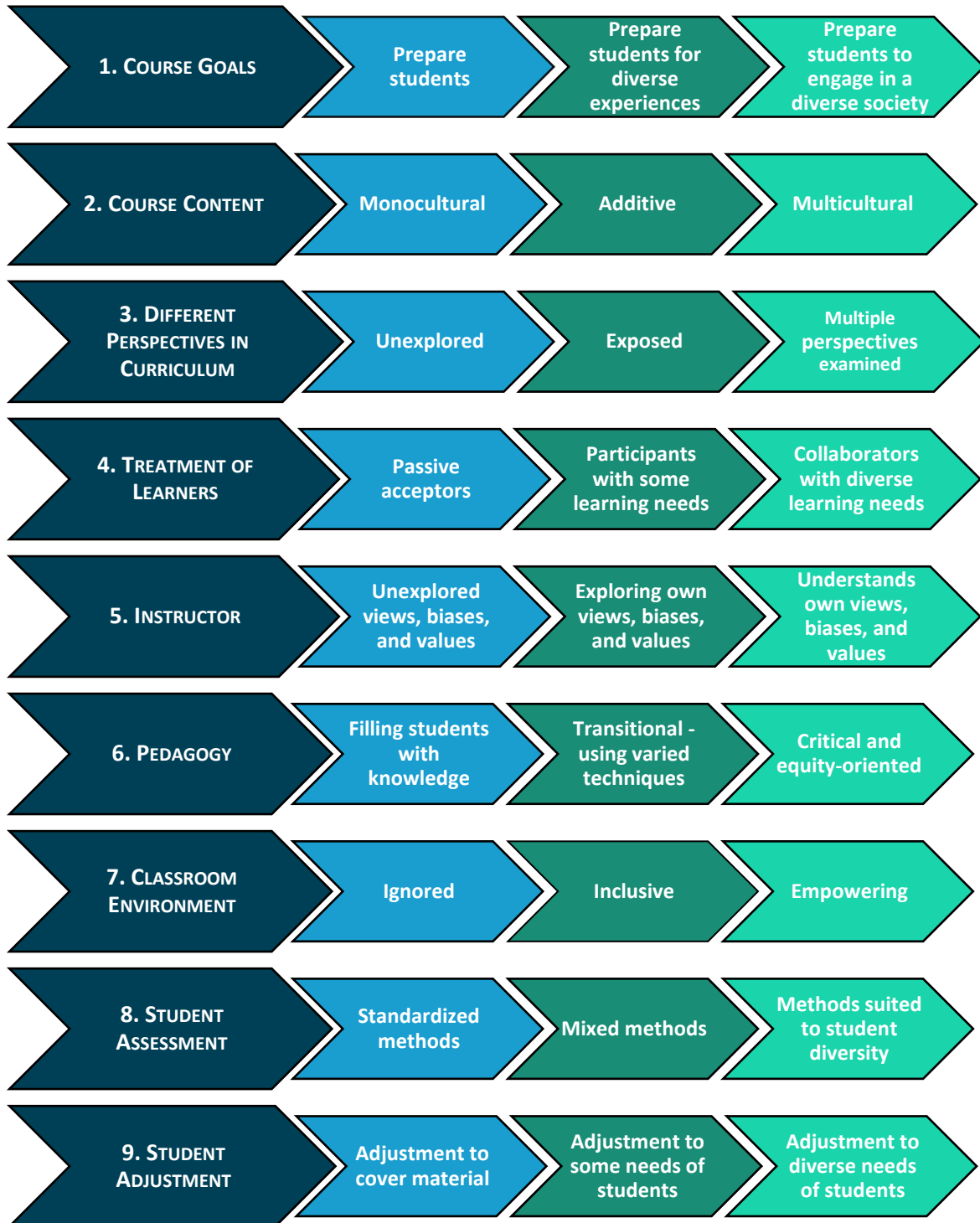
<sup>11</sup> Gay, G. “Preparing for Culturally Responsive Teaching.” *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53:2, April 2002. p. 110.

<sup>12</sup> Tucker, Michelle. “Multiculturalism's Five Dimensions: Dr. James A. Banks on Multicultural Education.” September 1998. <https://www.learner.org/workshops/socialstudies/pdf/session3/3.Multiculturalism.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Nelson Laird, T.F. “Reconsidering the Inclusion of Diversity in the Curriculum.” *Association of American Colleges and Universities*, 17:4, Fall 2014. <https://www.aacu.org/diversitydemocracy/2014/fall/nelson-laird>

<sup>14</sup> Nelson Laird, “Measuring the Diversity Inclusivity of College Courses,” *Op. cit.*, p. 573.

**Figure 1.3: Diversity Inclusivity Continuum**



Source: Thomas Nelson Laird<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Nelson Laird, "Reconsidering the Inclusion of Diversity in the Curriculum," Op. cit.



Like Banks’ model, the diversity inclusivity framework looks critically at both curricular content and instructional method. Both emphasize the importance of content integration, the inclusion of diverse perspectives in the curriculum, and using varied and equitable pedagogical techniques which are suited to teaching a diverse group of students. However, by breaking down courses and instructional method into individual components, the diversity inclusivity continuum goes a step further. According to Nelson Laird, this system allows certain aspects of a course to earn high scores in some areas and receive lower scores in others.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the framework can identify and target specific areas for improvement.

In 2011, Nelson Laird conducted a study in which 7,101 faculty at over 100 undergraduate institutions in the United States were asked to analyze their pedagogical methods and courses using the diversity inclusivity framework.<sup>17</sup> According to Nelson Laird, this survey led to several notable findings. First, faculty members who reported including diverse and inclusive practices in their courses and classrooms were also more likely to encourage student peer interactions and promote practical skills and social responsibility.<sup>18</sup> Second, faculty who perceived their institution’s undergraduate curricular requirements as supportive of diversity were more likely to include issues of diversity in curricula and diverse teaching practices in their classrooms. According to Nelson Laird, this suggests that institutional leadership should openly discuss the ways undergraduate curriculums support diversity and empower faculty to take advantage of this programming.<sup>19</sup> Finally, the survey found that female faculty and faculty members of color were more likely than male and white colleagues to include diverse practices in their courses and classrooms. Consequently, Nelson Laird notes that institutional leadership should make a concerted effort to both hire diverse faculty members, and look for ways to support male and white faculty in their efforts to improve diversity and inclusivity in the classroom.<sup>20</sup>

*Faculty who perceived their institution’s undergraduate curricular requirements as supportive of diversity were more likely to include issues of diversity in curricula and diverse teaching practices in their classrooms.*

### “MAKING EXCELLENCE INCLUSIVE” FRAMEWORK

The “Making Excellent Inclusive” framework was formed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) as a guiding principle for increasing access and achieving an equitable, liberal education for all students. This includes integrating three core principles – diversity, inclusion, and equity – into college and university missions, curricula, and institutional operations (Figure 1.4). These three principles build upon each other with the end goal of supporting more equitable outcomes between students.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

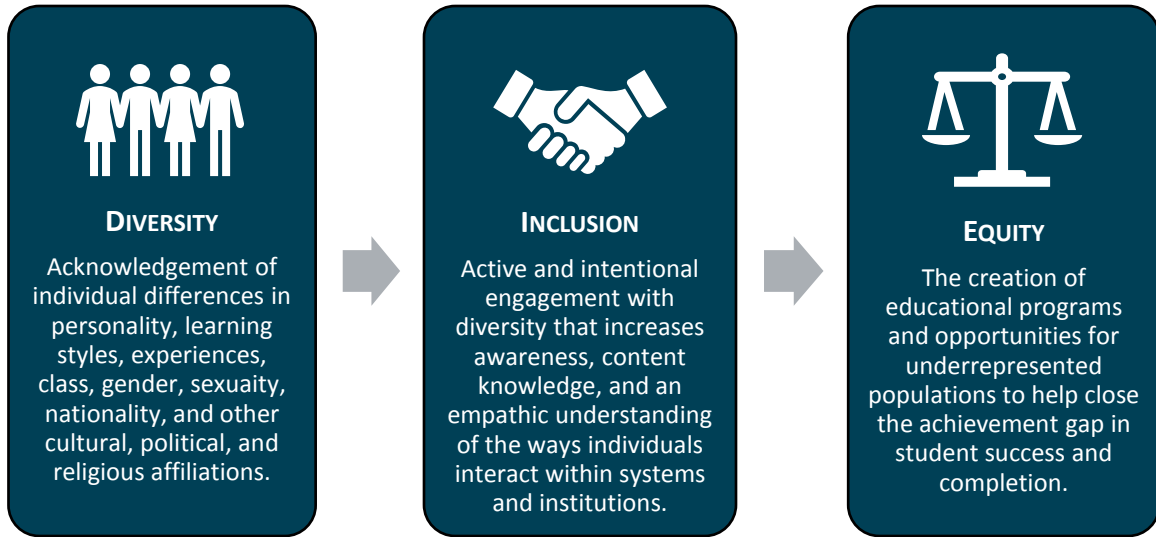
<sup>17</sup> Nelson Laird, “Measuring the Diversity Inclusivity of College Courses,” Op. cit., pp. 576–578.

<sup>18</sup> Nelson Laird, “Reconsidering the Inclusion of Diversity in the Curriculum,” Op. cit.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

**Figure 1.4: Core Principles of the Inclusive Excellence Framework**



Source: AACU<sup>21</sup>

At the most superficial level, institutions acknowledge the individual diversity of students, including their physical, personality, learning, and social differences. At the next level, institutions become inclusive by building awareness and developing knowledge of these individual differences. Finally, this process culminates with the development of “equity-minded practitioners” who are aware of and willing to address equity issues at their institutions. “Equity-mindedness” in education is a concept was developed by the University of Southern California’s Center for Urban Education (USC CUE), which regularly engages with the AACU’s framework. Equity-minded practitioners are “willing to engage in the necessary, and sometimes difficult conversations and decision-making that can lead to transformational change” for students – including closing the achievement gap between majority and underrepresented student populations.<sup>22</sup> Like the instructors in Banks’ and Nelson Laird’s models, these individuals deconstruct their own perspectives and recognize harmful stereotypes and biases.

This framework is regularly adopted as a core component of AACU member institutions’ individual diversity and equity initiatives. The general nature of this model provides institutions with some degree of flexibility in interpretation. Individual institutions may emphasize curricular changes, auxiliary programming, changes in institutional operation or structure, or some combination thereof. However, institutions subscribing to this framework emphasize the importance of looking beyond diversity and inclusivity, and towards adopting initiatives which achieve students’ equitable achievement over equal treatment.

<sup>21</sup> “Making Excellence Inclusive.” Association of American Colleges and Universities. <https://www.aacu.org/making-excellence-inclusive>

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

## OTHER METHODS TO SUPPORT DIVERSITY AND EQUITY

Since models typically advocate a whole-institution approach to addressing diversity and equity on college campuses, institutions regularly employ a variety of auxiliary programs to compliment coursework and promote diversity and equity on their campuses. This includes increasing faculty diversity, high-impact practices, and student support teams.

### FACULTY DIVERSITY AND TRAINING

Increased faculty diversity has long been regarded as an effective method for closing achievement gaps between underrepresented and non-underrepresented students. Banks asserts the importance that institution's "walk the talk" and hire diverse faculty as they promote diverse teaching practices.<sup>23</sup> A report by the AACU elaborates on this concept, arguing that faculty and staff are a college's highly visible institutional representatives and authority figures. Consequently, students tend to easily recognize diversity discrepancies between faculty and students, and may perceive an institution's diversity initiatives as insincere if it does not hire diverse faculty.<sup>24</sup> In addition, diverse faculty may meaningfully impact the quality of diverse teaching practices. As Nelson Laird's 2011 study determined, female faculty and faculty of color were more likely to integrate diverse pedagogical methods and topics of diversity in their course curriculums.<sup>25</sup> Ideally, institutions should be purposeful and plan strategically when seeking to increase the diversity of its faculty. According to a 2004 study, racially homogenous faculty search committees were unlikely to hire candidates from diverse racial groups unless the committees were explicitly directed to.<sup>26</sup> To combat this shortfall, hiring committees should also be comprised of diverse individuals, and be mindful of diversity needs.

In addition to ensuring a diverse faculty, institutions are increasingly training faculty to use more diverse and inclusive teaching methods in the classroom, regardless of academic discipline. These programs are designed to increase faculty awareness of diverse learning styles among different demographics of students. In addition, they encourage faculty to identify dominant perspectives and implicit biases in their disciplines, and teach faculty different methods for addressing them in the classroom.<sup>27</sup> A case profile from Oregon State University is included in the third section of this report.

### HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICES

High impact practices (HIPs) are academic programs and extra-curricular activities which are designed to support learning and development across diverse groups of students. According to the AACU, these programs are designed to suit students with differing strengths and

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<sup>23</sup> Tucker, Op. cit.

<sup>24</sup> Williams, Berger, and McClendon, Op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>25</sup> Nelson Laird, "Reconsidering the Inclusion of Diversity in the Curriculum," Op. cit.

<sup>26</sup> Williams, Berger, and McClendon, Op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>27</sup> Shaw, S. and D.A. Champeau. "Infusing Diversity in the Sciences and Professional Disciplines." *Association of American Colleges and Universities*, 12:3, Fall 2009. <https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/infusing-diversity-sciences-and-professional-disciplines>

learning styles.<sup>28</sup> This concept is consistent with both Banks' and Nelson Laird's models, which emphasize varied instructional methods as a critical component to serving diverse student bodies. By catering to students' unique needs and experiences, HIPs are effective measures for improving student engagement, retention rates, and graduation rates.<sup>29</sup>

Some HIPs involve curricular changes or new coursework development. This includes first-year seminars, writing-intensive courses, capstone courses, and collaborative assignments across different disciplines.<sup>30</sup> However, HIPs also may take the form of auxiliary programming. These HIPs enrich student experiences outside of the classroom and provide students with real world skill development, including internships, undergraduate research opportunities, and study abroad or other global learning opportunities.<sup>31</sup>

## STUDENT SUPPORT TEAMS

Student support or "success" teams (SSTs) are teams of school or university staff which identify, intervene, and connect at-risk students with institutional resources to prevent those students from dropping out.<sup>32</sup> While SSTs were originally designed to support students with disabilities or other special needs at the secondary school level, SSTs are increasingly utilized by higher educational institutions as an effective tool to provide academic and co-curricular support for at-risk college students, including underrepresented and first-generation college students. These teams, which are typically comprised of a mixture of faculty and administrators, are designed to increase student access to campus resources, including academic support, career counseling, and health and mental services. By implementing these programs, institutions hope to increase graduation rates, and close achievement gaps.

The California State University – Fullerton (CSUF) has been particularly successful in adapting the SST model to higher education. In 2015, CSUF implemented a new strategic plan to close achievement gaps and increasing retention rates – particularly for its large population of first-generation college students. As part of this initiative, CSUF designed a comprehensive, campus-wide SST network. The CSUF model assembles faculty and academic advising center staff at each of the university's colleges into individual SSTs.<sup>33</sup> Each college's associate dean is designated the chair of its SST. Finally, a steering committee comprising of chairs from each of the SSTs and college administrators (including the college provost, and several university vice presidents and associate vice presidents) provides institutional support to each of the SSTs.<sup>34</sup> In 2017, CSUF's SSTs won the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education

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<sup>28</sup> Kuh, Op. cit.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> "Issue Brief: Student Support Teams." U.S. Department of Education: Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, January 2017. p. 1. <https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/high-school/student-support-teams.pdf>

<sup>33</sup> Cruz, J. "The Power of Intentionality: Cal State Fullerton's Strategic Approach to Ensuring Equity." *AACU Diversity and Democracy*, 19:1, Winter 2016. <http://www.aacu.org/newsletter/2016/may/feature>

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

(NASPA)'s 2017 Promising Practices award.<sup>35</sup> Additional details of CSUF's diversity and equity programming are provided in the third section of this report.

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<sup>35</sup> Cardenas, C. "Student Success Teams Nationally Recognized as 'Promising Practice.'" California State University - Fullerton: Division of Academic Affairs, January 23, 2017.  
[http://www.fullerton.edu/academicprograms/news/latest\\_news/stories/sst\\_recognized\\_as\\_promising\\_practice.php](http://www.fullerton.edu/academicprograms/news/latest_news/stories/sst_recognized_as_promising_practice.php)

## SECTION II: METHODS FOR EVALUATING STUDENT OUTCOMES IN DIVERSITY AND EQUITY

This section discusses several methods for assessing the impact of curricular and co-curricular diversity and equity initiatives on student understanding and outcomes. This includes both institution-wide and course-specific student assessments, and achievement measurements, including grades, retention rates, and graduation rates.

### ASSESSMENTS

#### ASSESSING INSTITUTIONS

One of the simplest methods for assessing diversity and equity on college campuses is administrative self-assessment. During this process, administrators and/or faculty use a model or rubric to evaluate and score their institution’s progress on different diversity initiatives. For example, in 2011, the New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE), developed the “Diversity Rubric.” This rubric breaks down an institution’s efforts into six components (administration, faculty, student, staff, pedagogy, and mission) and evaluates each of them on a continuum of three phases – “emerging,” “developing,” and “transforming” (Figure 2.1).<sup>36</sup> These three phases tie in closely with the three core principles of the AACU’s “Making Excellence Inclusive” Model, and are designed to guide administrators as they set goals and evaluate the progress of whole-campus diversity initiatives.<sup>37</sup>

Figure 2.1: NERCHE Diversity Rubric Continuum



Source: Ande Diaz and Judy Kirmmse<sup>38</sup>

In addition, institutions can also evaluate diversity initiatives by surveying the student body. One such assessment is the **Culturally Engaging Campus Environment (CECE) Survey Model**. Developed by Richard Museus in 2014 at the Indiana University at Bloomington, this survey measures diversity and equity on college campuses based on nine indicators within two

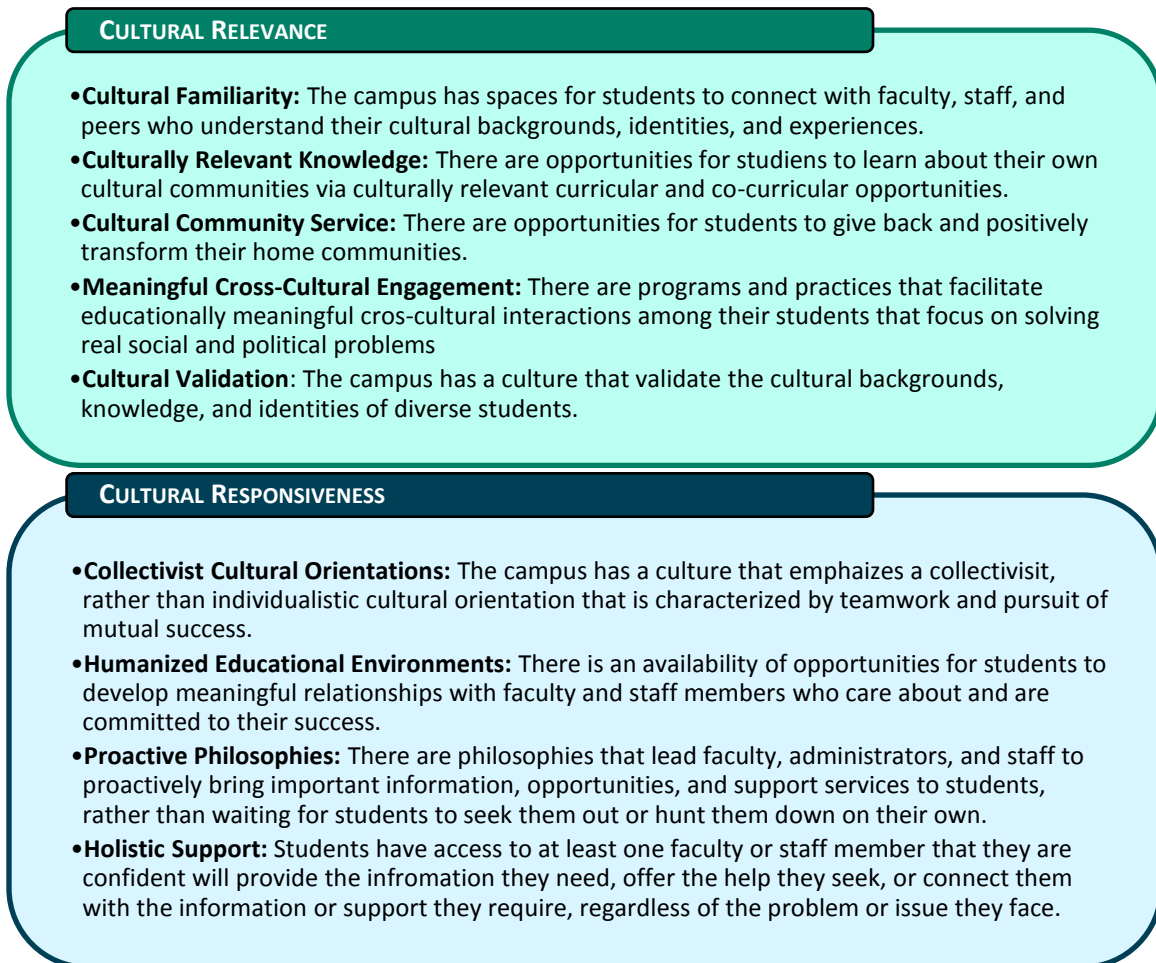
<sup>36</sup> Diaz, A. and J. Kirmmse. “A New Rubric for Assessing Institution-Wide Diversity.” Text. Association of American Colleges and Universities, July 2, 2013. <https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/new-rubric-assessing-institution-wide-diversity>

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

categories, “cultural relevance” and “cultural responsiveness” (Figure 1.5).<sup>39</sup> The first category of questions gauges how well the atmosphere of a college campus reflects student’s background. Meanwhile, questions on “cultural responsiveness” gauge how different institutional support systems on college campuses respond to the needs of diverse students.<sup>40</sup> Currently, this survey is available in several forms for different institutions to purchase and use on their campuses, including a survey for community colleges, four-year colleges, graduate schools, and a faculty survey.<sup>41</sup> As of 2016, institutions could pay between \$2,100 and \$8,000 for the survey, depending on enrollment size.<sup>42</sup>

**Figure 2.2: Nine Indicators of the CECE Survey Model**



Source: The National Institute for Transformation and Equity at University of Indiana<sup>43</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Wexler, E. “Measuring Inclusivity.” Inside Higher Education, June 9, 2016. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/06/09/survey-aims-measure-inclusivity-campus>

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> “The CECE Surveys Are Open for 2017-2018 Registration!” University of Indiana: National Institute for Transformation and Equity. National Institute for Transformation and Equity, April 27, 2017. <https://www.indiana.edu/~cece/wordpress/2017/04/26/registrationopen1718/>

<sup>42</sup> Wexler, Op. cit.

<sup>43</sup> “The CECE Model.” University of Indiana: National Institute for Transformation and Equity, February 7, 2017. <https://www.indiana.edu/~cece/wordpress/cece-model/>

## ASSESSING COURSES

Student assessments may also be issued at the individual course level, prior to and/or following the completion of a course which address issues of diversity and equity. According to psychologist and professor Jack Meacham, course assessments may be broken down into three categories - assessing course goals, assessing classroom atmosphere, and traditional course assessment topics (Figure 1.6). According to Meacham, this is effectively no different than assessing courses on other topics. For the first category of questions, faculty and administrators should identify and articulate the learning goals of the course, craft an assessment around the goals, and then measure student responses against the goals.<sup>44</sup> For the category on classroom atmosphere, Meacham argues – similar to Banks and Nelson Laird – that questions should include indicators of inclusivity, including diverse teaching methods and support of diverse perspectives.<sup>45</sup> Meacham also advocates that the assessment should be administered towards the end, but not in the final days of the course. This is helpful so that the instructor may have enough time to evaluate responses and adjust teachings to fill in any gaps which may remain before the end of the course.<sup>46</sup>

**Figure 2.3: Meacham’s Assessment Model for Courses on Diversity**

PURPOSE	SAMPLE QUESTIONS <i>Scale: “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”</i>
<b>Assessing Diversity and Other Learning Goals for Students</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This course has helped me to understand myself and others in ways other than stereotyped groups and categories.</li> <li>▪ I now have increased awareness of the causes and effects of structured inequalities and prejudicial exclusions.</li> <li>▪ This course has helped me to ask questions, analyze arguments, make connections, and be a better thinker.</li> </ul>
<b>Assessing Classroom Atmosphere and Teaching Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The instructor allowed students to express their point of view and respected their opinion.</li> <li>▪ The format for this course has been primarily lecture.</li> <li>▪ The format for this course has been primarily discussion.</li> <li>▪ The instructor asked questions and challenged me to think.</li> </ul>
<b>Traditional Assessment Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The instructor is punctual for class and office hour responsibilities.</li> <li>▪ The text and readings used are suitable for the course.</li> </ul>

Source: Jack Meacham<sup>47</sup>

Another method for assessing student understanding is a standardized assessment. The **Multicultural Experiences Questionnaire (MEQ)** – a multicultural competencies test developed in 2010 by the University of Notre Dame – is a standardized test which has been used by several institutions to measure student understanding prior to and after completion

<sup>44</sup> Meacham, J. “Assessing Campus Diversity Initiatives.” Association of American Colleges and Universities, January 2002. p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., pp. 3–4.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp. 3–5.



of a diversity course (Figure 1.7). In a 2013 study, researchers measured the effectiveness of an undergraduate course on diversity, by issuing demographic questionnaire and the MEQ to 137 students prior to and after completing the course.<sup>48</sup> First, the study concluded that the MEQ was an easily administrable and effective measuring tool for evaluating the impact of diversity courses on student understanding. Second, it determined that students who completed the diversity course scored higher on the MEQ than those who did not. In addition, the study determined that students who interacted with people with diverse backgrounds as part of the course experienced greater gains on the MEQ than those students who took the course but did not have those interactions.<sup>49</sup>

**Figure 2.4: Questions from the Multicultural Experiences Questionnaire**

QUESTION	RESPONSE OPTIONS
I travel outside of the country.	Scale: "Never" to "Regularly"
I want to travel outside of my country.	Scale: "Not true" to "Very true"
I speak _____ well.	Scale: 1 to more than 3 languages
I correspond currently with people from other countries.	Scale: 0 to 3 or more countries
I have friends from cultural-racial-ethnic backgrounds different than my own.	Scale: 0 to 5 or more friends Scale: "Not very close" to "Very close"
I want to have friends from different cultural-racial-ethnic backgrounds.	Scale: "Not true" to "Very true"
I work with people with cultural-racial-ethnic backgrounds different from my own.	Scale: "Never" to "Always"
I go out of my way to hear/read/understand viewpoints other than my own.	Scale: "Never" to "Always"
I try to get to know people who are different from me.	Scale: "Never" to "Always"
I push myself to explore my prejudices and biases.	Scale: "Never" to "Always"
Discussing issues of discrimination, racism, and oppression makes me uncomfortable.	Scale: "Never" to "Always"
I have had courses in intercultural communication.	Scale: 0 to 3 or more courses
I have lived in a contrasting community (with a very different culture from my own).	Scale: 0 to over 9 months
I pay attention to the world beyond the U.S.	Scale: "Never" to "Always"
I enjoy media and art from different cultures.	Scale: "Never" to "Always"

Source: University of Notre Dame<sup>50</sup>

<sup>48</sup> You, D. and E. Matteo. "Assessing the Effectiveness of Undergraduate Diversity Courses Using the Multicultural Experiences Questionnaire." *Journal of College and Character*, 14:1, 2013. p. 61.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>50</sup> Narvaez, D., L. Endicott, and P. Hill. "Guide for Using the Multicultural Experiences Questionnaire (MEQ) for College Students and Adults, Version 4 Revised." Moral Psychology Laboratory, University of Notre Dame, November 2017. pp. 5–6.

<https://www3.nd.edu/~dnarvaez/documents/MulticulturalExperiencesQuestionnaireV4REVISION.pdf>

## STUDENT ASSESSMENT CHALLENGES

However, institutions should consider several limitations when issuing assessments for courses or programming on diversity and equity. First, written assessments are vulnerable to implicit bias, which could be marginalizing to minority groups or perspectives. For example, the language or phrasing of questions, and the topics covered in an assessment could be influenced by a dominant perspective in the academic discipline or the perspective of the individual designing and issuing the assessment.<sup>51</sup> To avoid this problem, academic research recommends that institutions solicit a variety of perspectives when developing their assessments, to ensure that multiple perspectives are represented in the assessment and that the assessment provides insights which are useful to a variety of faculty and administrators.<sup>52</sup>

In addition, assessments of student opinion – such as course evaluations – could be skewed by a student’s feelings about their personal academic outcomes or the format of the course. For example, courses which utilize HIPs and diverse teaching methods like active-learning techniques, problem-solving, and writing intensive assignments often receive lower ratings from students since they may require more challenging assignments and student engagement.<sup>53</sup> This may make course evaluation measurements less reliable.

## ACHIEVEMENT MEASUREMENTS

Achievement measurements – including grades, retention rates, and graduation rates – are commonly used to evaluate the outcomes of student equity initiatives. According to the Washington Student Achievement Council, students of color and other underrepresented groups typically experience lower enrollment and graduation rates than students who are white. This is correlated to the fact that these students are also more likely to be first-generation college students, English-language learners, or come from families with a lower socio-economic status.<sup>54</sup> While these students may aspire to obtain a higher education degree, poor academic preparation due to low-resourced schools, a lack of social capital, and rising college tuition costs are commonly listed by these students as barriers to their academic achievement.<sup>55</sup> Since equity-oriented auxiliary programming – like HIPs and SSTs – are designed to provide extra support to these students and help reduce the impact of these barriers, graduation and retention rates are valuable indicators for measuring institutional progress towards achieving student equity on campus. In addition, since measuring these indicators is highly-standardized and data-oriented, these measurements are immune to the implicit bias risks that self-assessments and student assessment carry.

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<sup>51</sup> Bringle, R.G., P.H. Clayton, and W.M. Plater. “Assessing Diversity, Global, and Civic Learning: A Means to Change in Higher Education.” Association of American Colleges and Universities, July 29, 2013. <https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/assessing-diversity-global-and-civic-learning-means-change-higher>

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Kazar and Holcombe, Op. cit.

<sup>54</sup> “Educational Attainment for All: Diversity and Equity in Washington State Higher Education.” Washington Student Achievement Council, May 2013. p. 16. [http://www.wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Diversity\\_Report-2013.pdf](http://www.wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Diversity_Report-2013.pdf)

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

## SECTION III: INSTITUTIONAL PROFILES

To provide a meaningful analysis, Hanover selected three institutions which pursued different strategies for integrating diversity and equity into their curriculums and campus culture. These institutional profiles include a comprehensive approach using both curricular and co-curricular changes, faculty training, and new curricular diversity requirements.

### COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH: CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY – FULLERTON

In 2012, California State University – Fullerton (CSUF) adopted a five-year strategic plan to reevaluate its institutional mission and undergraduate curriculum to support local needs and a diverse student body. Specifically, CSUF cited a need to increase its graduation rates, close the achievement gap for underrepresented students, and recruit and retain a high-quality, diverse staff.<sup>56</sup> To achieve this, CSUF adopted a multi-pronged approach which included curricular, co-curricular, and institutional changes. First, CSUF overhauled its undergraduate general education curriculum, requiring students to complete coursework in one of six “pathways” designed to educate students for participation in a global and diverse society. Pathways included interdisciplinary and current events subjects such as “power and politics,” “global studies,” and “ethics and leadership.”<sup>57</sup> In addition, CSUF adopted multiple HIPs, with the goal of ensuring at least 75 percent of students participated in HIPs prior to graduation. Finally, CSUF recruited faculty, administrators, and staff to create comprehensive, academic department-specific SSTs to support students through to graduation.<sup>58</sup>

To measure the success of the strategic initiative, CSUF established a goal of obtaining a graduation rate of 61 percent, and an achievement gap of 6 percent between underrepresented and non-underrepresented students, by 2018. However, CSUF’s progress under the strategic plan exceeded expectations and their six-year graduation rate goal was met in only three-years. By 2015, CSUF increased their graduation rate from 51 to 63.3 percent.<sup>59</sup> That same year, CSUF was also on track to meet their 2018 achievement gap goal, narrowing their achievement gap between underrepresented and non-underrepresented students from 12 to 8.7 percent in three-years.<sup>60</sup> In 2017, CSUF’s SSTs won the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA)’s 2017 Promising Practices award.<sup>61</sup>

### FACULTY WORKSHOPS IN CURRICULAR RESTRUCTURING: OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

In 2008, Oregon State University (OSU) began a new initiative to increase the inclusivity and diversity of its curriculums and faculty’s teaching methods, particularly in the sciences and

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<sup>56</sup> Cruz, Op. cit.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

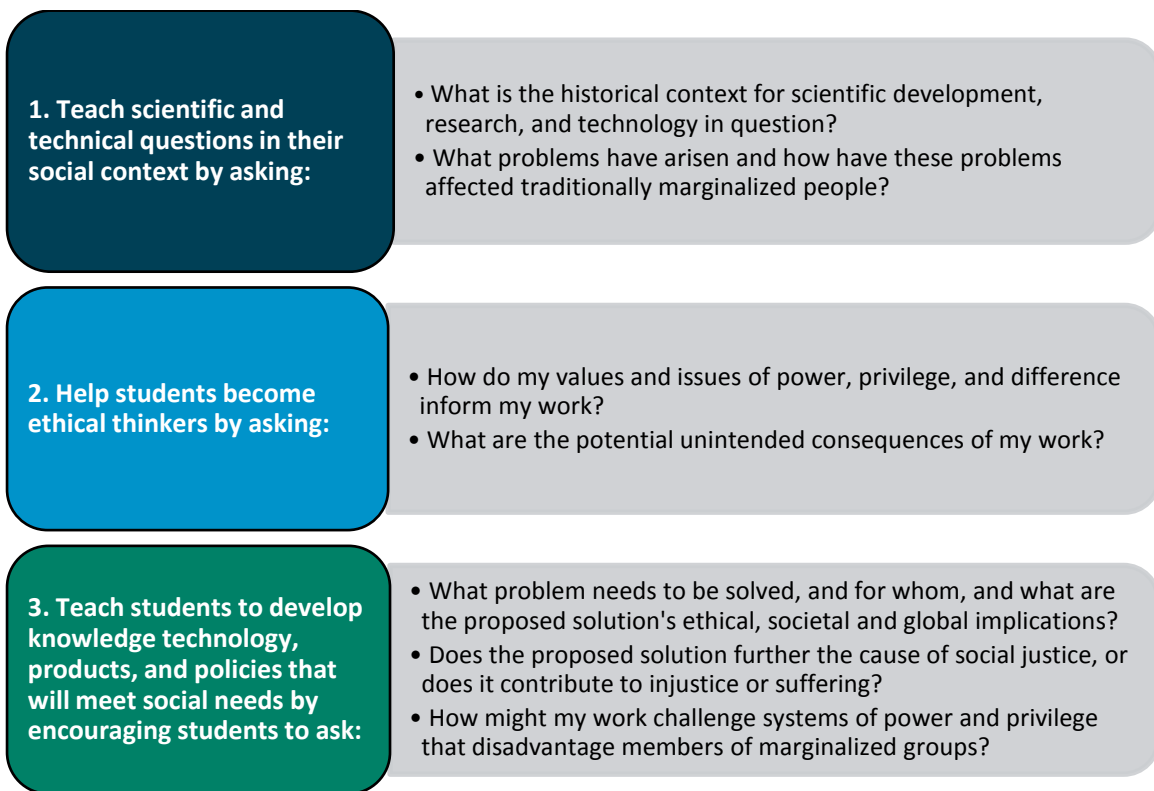
<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Cardenas, Op. cit.

professional disciplines. This was accomplished through comprehensive faculty training and workshops, which OSU has used to support and encourage faculty to develop more diverse and inclusive curriculums. According to OSU faculty workshop leaders, OSU’s program first asks faculty to brainstorm and think critically about different biases, perspectives, and socio-cultural norms that may shape content and knowledge construction inside their academic disciplines and create barriers for marginalized groups. This is a similar process to Banks’ multicultural education model outlined in the first section of this report, which asks educators to identify biases and consider multiple perspectives.<sup>62</sup> Then, based on their findings, OSU asks faculty workshop participants to restructure their curriculums based on three principles to better address discrepancies between traditional perspectives inside of the disciplines and the perspectives of marginalized groups (Figure 3.1).

**Figure 3.1: Ohio State University’s Three Principles for Curriculum Restructuring**



Source: Susan M. Shaw and Donna A. Champeau

OSU’s faculty training had the intended effect of inspiring faculty to create new curriculums in support of diverse and inclusive teaching. Rather than creating a single, universally-required course on diversity, OSU administrators and faculty in different departments restructured at least one course within their academic discipline to include topics on diversity relevant to the respective discipline.<sup>63</sup> According to OSU, this was critical to not only create more diverse and inclusive courses, but allow students to understand “how power, privilege,

<sup>62</sup> Shaw and Champeau, Op. cit.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

and social inequality are relevant across disciplines.” For example, a course in microbiology now explores the movement and impact of disease on individuals of different races, genders, and social classes.<sup>64</sup>

## **CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS IN DIVERSITY: ST. CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY**

In 2001, St. Cloud State University (SCSU) adopted new curricular requirements in diversity issues to support an increasing international student population and address concerns following an increase in racist incidents in the local community. Designated the “racial issues requirement,” the new initiative required all students at SCSU to take one course covering different topics in diversity and racial issues.<sup>65</sup> All courses eligible to fulfill this requirement needed to include a historic and social examination of race and racial oppression, and the culture and contributions of minority groups in the United States, including African American, Asian American, American Indian, and/or Latino populations. In addition, racial issues courses must engage students and increase self-awareness by using a variety of pedagogical methods, including group discussion and self-reflection.<sup>66</sup>

To measure the impact on student understanding of diversity, students in racial issues courses are required to take assessments prior to and at the end of racial issues courses. In addition, a faculty colloquium was selected to review and approve course curriculums to ensure that racial issues courses continue to reflect institutional goals.<sup>67</sup> According to SCSU faculty reviewing the initiative in 2010, the new curricular requirement was helpful in exposing a predominantly white student population to different racial and diversity issues – often for the first time in their lives. However, earning faculty buy-in and willingness to convert curriculums to colloquium standards continued to be a challenge between faculty and administration.<sup>68</sup> Reviewers of the program recommended that faculty in the colloquium provide faculty some flexibility in course content and pedagogical methodology, to encourage faculty’s buy-in and enthusiasm for the program.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> St. Clair, D. and K. Kishimoto. “Decolonizing Teaching: A Cross-Curricular and Collaborative Nmodel for Teaching About Race in the University.” *Multicultural Education*, 18:1, Fall 2010. pp. 18–19.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., pp. 19-20.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

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