



Diversity & Inclusion

YOUR ULTIMATE GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION.

More in more, campuses are becoming more diverse. Whether this is because of gender, age, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation or many other ways to categorize the student body. As this diversity continued to increase, there are certain concerns that come with it: is your campus embracing diversity, and could it do more? How can you measure how diverse your campus is? How do you start increasing diversity on your campus?

There are also other concerns, as you build diversity on your campus, such as the chance that some clashes between the different groups occur. How do you handle that while respecting all sides, what should you do in terms of safe spaces and brave spaces?

This guide covers various aspects to consider when it comes to diversity and inclusion, with a focus on the issues mentioned. If you're looking for a specific topic, use the table of contents below.

BENEFITS OF DIVERSITY IN COLLEGE

In the world, as well as in the workforce, it's an established fact that the best products, services, and environments are fostered in places that embrace diversity and inclusion. College campuses are no different. The [benefits of diversity in college](#) far outweigh any perceived hindrance critics of diversity would bring up. The list of these benefits are many, but a few that stand out include being able to recruit from a larger pool of candidates and subsequently a college can growth forecast and follow population trends to make sure enrollments numbers are met. It's also good public relations, some would say a badge of honor, to be known as a diverse institution. It's also beneficial for a college to be able to tap into the intellectual prowess and experiences that exists in people of all different types of backgrounds. Thinking longer term a diverse student body will equal a diverse Alumni base which is a benefit to institutional advancement.

LARGER RECRUITMENT POOL.

When it comes to student recruitment, colleges need to fish in the ocean not in a creek. Being able to cast a wider net will give the college the ability to reach it's enrollment goals. A part of this approach is admission of all the different types of prospects of different backgrounds that's going to be available to the institution. It's a disservice from a sheer numbers perspective to have a monolithic focus. Would you rather thread a needle or walk through a wide open door. For admissions departments an increase in prospects is a definite benefit of diversity in college.

THE GRASS IS GREENER AND MORE FERTILE.

The last two census counts and numerous studies and surveys over those decades all point to the fact that the diversity of the population is expanding not contracting. As an extension of the first point it's to the advantage of admissions departments to go where the growth is -- where the grass is greener or more fertile. If you were a ranch hand and you had a choice between long fertile grass for your cows to graze or a landscape that was smaller and less fertile with only patches of grass which one would you choose? Common sense would dictate the former. This is no different, paying attention to population trends and using that data to make smart decisions about recruitment ensures that you're going with growth and not against it.

PUBLIC RELATIONS.

In our current social climate. Institutions, companies, individuals who are opposed to diversity or show tendencies to lack diversity are often ostracized publicly. One of the benefits of diversity in college is the institution can wear it as a badge of honor and be held in high regard among its peers and society at large. There are plenty of media outlets who would embrace a story of diversity and inclusion on campus and how it's been beneficial. After an extended period of these efforts it, becomes synonymous with the school's brand and in a self sustained cycle continues to help bolster recruitment and enrollment. Traditional and non-traditional students are highly conscious about challenges in society in regards to diversity and inclusion, showing that not only is this something that the university is sensitive to but it's also taken steps to bolster inclusion is very attractive to prospective students and great benefit of diversity in college.

UNTAPPED TALENT.

You often hear people refer to a brain drain where an area or country's best and brightest leave for greener pastures. Justified or not this is a real threat to states, countries, municipalities and institutions like colleges. Embracing diversity on campus can help avoid a brain drain and draw people to your campus/area instead of them leaving. Also great ideas, innovations, new companies, cures for diseases etc. are discovered and founded by people of all different types of backgrounds. Having any exclusionary environment can only harm the institution in the long term as it limits its access to great minds and innovators of the future.

DIVERSE ALUMNI

One of the Long term benefits of diversity in college is a diverse student body will eventually mean a diverse Alumni. Diversity among alumni is very beneficial for institutional advancement. Whether it be for the purpose of recruitment, fundraising, growing the endowment or tapping into a certified base of knowledge that has an affinity for the college and would go out of its way to help, a diverse alumni is a potent and important factor for the success of any institution.

A focus on diversifying or growing alumni, tapping into a pipeline of talent, PR, bettering the odds for recruitment/enrollment having a larger pool of prospects to choose are all benefits of diversity in college.

VITAL METRICS TO MEASURE DIVERSITY

Throughout this diversity series, we've made the case for why a more diverse learning environment is one, that ultimately produces greater results. However, what are the results we are expecting? How do they materialize and what value do they add? In order to determine that we need to assess and track key performance indicators or metrics.

Many people think metrics are the latest fancy buzz word that's a glorified synonym for data. Not quite. Data is nothing but a bunch of information if its not manipulated to create meaningful value. Metrics bring that data to life. Great metrics interpret data in such a way, that at a glance, you can determine success. Today, we have analysts making an exceptional living by simply interpreting this data and selecting key metrics in a dashboard or a tool used to [simplify complex data sets to provide users with at a glance awareness of current performance](#). When it comes to moving your institution toward healthy diversity, here are 5 vital metrics To Measure Diversity In Higher Education that you should be tracking.

SUCCESS

It might sound silly but one thing I always ask clients is how do you measure success? You would be surprised the answers and looks we often get. However, in order to determine whether a diversity program is working, you need to clearly define success for said program. The best way to do this is by [defining S.M.A.R.T. Goals](#).

- Specific - Your goal should be unambiguous and communicate what is expected, why it is important, who's involved, where it is going to happen and which constraints are in place.
- Measurable - Your goal should have concrete criteria for measuring progress and reaching the goal.
- Attainable - Your goal should be realistic and possible for your team to reach.
- Relevant - Your goal should matter to your business and address a core initiative.
- Timely - You should have an expected date that you will reach the goal.

For example, instead of evaluating success simply as an increase in diverse students, a SMART Goals would establish success at a 5% increase in [female non-traditional student](#) enrollment among our key programs (Nursing, Business, Marketing) in the Fall semester. See much more specific and something that at the end of the Fall semester you can look back on and see how well you've done.

DIVERSITY PACING

Diversity is not a sprint, it's a marathon and much like the 26.2 mile race, setting and measuring pace is also important. Diversity Pacing is very similar. You set intermediate intervals. (I would recommend quarterly or by semester to coincide with your school fiscal year.) Based on your previously determined SMART goals, measure your performance at intervals as a percentage of the success metric. Using the example above, in order to stay on track to be "successful" and hit your Fall semester SMART goal, you should be seeing a 2.5% increase in female

non-traditional student enrollment among key programs by midterms. If you're not seeing the activity, this will give you a preliminary heads-up that you might want to tweak your strategy. If you're pacing way ahead, it doesn't mean you need to slow down but perhaps you set your goals too low and might want to invest more heavily in the activities that are generating these successful outcomes.

RETENTION OF UNDERREPRESENTED FACULTY AND STAFF

As a general practice, retention is an extremely important metric to determine performance in higher education, however environments that breed high-turnover among underrepresented faculty and staff is a key indicator that something is broken. Less diverse classrooms can come across as unwelcoming to minority applicants and current students. If faculty and staff aren't sticking around because they don't fit into the school culture you have developed, the diversity at your institution will be hard to change.

COMPENSATION DISPARITIES

One of the factors that may be affecting the aforementioned retention is compensation disparities. While over-simplistic, there is a direct correlation between how the faculty and staff feel they are valued and their pay. While you may be making an effort to hire more diverse employees, if they're primarily for lower-level admin positions and adjunct faculty, you're likely to continue to see a disparity in the compensation and the sentiment that women and minority employees aren't being treated fairly. There's a good chance they'll look for more equitable opportunities which affects your retention metric above.

While it's still widely held practice not to discuss salary in the workplace, your human resources department should be keeping a close eye on this metric and make adjustments to level the playing field. By maintaining balance and equal pay for equal work regardless of race, gender, race, or age, your retention stats will begin to improve.

COST/BENEFIT RATIO DIVERSITY INITIATIVES

Diversity shouldn't cost a lot of money, the investment should mostly be in time for strategizing, implementation and measurement. Like with any initiative your college undertakes, return on your investment is important. There are a lot of great ways to create a more healthy diverse environment but if the long-term benefits don't outweigh the cost, the initiative will be dubbed a failure. The danger with this is, from experience, we tend to see, not just schools, but all organizations turn their back on diversity completely when they perceive their initial attempts to prove futile.

Be smart. Select programs and projects that match your capacity. Clearly define desired outcomes and how you measure success. Map out the efforts you will need to complete and how much it will cost. As with anything, start small and manageable and get some early wins under your belt before moving on to larger more cost-intensive diversity infusion programs.

Metrics are great performance indicators but they're not effective at generating diversity, only measuring it. [You need a strategy](#). Developing, infusing and promoting diversity into your school culture is where it starts. Diversity isn't just about metrics and the data it interprets, its not sustainable on its own. You must invest in a long-term approach that is accepting and inclusive of all students, faculty and staff from all walks of life.

TOOLS FOR A MORE DIVERSE CAMPUS

At nearly every college, university and now even the private schools in the country you'll find a position, if not department, dedicated to the job of [diversity inclusion](#). While certainly, a hot trend, more diverse college campuses are the future as evidenced by the changing demographics. [RBC.com](#) defines diversity as any dimension that can be used to differentiate groups and people from one another while showing appreciations of differences in ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, and religion. Conversely, inclusion is a state of being valued, respected and supported and creating an environment and culture where each person can achieve his or her full potential.

When you think about it, these two concepts are quite contrary, opposites in fact. Can we highlight individuality while asking for togetherness? Here in lies the challenge with Diversity Inclusion. While on the surface a noble concept, but for many schools its a Utopian environment that we can only aspire to. However, with the most diverse institutions realizing the greatest success, forward-thinking educators must look to diversify their student bodies, faculty, and staff. Here are six tools for attaining a more diverse college campus.

WHY INVEST IN DIVERSITY INFUSION?

In an effort not to get too far ahead of ourselves, let's discuss why diversity is important and why your campus should invest in it. Contrary to commonly held belief, we do not live in a post-racial society devoid of racial bias. We are even less removed from the fight for equality on issues surrounding gender, sexuality, and religion. Even those without malicious intent are guilty of [blind spots](#). These unintended biases that affect our behavior or block our awareness of others' challenges mandate that diversity must be an intentional process and in fact rarely occurs organically.

As institutions of higher learning, it's important that we ourselves take stock of the lessons of the recent social and [political climate](#). Its proven that we, as global citizens, have failed to listen to one another. Diversity in our schools may assist efforts to do so by developing wide-ranging viewpoints and ideas within our society. [There is value in diverse environments, shared experiences and perspectives](#). These differences only enhance education and bring out the best for the future. Above all, a commitment to multiculturalism creates a clear competitive advantage over the competition that is reluctant to do so. By providing programs and curriculum that encourage the success and retention of diverse faculty and students, you can attract, retain and develop more talent and have better stories to tell.

What's more, this approach, by a measure of numbers, allows you to draw from the largest possible pool of talent. At the leadership levels, diverse environments drive innovation, improved and more globally informed decision-making and help institutions to become more ingrained and relevant citizens in the communities in which they reside. By increasing measures of accountability, you can demonstrate that diversity is a top/ down commitment which empowers faculty and staff and develops better leaders.

THE TOOLS OF DIVERSITY INFUSION

Now that we know why diversity is important, let's discuss how we accomplish it.

1. INVESTMENT

Having a diversity inclusion department is great, but if there is no buy-in and support from the administration, they'll just be collecting a check. The administration and board of directors must understand that a diverse student body, faculty and staff is not only the right thing to do but will help improve the bottom line.

2. STRATEGY

Your diversity infusion strategy must start with how you recruit students and hire employees. Develop a hiring strategy to make your faculty, more diversified. Start with your existing students and current employees. Ask them for referrals. Consider hosting a focus group to gain insights on your blind spots and to develop best practices on how to best recruit diverse talent. Of course, hiring an agency with experience in the multicultural arena is also a great step (wink, wink!)

3. RETENTION

Unfortunately, when you don't have a sound strategy, it can lead to a one-dimensional approach to diversity. Attracting multicultural students and staff is great but if you have no plan for them when they arise, you can expect most won't stay. This is even more tragic than not recruiting them at all.

4. CULTURE

Your campus culture must promote inclusiveness. While many groups may have felt unwelcome in the past, it's important to leverage communication tools and marketing that is inclusive and intentionally demonstrates that intolerance will no longer be accepted.

5. TRAINING

While the Harvey Weinstein revelation and subsequent sexual harassment fallout have opened our eyes to [a world of men abusing power](#), it's also forced organizations everywhere to be introspective and examine policies. This is a great opportunity for comprehensive training and reform. Developing a diverse learning environment requires that diverse students, the most vulnerable among us, feel comfortable and included in the culture in order to be successful. Invest in staff and faculty training that addresses topics such as:

- blind spots
- resistance to change and diversity,

- sensitivities to identity terms
- making assumptions
- and microaggressions

6. COMMITMENT

While easier said than done, the key is to remain committed. Diversity doesn't happen overnight and can't happen unless there's a systemic shift in thinking and culture and it starts from the top. Regardless of your efforts, there will be students and even faculty and staff that are reluctant to your more concerted commitment toward diversity. It's important to stay the course. Remember, you've open the doors and welcomed a new community. Closing the doors behind them is dangerous. Understand this is a long-term commitment and one that will reap benefits and rewards in the end.

KEYS TO CREATING DISCUSSIONS ABOUT EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

It started with the revelation that [Harvey Weinstein was using his power and influence to sexually harass woman](#) and the whole House of Cards folded when actor Kevin Spacey and comedian Louis C.K. admitted to sexual harassment and other impropriety. Accusers have come forward in numbers too many to count and the [#MeToo](#) hashtag has empowered women (and men) across the globe to speak up and out against the rich and powerful that have used their positions as a license for inappropriate behavior.

While the fight for women's rights isn't a new one, the groundswell reached a tipping point with [Donald Trump's Access Hollywood tape first leaked](#) and later reached a fever pitch with the Women's March after his inauguration in January. What was historically a tempered discussion about suffrage, and more recently abortion has become the premier international topic of conversation centered around diversity. Women across the globe have been speaking out against inequality ranging from equal pay to sexual harassment. These concerns aren't unique to celebrity however and college campuses have become ground zero for all parties to share an opinion. Although our institutions of higher learning should be fertile ground for all healthy discussion, much like our National discourse, lines have been drawn and sides have been dug in on their positions resulting in tempers flaring into conflict. Issues from safety to liability exposure and 1st Amendment rights are all variables to be accounted for. Here are four keys to hosting healthy discussions about Women's Equality and campus diversity at your school.

SET THE GROUND RULES

While many students won't understand why certain activities are disallowed, it's important to outline them clearly. Because most American colleges and universities and their foundations are or not-for-profit, entities they must follow strict rules and regulations. For instance, they may not formally endorse any issue or candidate. [The Internal Revenue Service \(IRS\) states](#) that these institutions “may not participate in, or intervene in...any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.” Outline these restrictions clearly so when student groups are told an activity is in restricted, they understand it is because it violates a regulation, not because you're suppressing their rights.

WHETHER IT'S SAFE OR BRAVE, IDENTIFY AND DESIGNATE A SPACE

As colleges and universities around the country continue to be leaders in the diversity of thought, there has become a growing [sensitivity to Brave and Safe Spaces](#). Safe Spaces are those that allow students to feel safe to belong and be comfortable in who they are without judgment based on gender, orientation or religion. Conversely, [Brave Spaces](#) allow for open discourse about important topics that affect the world around us. While they sound similar, they can be contradictory. For instance, students that feel unaccepted may be threatened by open debate about their very existence.

It's important to consider the culture of your campus and be cognizant of the needs of the student body. Clearly, identifying the geography where spaces exist and the times and ground rules to which they are to be used. It's even a good idea to draw physical lines. Be sensitive to all the viewpoints on the campus and be open to suggestions and change. Because diversity requires collaborative input, you may experience blind spots in your own judgment when designating space that students will enlighten you to. Be receptive and willing to accommodate within reason. Identify an arbitrator who students can bring concerns to in hopes of providing resolutions that are culturally sensitive.

CELEBRATE DIVERSITY

As we've seen with the #metoo movement, what is on the surface, rarely is indicative of what true motivations are. Harvey Weinstein has often been celebrated as a champion of diversity and major backer of progressive politics. While money is important, to truly celebrate differences, institutions must prescribe a systemic commitment to it. If you're still abiding by the thinking that Asian night in the cafeteria is going to do the trick, then this message is for you.

Celebrating diversity means not only being welcoming of a multicultural student body, but an equally diverse faculty, and most especially, college leadership. It means recognizing the need to have an expansive curriculum that reflects the growing needs of the student populous beyond the traditional core requirements. It means providing an equal platform to the voiceless and creating an environment that is devoid of preferential treatment and disparity of any kind.

This can be a particularly challenging thing, especially for older institutions without a history of such. The old way of doing things, while easier, may no longer be acceptable. It's important in these times to regularly conduct self-evaluations of your efforts to be inclusive and celebratory of differences. Be transparent with the results and communicate a commitment to eliminating any disparities.

EMBRACE DIVERSITY IN YOUR MARKETING

The easiest way to welcome diversity is to ask for it. Very often, institutions of higher learning are married to the ways of the past, [steeped in generations of tradition](#). While this is a great thing, it's also important to recognize that you are an institute that is advancing with times and markets it as such. [Consider messaging that, not only features diverse students, but speaks to their unique challenges](#). Highlight student differences and

consider segmented messaging that targets specific cultural groups. Be sure to highlight any improvements the campus has made to assist in making the environment a safe one and combative of cultural bias and sexual assault. Consider partnerships with the surrounding community to assist in creating a welcoming environment for students, faculty, and staff of all kinds.

We are now at least a generation removed from the times when the academic curriculum was the basis upon which all college decisions are made. It's important to realize that cultural sensitivity is a major factor as well. By moving towards a more inclusive environment we as institutions of higher learning can begin to be the change in issues of Woman's rights, equality and diversity that we hope to see and as evidenced by recent events, needs to happen.

SAFE SPACES VS. BRAVE SPACES

Political ideology, social beliefs, triggering events and shifts in the power structure have the populations at large clearly divided among strong partisan lines. Contemporary communication methods like social media where voices on any side of a debate can be amplified by all the participants in said debate help define these divides even more. College campuses are not immune to this environment, and because campuses have traditionally been a format for the expression and exchange of ideas, these beliefs can often time be on full display in common areas and lecture halls throughout the school. In response to this phenomenon, a number of schools have deemed certain areas of the campus and in some instances the entire campus as a "Safe Space". The loose definition of which is an area where a student(s) can occupy learn and thrive without being encountered by speech or action that they or society at large may deem offensive. The proliferation of Safe spaces on campuses all over the US and backlash from those who believe providing these type of spaces only help divide even more have led some university officials to also consider areas known as "Brave Spaces".

Brave Spaces would be loosely defined as designated areas where ideas and philosophies from all viewpoints can be shared in a civilized manner with the implication that although you may not agree with the viewpoint or even find it offensive, you acknowledge the right of individuals or groups to express said point without interruption or disturbance. College officials who are striving towards or struggling with [campus diversity](#) and inclusion must consider a number of factors when establishing safe or brave spaces on campus including but not limited to groups of students current and perspective who may be included or excluded by these designations. Ground rules for both types of spaces. They must also consider a concurrent plan of bridging the divide while creating these spaces for people to be heard and or feel safe.

Campus Diversity and inclusion is a goal for a lot of college campuses, and when establishing safe or brave spaces must keep their D&I goals in mind. Specifically when it comes to establishing these spaces and who they're designated for. A good rule of thumb is to have rules for these spaces in terms of who can use the space along lines of similar thinking as opposed to other factors such as race, or gender. Especially when it comes to "safe spaces". Designations based on race and gender even when well intention still provide barriers to access or a feeling of being ostracized if you're not automatically part of the defined group. If the occupation of the space or

participation in activities in the space is based on more obtuse identifiers like mindset, value system, political beliefs/agenda than you're less likely to exclude any groups based on factors they have no control over such as race and gender. At least in the initial establishment of these spaces, You don't create isolation based on these constructs that are already divisive.

Another rule of thumb when championing diversity and inclusion and establishing spaces for the equal exchange of ideas is setting ground rules. Think of this as establishing a baseline of civility and respect for each designation. The rules should be based on ensuring participants physical well being and prepping them for what to expect when participating in the spaces or even within close proximity. Establishing a baseline of appropriate behavior is a message from the institution to the students current and perspective, faculty and staff, that you have skin in the game in terms of fostering a diverse inclusive environment where an exchange of ideas with people from all different walks of life is encouraged. This can go a long way in public relations and recruitment efforts. If your institution is known for addressing the elephant in the room head on and looking for solutions that are much more attractive to the audience at large than an institution who see's challenges faced by the student body and sticks its head in the sand to avoid dealing with it.

Safe space or brave space is not the end all be all when it comes to a plan for diversity and inclusion on campus. These approaches should be conduits used by people with opposing views to traverse with the end result being reaching a common ground. This isn't to suggest the college be solely responsible for changing larger societal views, but nobody denies higher ed's role in this ongoing debate. If you can use these tactics to bridge that gap not only will you be attractive to prospective students for years to come. You'll also be held up as an example of open dialogue, unity, and equality that people and institutions worldwide will emulate, which is an envious position to be in for any school.

Using these spaces as a conduit to tackling larger issues, establishing ground rules for safe and brave spaces, and also recognizing the groups and individual types that would be attracted to each type of space are solid action steps to promote and foster an environment of diversity and inclusion on campus and set as solid example outside campus. Have you seen or implemented safe or brave space programs on your campus? Feel free to share those experiences and outcomes with us in the comment section below, your feedback is appreciated.

ARE YOU READY TO TURN THESE INSIGHTS INTO ACTION?

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